Socio-cultural Aspects In The “English File” Teaching Book

Mariana De Los Angeles Vanegas Valderrama

Loren Mariana Mesa Quintero

Juan Esteban Mayorga Alberto

Universitaria Agustiniana - Uniagustiniana

Facultad de Humanidades, Ciencias Sociales y Educación

Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés

Bogotá

2026

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Mariana de los Angeles Vanegas Valderrama

Loren Mariana Mesa Quintero

Juan Esteban Mayorga Alberto

Tutor

Rodrigo Andrés Demera Arias

Trabajo para optar a título de licenciados en lenguas extranjeras con énfasis en inglés

Universitaria Agustiniana - Uniagustiniana

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Resumen

Este estudio analiza los aspectos socioculturales presentes en el libro de texto «English File» (niveles elemental y pre intermedio, 4.ª edición) y su influencia en el proceso de aprendizaje del inglés entre los estudiantes de primer y segundo semestre de la carrera de Lenguas Extranjeras con especialización en inglés de la Universitaria Agustiniana - Uniagustiniana, en Bogotá (Colombia). Para ello, se ha utilizado un enfoque de métodos mixtos, con entrevistas semiestructuradas y observaciones en el aula. La información se recopiló desde diferentes perspectivas. El análisis se organizó en cuatro categorías: representación cultural, aspectos sociales, inclusividad cultural y prácticas docentes. Como resultado, el análisis del libro de texto se centra principalmente en referencias culturales británicas y estadounidenses, con un contenido limitado relacionado con la cultura latinoamericana y la cultura local colombiana. Algunos estudiantes manifestaron sentirse cómodos con el contenido cultural del libro de texto; sin embargo, el 66,7 % de ellos indicó que el libro no refleja la cultura de la que forman parte. En cuanto a los docentes, se mencionó que son conscientes de las fortalezas estructurales y comunicativas del libro de texto, aunque es necesario complementarlo con materiales locales y relevantes para salvar las brechas culturales y mejorar la participación de los estudiantes. En conclusión, el docente actúa como mediador cultural, mejorando el proceso de aprendizaje de los estudiantes no solo mediante el uso de los libros, sino también reestructurandolos para lograr un mejor enfoque relacionado con la cultura de los estudiantes.

Palabras clave: aspectos socioculturales, análisis de libros de texto de inglés como lengua extranjera, competencia intercultural, representación cultural, English File, materiales didácticos de idiomas.

Abstrac

This study analyzes the socio-cultural aspects present in the English File (Elementary and Pre-Intermediate, 4th edition) textbook and its influence on the English learning process from first and second semester students in the Foreign Languages Degree with Emphasis in English, at the Universitaria Agustiniana - Uniagustiniana in Bogotá, Colombia. Using a mixed-methods approach, with semi-structured interviews, and classroom observations. The information was collected from different perspectives. The analysis was organized in four categories: cultural representation, social aspects, cultural inclusivity, and teaching practices. As a result, the investigation of the textbook focuses mostly on British and American cultural references, with limited content related to Latin American and local Colombian culture. Some students reported feeling comfortable with the textbook's cultural content, however, 66.7% of them indicated that the book does not reflect the culture they are part of. About the teachers, It was mentioned that they are aware of the textbook's structural and communicative strengths, even though it is necessary to support it with local and relevant materials to connect cultural gaps and enhance student engagement. In conclusion, the teacher works as a cultural mediator, improving students' learning process by not only using books, but also restructuring it in order to have a better approach related to students' culture.

Keywords: socio-cultural aspects, EFL textbook analysis, intercultural competence, cultural representation, English File, language teaching materials.

Chapter I

1.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the description of the problem identified through the analysis of the didactic material used in English classes (English File textbook elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) in some university programs is presented. The analysis revealed an issue in the socio-cultural representation, which is limited and biased compared to reality. Moreover, this chapter includes a quick examination of the two books that will later be analyzed in depth. This preliminary examination is focused only on the problem statement. Regardless of the origin of the books—being British—an aspect of utmost importance is that the book does not reflect the cultural diversity around the world. The few cultural references that appear are mostly stereotypical and superficial. For instance, in the first book, only two Latin American countries are mentioned (apart from three Latin America nationalities listed in a vocabulary section): Mexico and Costa Rica. In the case of Costa Rica, the country is represented only by a fruit seller and an exotic dried fruit.

After the problem statement, the chapter continues with an analysis of the impact of this socio-cultural representation in the books when used in class. Finally, the research question and objectives are presented, supported by a justification.

The institution where this research will be carried out is a private university located in Bogotá, specifically in Kennedy's locality. This university offers several programs considered bilingual, some of them with more intensity per week than others. The specific program selected for this research has classes of two and a half hours per day, five days a week, which equals twelve hours and thirty minutes per week. The population chosen for this study includes students

from the first and second semesters of the bachelor's degree in foreign languages, as well as the teachers in charge of these courses.

1.2. Statement of the problem

The problem that is under study in the present research is the socio-cultural aspects addressed in the "English File" (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) teaching book and the possible influences that these aspects could have on the learning process of the students from the first and second semester of the private university under study. The research problem emerged from some English classes taken by the researchers in their fifth semester of the foreign languages degree. Through the English classes in which the "English File" (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) teaching book was used, several examples were identified that contained cultural and gender stereotypes, these examples led to a class discussion between the teacher and the students about those. In addition the teacher provides extra material for the students, making use of Colombian culture in order to complement the class and foster better understanding and contextualization of the topics.

The identification of this problem was supported by a classroom observation during a regular foreign languages degree English class. During the observation it was noticed that in the "English File" (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) teaching book were some examples or activities with stereotypes and a small sample of other cultures. Also it was noticed that the teacher often makes use of familiar examples for the students in order to grab students attention and contextualize the topic better. This class observation provides the necessary evidence of the proposed problem, "English File" teaching book present socio-cultural limitations that may affect students participation and affections in their learning process. Based on these observations,

the following research question and objectives are proposed in order to analyse these aspects in the English learning process of the students from first and second semester. Besides this is supported by Larrea-Espinar and Raigon Rodriguez (2019), a study that analyzed the socio-cultural content in diverse editions of the English File textbook. They found and demonstrated that not only the textbook increased the amount of cultural content over time, but most of the representations continued to emphasize mainly on superficial cultural aspects related to British and American culture, while local, diverse, and perspectives remained limited.

1.3. Research Question

Thanks to the scan of the book in which a problem was identified and it could be recognized that it is a matter of utmost importance to analyze these English teaching books that are used in these semesters and the socio-cultural representation included there. According to Byram, (2008 that was cited by Bose and Gao,2022) "*Engagement with such cultural representations is a crucial part of English language teaching (ELT), as promoting cultural understanding is one of the most significant objectives of language teaching*" As cited in, Bose and Gao emphasize the impotence of a balance representation of cultural materials is important, owing to the exposure of a variety cultural representations of English helps the learners to compare their own cultural, social and life experiences with other cultures, and also to become aware of the different perspectives, expectations, behaviours, values and beliefs to develop in a better way intercultural awareness. Due to this facts the proposed question for this research is the following one:

- To what extent does the 'English File' (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) teaching book address social and cultural aspects that influence the English learning process for students of A1 to A2 English level?

1.4. Research objectives

Then for the research objectives these are the proposed ones

General objective

- To analyze the representation of cultural diversity in the English textbook "English File" (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition), used in the foreign languages with emphasis in English program of Universitaria Agustiniana - Uniagustiniana in students between first and second semester (sixteen to twenty years old), and evaluate its impact on student engagement and comprehension.

Specific objectives

- To analyze the efficacy of culturally inclusive content in English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition), in enhancing the motivation and classroom participation of students from A1 to A2 English level in the foreign languages with emphasis in English program of Universitaria Agustiniana - Uniagustiniana in students between first and second semester (sixteen to twenty years old).
- To compare how diverse cultural references are incorporated into the language exercises and stories, in the English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) for students from A1 to A2 English level of the students between first and second semester (sixteen to twenty years old) .
- To examine how teachers in the already chosen university program (Foreign languages program of Uniagustiana University) perceive and implement the cultural and social aspects of the English File textbook (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) in their teaching practices, based on their experience.

1.5. Justification

The present National Program proposed by the Colombian Ministry of Education is based on strengthening English, indigenous languages, and Creole languages. It promotes respect for the language diversity that exists in the country, also it encourages the learning of English as an important global language. It is essential for learners to learn not only linguistic skills but also develop the ability to interact correctly in diverse cultural contexts. Therefore, English teaching should provide not only communication, but also intercultural awareness.

In order to improve the language proficiency, the project is focused on the emphasis on functional multilingualism. This is achieved through training and by implementing materials which encourage the use of English in high school education, implementing real-life situations. The implementation of this, helps the students to communicate effectively in academic and every day contexts.

To achieve this, the program includes teaching training and implementation of different materials that encourage the use of English in students of high school education. These strategies aim to create more participation in classroom activities and classes in general, helping the students to feel more confident at the time of using the language. Therefore students' motivation and the ability to relate the language to their own experiences can be directly influenced by the inclusion or exclusion of socio-cultural content in teaching materials. The students also may perceive English disconnect from their reality when they do not see their culture represented.

In this regard, the role of English teaching materials becomes a matter of fact, as they serve as a key tool for implementing the objectives of the Bilingualism National Program (PNB) of Colombia. Textbooks not only provide the students the necessary linguistic input, such as grammar and vocabulary, but also transmit socio-cultural values and content which can influence

students' perspectives and engagement with the language. For that reason, analyzing these materials is essential in order to know if they align with the educational policies and also contribute to both, language development and intercultural competence. Despite the interest in socio-cultural aspects in English language teaching, there is still a lack of investigations that demonstrate how published textbooks, such as English File, contain these elements within the Colombian education system. Therefore, this research helps contribute to this gap by presenting a contextualized analysis in local educational systems.

Having in mind the proposed research question and the objectives, it is necessary taking into account that the present research does not aim to change or correct the textbook. Instead, the purpose of this research is to conduct a critical analysis of the socio-cultural aspects included in the English file (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) teaching book, with an emphasis on the role in the development of the language learning. Additionally the research also examines the relevance of these aspects within the expectations of TESOL, tacking into the consideration how they contribute to intercultural awareness and also the communicative competences developed by the students. On the other hand it is a matter of fact the methods or techniques that the teachers manage or implement for these socio-cultural elements in their classrooms, since their interpretation and use of material affects directly into the student's English learning process. Moreover, this research is fundamental for teaching practice, since teachers reflect on how they choose, adapt, and create or complement teaching materials in order to contribute to the development of more inclusive and culturally teaching strategies that supply students' needs.

According to Tang "*Textbooks serve as the primary form of language input for learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Mainland China. They are considered the main learning resource and vehicle for (a) delivering cultural content and (b) developing students'*

intercultural communicative competence." (Tang, 2022, p. 39). This research shows an understanding of the role that textbooks have in the learning process, exposing that they are not only a source used in the linguistic input, but also showing that it is an important key tool for furthering cultural knowledge and also intercultural awareness.

Chapter II: Literature Review

The integration of social and cultural aspects into English language teaching has become an important and pressing issue in contemporary research. Language is not only grammar and vocabulary, but also a means of communication, perspective, and intercultural exchange. Therefore, textbooks, which are often the main source of information in English as a foreign language classroom, are increasingly being studied to determine the extent to which they implement meaningful cultural content. This discussion is very essential to the present study, which aims to evaluate the representation of social and cultural aspects in the English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition), textbook within the foreign languages program. This chapter is organized by authors and divided into four main categories which are: Culture language learning, TESOL materials, Cultural influence and the relevance of English File teaching book.

Culture and Language learning

Language learning is deeply connected to cultural understanding. Kovács (2017) offers one of the clearest frameworks for cultural inclusion in language teaching. He proposes evaluating content through “the three perspectives of the learners’ own culture, the target culture, and the international culture” (p. 77). This triadic model is fundamental to our study, as it allows us to analyze whether the English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) offers Colombian students an intercultural bridge or whether it only benefits the target (English-speaking) culture. If English File neglects the students’ international culture and perspectives, there is a risk of positioning them as passive recipients of foreign content rather than active participants in intercultural dialogue. This could also make it difficult for students to connect their own identities with the material presented.

Nguyen (2017) further develops this argument, showing that culture in language learning progresses on three levels: “cultural knowledge, cultural awareness, and cultural competence” (p. 147). According to the author, textbooks must go beyond “mere awareness” (p. 152) and deliberately implement intercultural competence. For this study, this means assessing whether the English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) provides the university students with more than just facts about English speaking societies, enabling them to critically address cultural differences. It also clarifies what level of cultural learning English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) promotes: To what extent does the material about the United Kingdom and the United States? (knowledge), in what ways does it support learners to recognize different perspectives? (awareness), or truly prepare them for intercultural encounters? (competence) This raises a question that is fundamental to our objectives. Nguyen refines this further by examining the results of cultural integration in language learning.

Together, Tran and Dang (2014) argue that although teachers value the inclusion of culture and “acknowledge the importance of teaching culture in the English classroom” (p. 210), they often lack the resources, training, or curricular support to do it effectively. As they state, “cultural content is often underrepresented or omitted due to curriculum constraints” (p. 210). This highlights that textbooks such as English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) become essential when teachers are unable to fill these gaps with additional teaching resources. If teachers are not prepared to fill cultural gaps, the cultural component that students receive comes from the English File textbook. Therefore, these three studies justify why analyzing the cultural depth of textbooks is not optional, but essential.

In general, these studies show that language learning is always connected to culture. Furthermore, the way in which books present that culture directly influences students' ability to develop intercultural awareness.

TESOL Materials

TESOL methodologies have been changing from teaching methods to broader approaches that include social and cultural aspects. Kumaravadivelu (2006) argues that TESOL has moved "from method-based pedagogy to post-methodological pedagogy" (p. 62), in which macro factors such as culture, politics, and history are integrated into classroom practices. This orientation allows us to evaluate whether English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) aligns with post methodological approaches or continues to reproduce more traditional practices. If the book follows traditional methods, it may not pay much attention to social and cultural aspects. However, if it reflects post-methodological thinking, it could contribute to critical and socially conscious learning. Textbooks remain essential for language teaching. TESOL materials have evolved, showing that teaching methods have also changed.

Núñez (2018) reinforces this concern by describing textbooks as "instrumental, regulatory, homogenizing, and commercial tools" (p. 236) that hinder deep cultural learning since they present knowledge in a uniform manner. The author proposes adopting "a critical intercultural perspective that questions power relations and promotes decolonial alternatives" (p.237). This is directly relevant to the present study, as one of its objectives is to examine whether the English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) reinforces homogenized narratives or creates space for local and intercultural perspectives. These criticisms make a lot of sense in the Colombian context, where imported books such as English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) often do not reflect the real lives and experiences of students.

On the other hand, Prieto (2024) offers a constructive alternative. His study shows that materials designed by teachers and based on “ontological, epistemological, and power-based perspectives” (p. 5) successfully promote critical intercultural awareness among students. For our study, this implies that if English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) is insufficient, it must be supplemented to achieve in-depth cultural objectives and complemented with locally designed, critique-oriented resources that increase students’ intercultural awareness.

Overall, the findings of this study show that English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) is part of the international debate on English teaching materials. It determines that textbooks are not neutral, they must be analyzed critically, both for what they show and what they omit. Therefore, English File is not only understood as a classroom resource, but also as material that reflects the decisions made by publishers worldwide and that needs to be analyzed. Furthermore, if the book proves to be limited, teachers in the university may need to supplement it with other materials that have greater cultural understanding

Cultural Influence

The previous studies underline the challenges of integrating culture in ELT classrooms. According to Tran and Dang (2014) demonstrate that although teachers value teaching culture, there are limitations in training and resources needed to fully integrate it into their classes. These limitations become more visible at the time when teachers use instructional materials (as English teaching books) which does not provide enough cultural exploration. In this sense, the absence of the integration of cultural representation in the classroom is often reduced to the common or stereotypical representation.

Gómez (2015) offers a critique, comparing how many English as a foreign language textbooks only present “superficial culture” (p. 170) parties, celebrities, traditions and avoid “transformative and complex cultural topics” (p. 175) such as diversity and identity that encourage deeper reflection. For our research, this suggests a potential risk, as English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) reproduces only superficial culture, students may be ill-prepared for intercultural encounters outside the classroom, and their contribution to intercultural competence will be minimal.

Prieto (2024) shows that culturally enriched worksheets can increase students’ “critical intercultural awareness” (p. 5). This contributes to our study by indicating that, if the English File is limited, teachers in the private university can supplement it with additional activities to achieve the program’s objectives. These findings confirm that the cultural influence of textbooks depends not only on their content, but also on how teachers enrich them.

These findings emphasize that the analysis of English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) must go beyond counting cultural references, where students are encouraged to think critically about culture and not reproduce stereotypes and superficial representations. These ideas also reinforce the need to implement additional strategies in the university to deepen students’ intercultural learning.

English File Relevance

Finally, research that directly examines English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) provides indispensable information. Larrea-Espinar and Raigón-Rodriguez (2019) compared the 1999 and 2013 editions of English File and found that the more recent version "almost doubles the presence of cultural content" (p. 123). However, they concluded that "Big C still dominates (75%), while little c culture remains scarce" (p. 127). This is very important to our study, as it shows that although English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) has expanded its cultural references, the way it approaches culture remains limited to history, art, and famous people, omitting everyday practices and diverse perspectives and providing a superficial view of culture.

Gomez (2015) reminds us that superficiality and a failure to address cultural issues mean that textbooks "limit students' opportunities to develop true intercultural competence" (p. 172). His criticism provides a clear perspective for analyzing English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition), which focuses on superficial topics. Students may complete their linguistic skills, but without the critical cultural tools necessary for global communication.

Similarly, Núñez (2018) proposes evaluating materials through a "critical intercultural lens that incorporates perspectives of identity, knowledge, and power" (p. 240). By applying this critical analysis to English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition), it will be possible to determine whether it effectively promotes intercultural competence or merely reinforces stereotypes.

The literature reviewed shows that language learning is directly related to culture. However, TESOL materials, although essential for language teaching, tend to emphasize globalized and superficial representations, displacing deeper cultural perspectives linked to the local context. In particular, textbooks such as English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition), although showing great progress in the inclusion of cultural contempt, continue to be limited by their focus on superficial cultural elements, “Bic C#, and by their lack of critical or intercultural depth.

These points of analysis are particularly relevant to our study, which investigates how English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) addresses cultural and social aspects within the Foreign Language Program at Universitaria Agustiniana - Uniagustiniana. The reviews bibliography not only provides a theoretical foundation through Kovács’ three-level model and Nguyen’s such as the contrast between superficial and deep culture, and the concept of critical interculturality. Given the role that textbooks play in shaping teaching practice at Universitaria Agustiniana - Uniagustiniana, it is essential to assess whether the English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) promotes the development of intercultural competence or continues to reinforce a superficial culture.

In summary, the literature identifies the significant need to implement culture in a meaningful and effective way in language teaching, as well as the limitations of current TESOL materials in achieving this goal. This study contributes to the current discussion on how to make TESOL resources more attentive to cultural differences that are critical and socially valuable in different educational contexts.

CHAPTER III: Theoretical Framework

The previous chapter provides an overview of several studies and researches, national and international, that had already worked on this topic, offering some valuable view into how socio-cultural aspects have been analysed before in such different contexts Regardless, the present chapter focuses on outlifting the type of study that has been specially designed for this research. It also explains the methodological approaches that are fundamental for this study owing to their guidance that they could give for it. In addition this chapter also introduces the authors and the theoretical perspectives making use of constructs and sub-constructs in which they support the chosen research theme, underlining their relevance in the present analysis and ensuring the academic rigor of the research.

English as a foreign language learning

English as a foreign language learning is a matter of fact in this research, since it goes beyond the simple process of the acquisition of grammatical rules and vocabulary. As Zarei (2011) said “Learning a foreign language is to a large extent a way of socially constructing certain identities… culture learning is a process through which language learners experientially come to perceive, interpret and feel the world around and create meaning between cultural representatives” (Zarei, 2011, p. 2052). It is known that English as a foreign language learning is closely linked with identity and consequently to culture. In this sense culture plays an important role, impacting and shaping both students' and teachers’ identities. Culture often mediates how people interact and interpret linguistic input, how they share their experiences and beliefs in the English speaking world. The deeply understanding of the connection between language, identity and culture is crucial for analysing the socio-cultural aspects in language learning and then in teaching materials

Language learning

As Haberman, Afzaa, and Alfadda (2020) mention "Learning a foreign language has become the tool of the trade around the globe. However, it can become challenging for non-native speakers to achieve proficiency in a second language in both conversational and academic ways." (p. 610) This perspective shows that learning a foreign language is not only a process full of grammar studying, memorizing rules or vocabulary; rather it also involves experience, interpretation and integration of the culture knowledge that is already known by the students while also highlighting the learners' own cultural background.

Skills development

The skills development for an English language learner could be particularly challenging owing to the complexities that each four skills entails (speaking, writing, reading and listening), due to it Ahmed and Myhill, (2016), conclude that "EFL writing is still one of the most demanding skills… However, they still encounter a lot of difficulties in their L2 English writing" (p. 117) Ahmed, and Myhill, made this investigation with Egyptian English university and learners. This research indicates that for students who do not use the Latin alphabet, practicing writing skill could be demanding and challenging. Therefore, English teaching materials should be made in a more inclusive form for this people who is not related with the latin alphabet to address this issue

Influences on L1 to L2

The connection between L1 to L2 plays an important role at the time of learning a new language. The multicompetence concept, introduced by Cook (1991) emphasizes that knowing different languages creates an unique cognitive state; it is not comparable to the process and abilities of two separated monolingual speakers. Building on this idea, according to Cook (that

was cited by Alonso 2016) “The multicompetence perspective sees the knowledge of more than one language in the same mind as a complete system, not two separate systems” (p. 186). Learning a new language does not suggest the creation of a new space within learners’ minds. Instead, the new language starts to integrate with the cognitive and personal system, including new knowledge and experiences taking in account the cultural background that they already had. From this point of view “L1 acquisition bestows not only facility with the linguistic structure of the L1 but also the ability to learn linguistic structure in the L2” (Derakhshan & Karimi, 2015 p, 2116). Derakhshan and Karimi agree that learning a new language is not an apart issue, the L2 is deeply interconnected with L1 bases owing to the influences that this tongue had. Derakhshan and Karimi also highlight that the process of language learning is relational and not a fragmented process.

Cultural influences

As it was mentioned before, Anyanwu (2016) “Language is not only used as a means of communication, but also as a marker or indicator to the speaker's cultural identity. The identity is communicated through a particular language use during interaction (discourse markers)” (p.3) said cultural influences are deeply rooted in the language learning process, since language and culture are hard to separate in human communication. This interconnection between the L1 and the L2. The different traditions, customs, art, beliefs, values, education, civilization, identity and cosmovision that the learners’ acquire to their L1 learning. In other words culture not only remains in learners’ background but also it influences how learners develop communication strategies and interpret the L2.

Cultural background

Taking into account this Ibrahim (2013) states that “cultural background knowledge plays an important positive role in students' (...) comprehension. Moreover, good knowledge of other cultures helps students a lot in dealing with reading comprehension texts” (p. 27) In this specific case the author makes reference to the process of reading comprehension and underlines the role that cultural background plays in it. This also refers to learners interpreting and constructing the meaning in texts using the cultural knowledge and the already acquired experiences. Consequently, Ibrahim makes an important contribution to this research, in the fact that learners' culture not only enriches the learning process but also it helps learners to understand and interpret the materials given to them for acquiring the foreign language through the engagement and familiarity that learners could get from them.

Socio-cultural factors

Socio-cultural factors plays an important role in English language learning and teaching. This factor could influence the way learners perceive cultures, identities and social roles through the teaching materials that are used in the students' learning process. In this sense TESOL materials may transmit a variety of cultural representation and social perspective that can promote an open discussion in the classroom.

To support the last affirmation Amiri and Karfa said that “The more highly sophisticated the social environment is, the more likely it is to foster EFL students' academic achievements… the more similarity exists between the students' cultures, the more successful the learning is” (Amiri & Karfa, 2021, p. 395). The social and cultural environment in which the learners are exposed to impacts in their academic performance and in turn in their success. In this sense, encouraging cultural awareness and including diverse socio-cultural views in the teaching

materials enhance the inclusive environment that could be found in the classroom, encouraging students' motivation and participation.

In this regard, cultural biases can also be observed in gender representation, in which it appears through different perspectives such as the characteristics related to men and women, roles that are assigned or even professions that genres are associated with. "Women are often less visible than men, are often the butt of many jokes and are often placed in stereotypical roles and assigned stereotypical emotional reactions" (Hartman & Judd, 1978, p. 385). They demonstrate that in certain TESOL materials it could be found that gender roles and sexist representations can negatively influence learners' perceptions.

These issues also can be recognized in the English file (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) teaching book, not to a great extent, but these types of sexist patterns still exist in this teaching book. It is important to take a look at these issues owing to the fact that the learners could have a negative influence on them. It is crucial to encourage classroom discussion on these aspects, as it is well known that it is somewhat difficult to change this situation effectively in society.

Culture and communication

As it was mentioned, culture influences directly on the process of learning a new language, but its impact also influences the message interpretation. In fact Zhang and Yan indicates that "Culture and communication are inseparable because culture not only dictates who talks to whom, about what, and how the communication proceeds, it also helps to determine how people encode messages, the meanings they have for messages, and the conditions and circumstances under which various messages may or may not be sent, noticed, or interpreted" (Zhang & Yan, 2012, p. 76). The perspective that these authors highlight that the understanding

of how the cultural frameworks conduct and on the communicative practices and influence on the possible meanings that may arise.

EFL textbooks

As stated previously the EFL textbooks plays an important role in the language acquisition due to the guidance that these provides to learners, "TESOL practices which tend to perpetuate 'a colonial discourse of inferiorizing, marginalizing, and excluding' certain cultures, religions or creeds have far-reaching effects leading to further racialization and schism in the globalizing world" (Dijk, as cited in Rich & Troudi, 2006, p. 617, as cited in Shah & Elyas, 2019). EFL textbooks are the initial step at the time of language learning, providing the accurate tools for speaking the language, the language rules and, exercise for improving the different competences (listening, speaking, writing and reading) etc. Nevertheless, as it was discussed above, the final goal of these books should not be limited to providing only memorization rules and vocabulary. Instead they should respond to the communicative and cultural needs through the learner's life.

Influence on learners

The influence that English textbooks may have on learners is a matter of fact, this owing to English textbooks are an essential and the central role in where students approach to the language, It not only provides grammatical structures, vocabulary and exercises for enhancing the other skills, textbooks also works as the primarily source of guidance in the language learning process. For that Cheung (2001) points out that

Social and economic factors explain why Hong Kong students need to learn English in school. Educational institutions are essential for language learning, so all teachers should feel

responsible for promoting effective teaching; however, many rely on uninteresting textbooks focused on grammar and "teacher talk and student listen" routines.

This research suggests that although TESOL materials (in this case English textbooks) are a principal key for learning and teaching a new language, "The findings show that the English language books are not culturally diverse, but this does not affect the attitude and motivation of the students to learn English" (Magogwe, 2009, p.1). English teachers should not be confined to the suggested methods suggested in the materials, teachers should analyse the suggested options of the book and give to the students different ones if the already presented does not work effectively for not making the class tedious and monotonous for the learners in some cases.

Cultural representation in TESOL materials

At the time of analysing TESOL materials it is a matter of utmost importance to examine the cultural ideologies they transmit. From time to time teaching books and teaching practices could unconsciously certain worldviews, marginalizing some cultures and privatizing others "TESOL practices which tend to perpetuate 'a colonial discourse of inferiorizing, marginalizing, and excluding' certain cultures, religions or creeds have far-reaching effects leading to further racialization and schism in the globalizing world." (Dijk, as cited in Rich & Troudi, 2006, as cited in Shah & Elyas, 2019, p. 8) This unequal representation of cultures is not a minor issue, its role on political dimensions is important, since learners could still perpetuating this in an unaware form at the time of speaking what they had learned from this material. As it was said before it is important to create spaces of discussion if the guidance material takes one of these themes in order to change outdated discourses that are not equal for every culture that could be represented there.

Materials design

Materials design is a matter of importance at the time of language learning due to the guidance and the tools that they give to the learners in their journey across the learning process. in this sense Papaefthymiou-Lytra, Karagianni, & Pouliou (2019) underlines “TESOL materials should address learners’ lifelong FL needs across diverse lingua cultures of English” spotlighting the importance of preparing students for using language in different global contexts, fostering their intercultural awareness and preparing them for real-life interactions, giving them the right tools for communicating their values, ideas or beliefs and even their cultures.

Chapter IV: Research Design

In the previous chapter it was shown and analysed some studies, including international investigations and theories that sustain the constructs of the present research. These studies provide the theoretical information required for the understanding of the variables involved. Moreover, this chapter focuses on describing the type of study which was elected and implemented for the data collection process as well as a methodological approach that guides it. Also this chapter mentions the authors who support the chosen type of study and justify the application of the research design within this context.

4.1. Research approach

The type of study that has been selected is a convergent mixed methodology design, due to the nature of information that is intended to be collected. This design allows a closer examination of the socio-cultural aspects presented in the English File teaching book and how they are perceived by the academic community under study. Therefore this approach contains both qualitative and quantitative data that are collected and analyzed in order to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

4.2. Type of study

On the other hand, using a mixed methodology for achieving both qualitative and quantitative data will be gathered. On the qualitative side, *Taylor and Bogdan 1987* accords that the "type of methodology that produces descriptive data: people's own words (spoken or written) and observable behaviors" (p.7). The research aims to capture the different opinions, experiences, feelings, knowledge and perspectives that the academic community under study (students and teachers) have about after using the English textbook, admitting that these dimensions are crucial for the understanding of the cultural impact that the material already has

in it. On the quantitative side *Kothari (2004)* accords that “Based on the measurement of quantity or amount. It is applicable to phenomena that can be expressed in terms of quantity." (p. 30) The research looks for identifying the current tendencies by analyzing the averages and the most common responses, in which they are going to provide measurable evidence of the perceptions collected. Cooperatively, these both approaches will offer a comprehensive view of this issue, by combining deep understanding with the common tendencies.

Owing to that this research includes a mixed methodology, “Mixed methods research is a research design (or methodology) in which the researcher collects, analyses, and mixes (integrates or connects) both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or a multiphase program of inquiry.” (Creswell, 2014, p. 4) The mixed methodology was the most acquired and appropriate for this research owing to the research objectives. The integration data occurs through triangulation, comparing the results form quantitive data and contrast with the findings form inter. This supports better the understanding of the research problem by identifying differences, similarities and common patterns in the data.

4.3. Description of the setting/context

The institution in which this research will be conducted is in the Universitaria Agustiniana - Uniagustiniana located in Bogotá, specifically in the locality of Kennedy. The selected program is designed for being bilingual, with the main objective of reaching students to the C1 proficiency by the end of their studies, according to Common European Framework of Reference of Languages (CEFR). To accomplish this requirement the program also includes intensive daily sessions with an intensity of two hours and a half per day, for a total of twelve hours and a half per week across six semesters. English constitutes the subject with the highest number of institutional hours within the curriculum, this because of the giving emphasis of the

degree. Additionally, the university program integrates the communicative, linguistic and cultural components to ensure that the students apply them effectively in academic and professional contexts.

4.4. Participants

The academic community that participates in this research is composed of two groups of thirty students, between the range age from sixteen years to twenty-one years old, as well as the teachers who are responsible for the guidance during the language learning, between the ages thirty years to forty years old. These students are part of the university program described above. As it was mentioned before, the program involves obviously the teachers that are incharge on the guidelines and the support on the students journey through the English learning process. These teachers whose range ages are between thirty to forty years old have a remarkable profession and academic experience in language teaching. The collaboration between the teachers and students is of utmost importance owing to its contribution for obtaining a deep understanding of the teaching learning dynamics applied in class during the program.

4.5. Instruments for data gathering

For the present research it has been selected three different instruments for the gathering of data, those are:

Semi-structure interviews: Through the use of interviews in the present research, it was possible to ensure the alignment with the research as they allowed for understanding the students' opinions about the English teaching book "English File" (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) and also its use in real-life classroom settings in Universitaria Agustiniana - Uniagustiniana for students from first and second semester of the foreign language degree program.

Mixed questionnaires: Through the use of surveys in the present research, it was possible to ensure the alignment with the research as they allowed for understanding the opinions of both teachers and students regarding the use of the English textbook "English File" (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) in students of first and second semester of the foreign language degree program with emphasis in English of Universitaria Agustiniana - Uniagustiniana

Class observation: Through the use of classroom observation in the present research, it was possible to ensure the alignment with the research as it involved observing the real-life classroom setting in which the book "English File" (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) is used.

Semi-structured interviews, mixed questionnaires (open and closed-ended questions), and class observation. These instruments have been chosen in order to ensure the alignment with the research, as these provide valuable information about how the English textbook "English File" (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) addresses the cultural and social aspects that influence the English learning process. In addition they both contribute to achieving the general and specific objectives and they offer complementary perspectives. The use of interviews and surveys shows a better overview of the participant's perceptions and experiences. As *Cárdenas, Libia (2013)* mentions "The use of surveys, interviews and institutional documents allowed them to portray teachers' approaches or methods, lessons, activities, objectives, curricula, syllabi and evaluation and draw implications for teacher education and language policies, among others." *(p.8)*, while the classroom observation provides the necessary evidence on how these aspects are implemented and reflected in the classroom at the time of teaching and learning, since

"Classroom observations provide ST the possibility to observe, document and learn about classroom life." *(Devos, 2014, p. 17).*

Chapter V: Data Analysis

The analysis proposed to determine how the English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) textbook addresses social and cultural aspects that impact the English learning process of students in the foreign language program at a private university in Bogotá Universitaria Agustiniana - Uniagustiniana. This data gathering was collected through questionnaires (quantitative data), interviews, and classroom observations (qualitative data), which are the instruments used. After analyzing the data gathered separately, the results were compared and also integrated in order to identify patterns, similarities and differences. This process allowed a better comprehensible interpretation of the English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) textbook's social and cultural content and also its impact on the students that are working with it.

The process of this session was implemented through a mixed-methods approach, incorporating quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data were obtained from the questionnaire responses applied to students and teachers, while qualitative were obtained from the open-ended questions. The qualitative data analysis followed four main categories: Cultural Representation, Social Aspects, Cultural Inclusivity and Teaching Practices. These categories emerged through a deductive form and also taking into account the theoretical framework and literature review.

To enhance the credibility of the analysis, the coding process was discussed to ensure the consistency with each category proposed in the investigation, aligning it with both theoretical framework and literature review.

The coding process adhered to a thematic analysis, classifying the perceptions, ideas and comparing them across responses to identify answers in order to categorize them into sub-codes to detect recurring patterns.

4.1. Cultural Representation

This category refers to how the English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) represents cultural aspects and also the perceptions of students and teachers about these representations. The coded data had three subthemes: Presence of culture, Global and local culture and Everyday context and critical discussions.

The majority of students mentioned that the English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) textbook shows culture through accents, famous people and examples related to British and United States culture. However, the students mentioned that the textbook has a lack of local or Latin American cultural representation.

Through classroom observation, it was identified that the teacher not only focuses the class with the cultural examples given by the book, the teacher also adds other adapted examples in order to catch the students' attention in a better way. These complementary materials make the cultural learning experience more relevant for the Colombian learners.

Some students mentioned, "The book helps us learn about other cultures, but I would like to see more Colombian content" (Student comment, October 2025). "The English File book shows people from different countries and includes accents, songs, and topics from U.S. or U.K. culture." (Student questionnaire, October 2025)

One of the teachers also confirmed that English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) offers useful communicative material but disconnects between the textbook examples and students' own experiences since there is content focused on Western culture. One teacher

remarked, “I use the book for audios, texts, and grammar practice, but I complement it with local examples so students can connect more.” (Teacher questionnaire, October 2025). Observing some classes also confirmed this pattern, “The teacher connects topics with Colombian examples such as traditional foods, sports, or local celebrations to increase participation.”

According to Kovács (2017), this finding supports the idea that cultural inclusion in EFL should contain three perspectives: the learner’s own culture, the target culture, and the international culture. The data show that the English file (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) significantly supports the target and international culture, but almost never the students’ own culture. In the same way Larrea-Espinar and Rodríguez (2019) analyzed that English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) represents “Big C” culture (literature,art, music, famous people) while ignoring “little C” that defines aspects such as traditions,communication styles, habits and daily life. Therefore students’ opportunities for cultural identification gets involved and limits, as mentioned Nguyen (2017), is important for developing real intercultural competence so it is necessary the inclusion of local cultural content a teacher supports, so that, students will be enabled to acquire a better understanding of the topics since having a closer approach of their own culture reflected on their daily learning of the language would improve their learning process.

In regard to the general objective, the findings show that cultural representation in the English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) book is conducted within a British-centered approach. Cultural references are incorporated, but their distribution suggests a limited intercultural aspect rather than offering a more globally representative approach. This advises that engagement with global culture does not necessarily lead to inclusive representation.

4.2 Social Aspects

Social topics such as jobs, travel and relationships were examined in terms of how they are presented in the English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) and also how the stereotypes are handled. According to the students' answers, the textbook demonstrates those topics in a neutral way. "Most examples in the book are neutral." (Student questionnaire, October 2025), "The lessons include general topics about relationships, jobs, or travel that are not offensive." (Teacher questionnaire, October 2025)

However, the content of familiar culture such as Latin music, popular food topics, emblematic Latin American places or Colombian movies increase the students' engagement according to classroom observations done previously to the students. "During the observation, students participated more actively when the teacher introduced familiar cultural references, such as movies, food experiences, or anime, which encouraged engagement and open discussion instead of passive repetition." (Observation notes, October 2025)

Gómez (2015) evidences the same pattern in this research because he emphasized that the majority of EFL materials only presents superficial cultures such as celebrities or traditions between the English native speakers but ignores "transformative cultural themes" such as identity and diversity therefore English file (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) demonstrates the same, limits opportunities for students to analyze deeper social issues. Tran and Dang (2014) also confirm that the inclusion of meaningful cultural discussion sometimes relies on the teacher's creativity, since textbooks tend to omit complex topics.

it is necessary to highlight that the cultural elements in the book are not only used as visual and for the engagement to the reviewed topic, this sort of aids also targets to students' critical thinking, allowing them to to explore and create their own interpretations about how

different they are apart from the Latin American cultural context, this can not be possible without a teacher which encourages students to interpret those images and try to incorporate a variety of different global perspectives aside from the Latin American one, giving a chance to include different cultural aspects to their students, enabling them to compare how different could be a situation if the context is based on a different place aside of for example, USA or UK. As a result of the previous mention addition, students may also foster inclusivity and empathy among people from other cultures, since the learning processes and cultures are not solely relayed on the main English culture influences, but around the world or their immediate space.

Considering the social content, the data imply that social aspects are incorporated, however, their impact is activated through pedagogical mediation. Therefore, the influence of the textbook on social awareness is not inherent but depends on the elaboration of how teachers work the content in the classroom setting.

4.3 Cultural Inclusivity

This category focused on whether the English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) reflected the extent of gender balance and cultural inclusivity. The majority of students reported in the questionnaire that they would prefer to see more examples or characters from their own culture. The teachers also participated, mentioning that they complement the topics with activities that engage the students using their experiences, “It would be interesting to read about Latin American people or cultural events.” (Student comment, October 2025), “I use complementary websites and real examples from students’ lives because the book lacks cultural inclusivity.” (Teacher questionnaire, October 2025). Observation notes also confirmed that the teachers usually implement activities with Colombian case studies or Latin examples to foster motivation and connection to culture, “During observation, the teacher replaced some examples

with Colombian cases to improve student identification and participation." (Observation notes, October 2025)

These findings align with Nuñez(2018), who argues in *Indelible Coloniality and Emergent Decoloniality* that imported textbooks can reproduce homogenized and eurocentric perspectives while missing students' sociocultural realities, consequently, inclusivity does not only mean showing different countries but also validating local identities. From this perspective the English file (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) presents global cultural exposure but does not include the different people, genders and viewpoints found in students' environment. When the teacher adapts new material as a bridge between cultures, this helps to fill the gaps of the material's lack of inclusiveness.

4.4 Teaching Practices

This last category considers how the teachers use or adapt the English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) for connecting it to students' cultural experiences. The questionnaires and classroom observations conclude that teachers play an important role in adapting content such as digital tools and students' personal experiences to make classroom activities more interactive.

"I use extra websites, videos, and examples from Colombia to explain grammar topics." (Teacher questionnaire, October 2025), "Students understand more with familiar examples." (Observation notes, October 2025).

"The teacher included cultural references from Colombia, Argentina, India, Italy, and France, helping students compare cultures." (Observation note)

These adaptations reflect what Prieto Ramos (2014) describes as a teacher-designed cultural mediation, where teachers implement locally relevant content that helps students'

intercultural awareness, understanding and appreciating other cultures. In this sense, teachers create opportunities for students that help them to compare their cultural realities with the culture represented in the English textbook, this fosters critical reflection awareness in the students. Also this process provides the development of intercultural competence between the learners and the English teaching tools, beyond the passive exposure to cultural information and the analysis of the differences and similarities existing there.

Papaefthymiou-Lytra, Karagianni and Pouliou (2019) highlight that TESOL materials should support learners across different languages and cultures diversity, which the adaptability of teachers are fundamental by creatively adapting the content. Through this strategy, teachers facilitate students' ability to interpret and respond to different cultural perspectives, using different intercultural communicative skills.

Therefore, teachers not only help enhance comprehension but also they support students' motivation and feeling connected to the learning environment. The results demonstrated their function as cultural intermediaries during the teaching process, while the English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) book provides a structured framework, teachers act as the key who interpret, modify and contextualize cultural material. It means that the realization of intercultural education within the curriculum is influenced more by autonomy of educators than by the textbook's initial design.

Although the English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) textbook succeeds in good communicative activities and global exposure, it does not balance local representation nor international (aside from USA and UK culture) , inclusivity and deeper cultural understanding. The study demonstrates that teachers help to promote intercultural awareness since they adapt the content to students' cultural context. On the other hand the analysis

concludes that the socio-cultural aspects in the English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) textbook are present but not enough to achieve better results when it comes to the confidence and the familiarity of the student with the English language , since it is focused primarily on Anglo-American context but offers insufficient American representation. Teachers' active guidance makes the lesson culturally relevant by transforming general global content into learning that is meaningful by connecting the content with students' local experiences.

Finally, this data confirms that students' intercultural competence in the private university depends less on the textbook, but more on how teachers can adjust their own classes using as base the examples on the textbook with students' identities, experiences and cultural context according to their needs and immediate context. The results suggest that cultural identification influences learners' perceptions of relevance. Engagement may not work if culture fails to align with students' real-life experiences.

Contemplating the students' perspective regarding their experience using of the English teaching book "English File" (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) in their classes. It was found that the textbook provides cultural references related to British culture in the majority (Not forgetting that the book was made in England, it therefore reflects that culture in most of the cases). This perception was reinforced through the interview conducted with a foreign first-semester student who stated that despite the fact she could occasionally identify references to her home country, Argentina, the textbook overall lacks broader cultural representation, her perception suggest that the "English File" (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) provides limited multicultural representation and reinforces British culture.

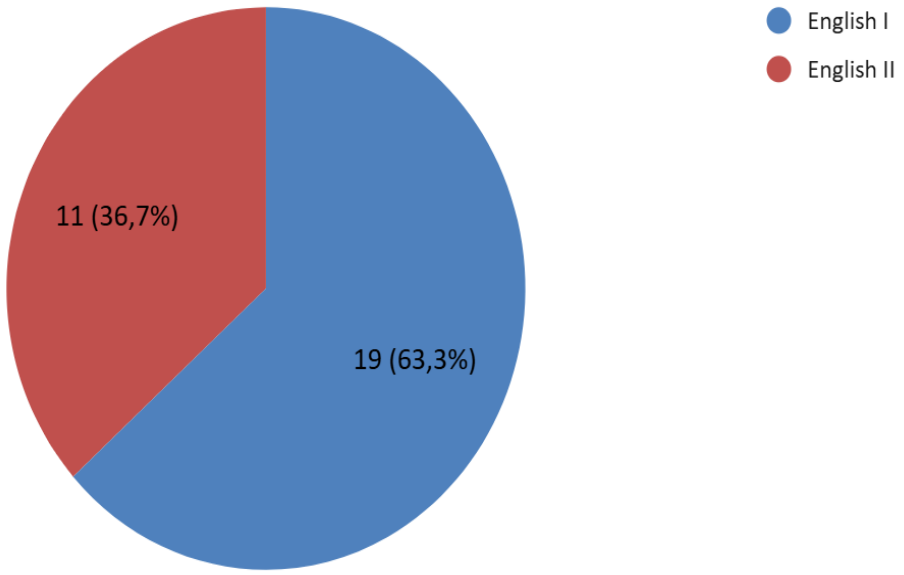
She also expresses, from her viewpoint, she agrees that she would like broader cultural representation in the textbook. Cultural references should move beyond superficial representations, instead, they could be addressed in a deeper and meaningful form.

Furthermore, the participant also noted the presence of some gender stereotypes in the vocabulary lesson related to professions. She observed that certain jobs, such as, waitress were represented with a female image, while other professions are related with men, she also suggested that it might be good if the book showed more examples, including both genders in various professions, and even incorporate other gender representation, to promote inclusivity in the book.

Even though this issue does not affect her directly, she recognizes that other students might feel more comfortable and validated if this textbook includes these types of representation. She also demonstrated that the visibility of these representations in the materials can influence students' learning process. Nonetheless, she acknowledged that the English teaching book's main purpose is teaching British English.

Figure 1

In which English course are you?

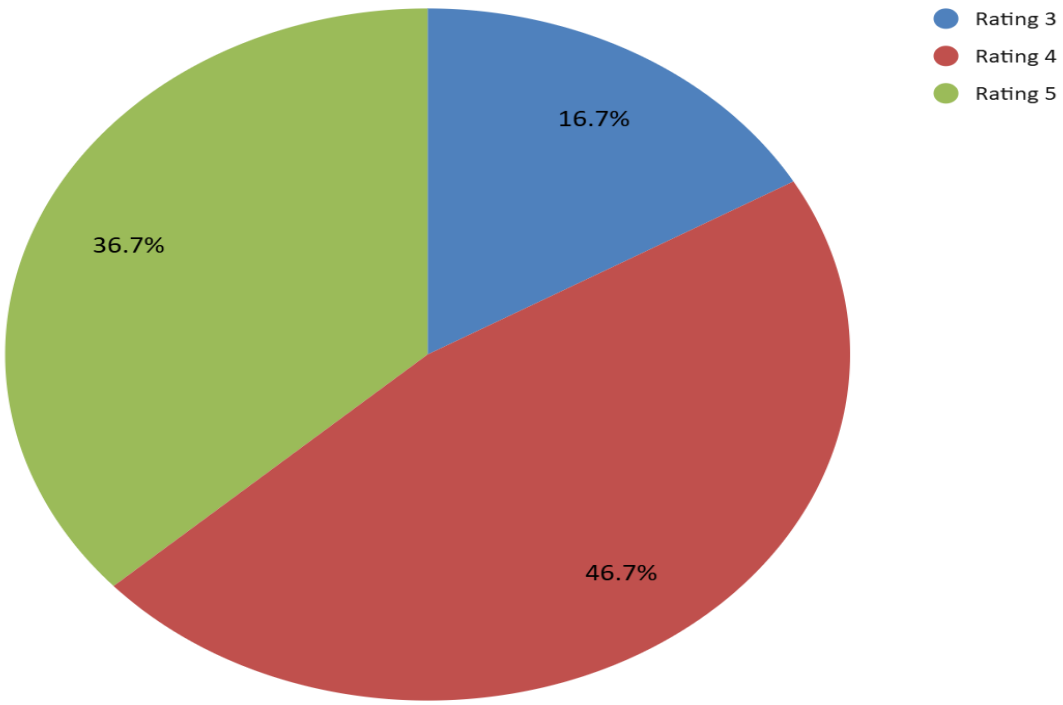


Note: Source: own elaboration. (2026).

Figure 1 shows the English course level of the participants. 63.3% (19 students) were in English I, which are first semester students, while the other 36.7% (11 students) were in English II, which belong to second-semester students.

Figure 2

How do students rate the cultural content shown in the English File?

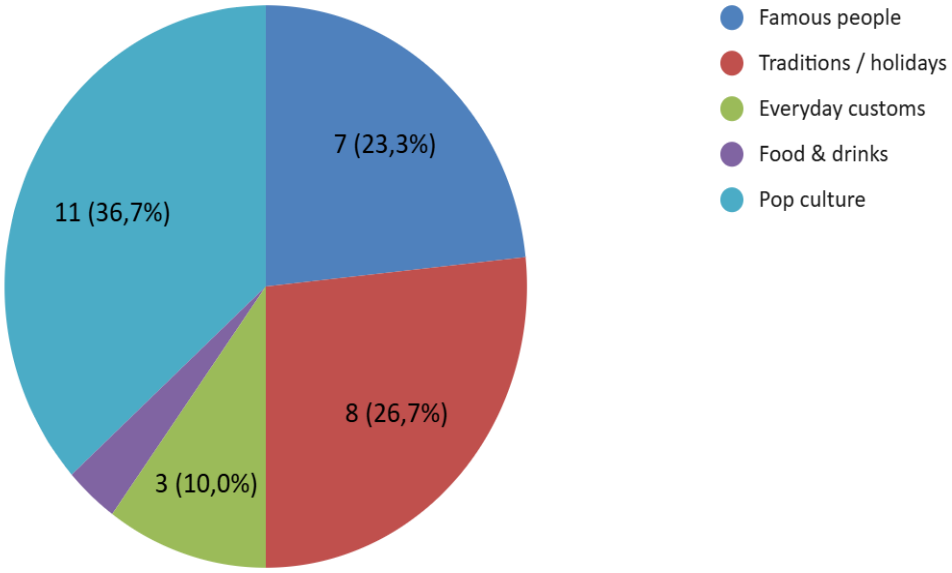


Note: Source: own elaboration. (2026).

In this graphic bar it is evidenced by the answers from the students to the following question “On a scale from 1 to 5 How do you feel about the culture that is shown in the English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) book?”. These results suggest that students generally feel comfortable with the cultural references included in the textbook, even though, as mentioned in previous sections, the book is likely to focus mostly on British and American culture. With that, students can have more information about those cultures, however, they do not pay attention to the cultural diversity that could be represented in their learning materials. However, the cultural content has a better reception, which is an important to consider how culture influences students' learning experience

Figure 3

Which cultural references in the English File do students find most memorable?



Note: Source: own elaboration. (2026).

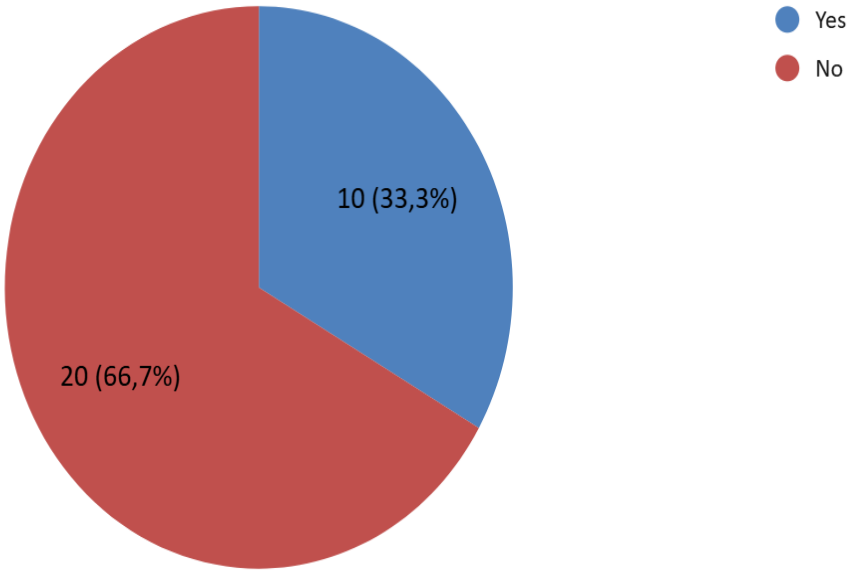
The graphic shown above, reveals the answers done by the students regarding the following question “Are there any particular cultural references in the English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) book that you find memorable or significant?” . This graphic shows the cultural references that students found most memorable or significant in the English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) book. The results showed that pop culture was the most selected option with 36.7%, After that, the traditions and holidays with 26.7%, and famous people with 23.3%. The everyday costumes chosen by 10.0% of the students.

The results show that students tend to remember more the cultural references that are more likely to their everyday life. These are topics that students can get to understand easily, through music, movies, or celebrations they may already know. This graphic helps to understand

which cultural aspects have a bigger impact on students and which ones have the least impact on them.

Figure 4

Do students feel that the English File represents their culture?

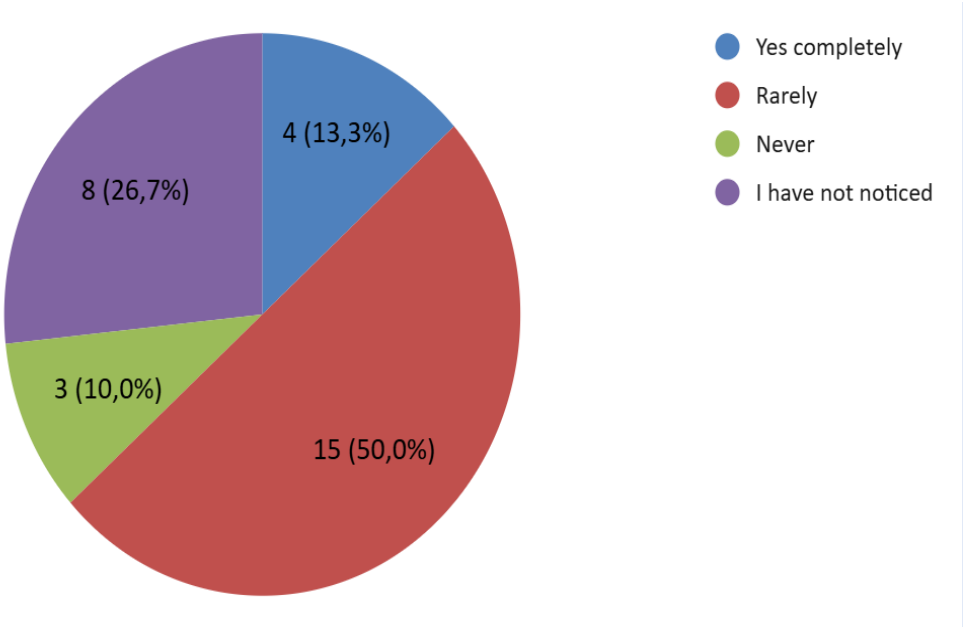


Note: Source: own elaboration. (2026).

The graphic shown above, reveals the answers done by the students regarding the following question “Are there any particular cultural references in the English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) book that you find memorable or significant?” This part was asked to students if they feel that the English File book represents their culture. The majority of students (66.7%), answered No, while only (33.3%) answered Yes. This means that most participants do not see their own culture in the textbook, which is related to what was mentioned before about the book being mostly focused on British and American culture.

Figure 5

Have students noticed stereotypes or generalizations in the English File?

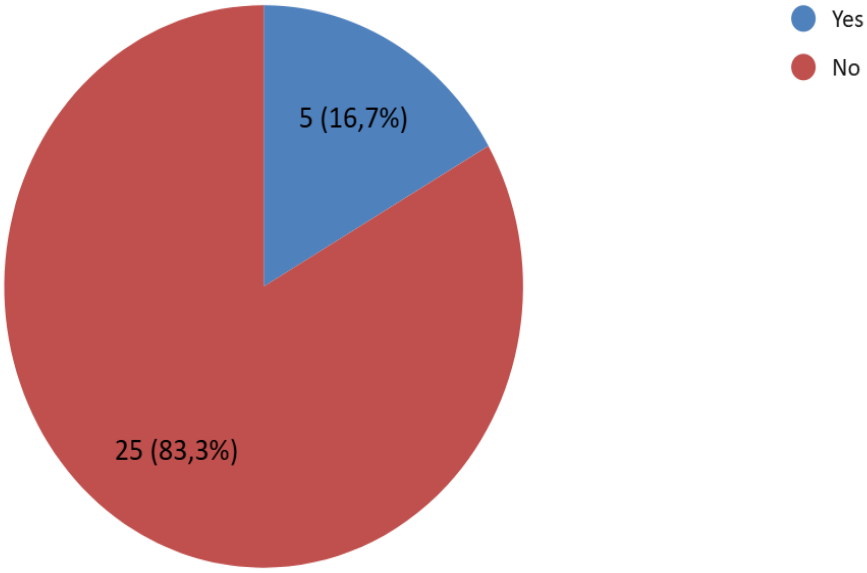


Note: Source: own elaboration. (2026).

In this graphic, it is displayed the question completed by the students “Have you noticed any stereotypes or generalizations about specific groups or cultures in the English textbooks?” The stereotypes or generalizations in the English File textbook results are. 50.0% selected rarely, 26.7% said they have not noticed any. 13.3% answered yes completely, and finally, 10.0% selected never. These results show that stereotypes in the textbook are not something most students strongly identify, it is more implicit than explicit.

Figure 6

Have students ever discussed these stereotypes in class?

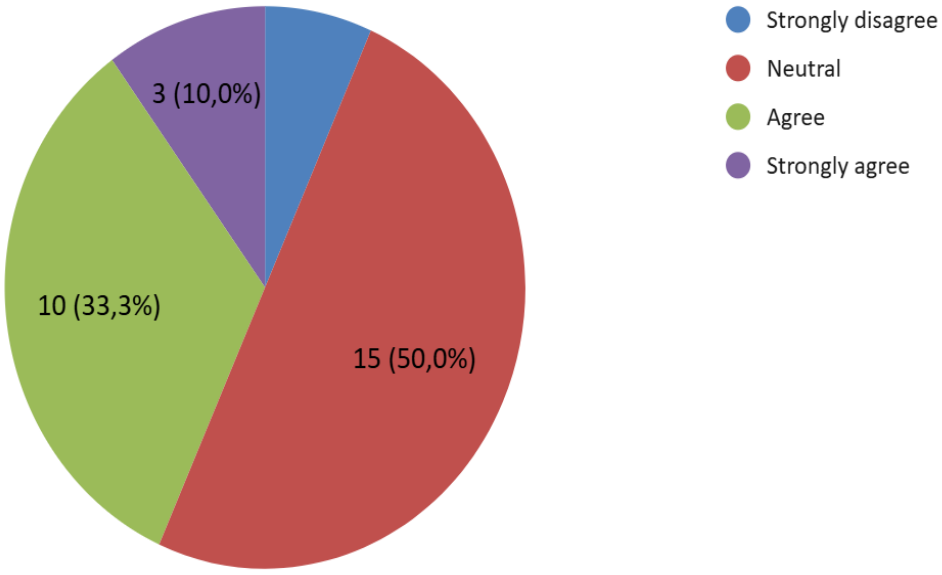


Note: Source: own elaboration. (2026).

In this graphic it is exposed the next questions answered by the students “Have you ever discussed these stereotypes in class?” The majority of students (83.3%), have never discussed stereotypes in class, 16.7% said they have. It shows that even though some students noticed stereotypes in the textbook, these are rarely relevant to the class. This suggests that teachers may not be using these moments as an opportunity to develop students' critical thinking or how students can identify other cultures.

Figure 7

Would students prefer English File to include more stories and characters from their culture?

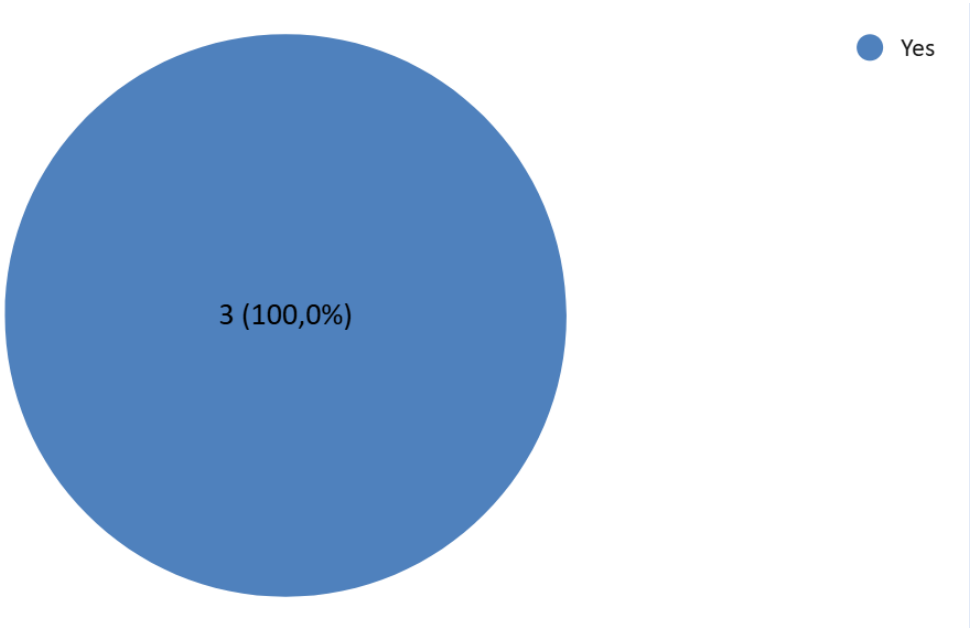


Note: Source: own elaboration. (2026).

In this graphic it is shown the results of the following question "Would you prefer that the English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) book includes more stories, characters from your culture and other cultures?" Half of the students stayed neutral about the question, if they would prefer the textbook to include more stories and characters from their own and other cultures. 10 students selected agree and 3 of them selected "strongly agreed". A good number of students can see that it could be beneficial for them to have many different cultural aspects and finally, nobody selected "Strongly disagreed".In conclusion, With this information is possible to claim that students are not strongly opposed to the current content of the textbook, most of them are open to it.

Figure 8

Does the English File include topics related to social values?

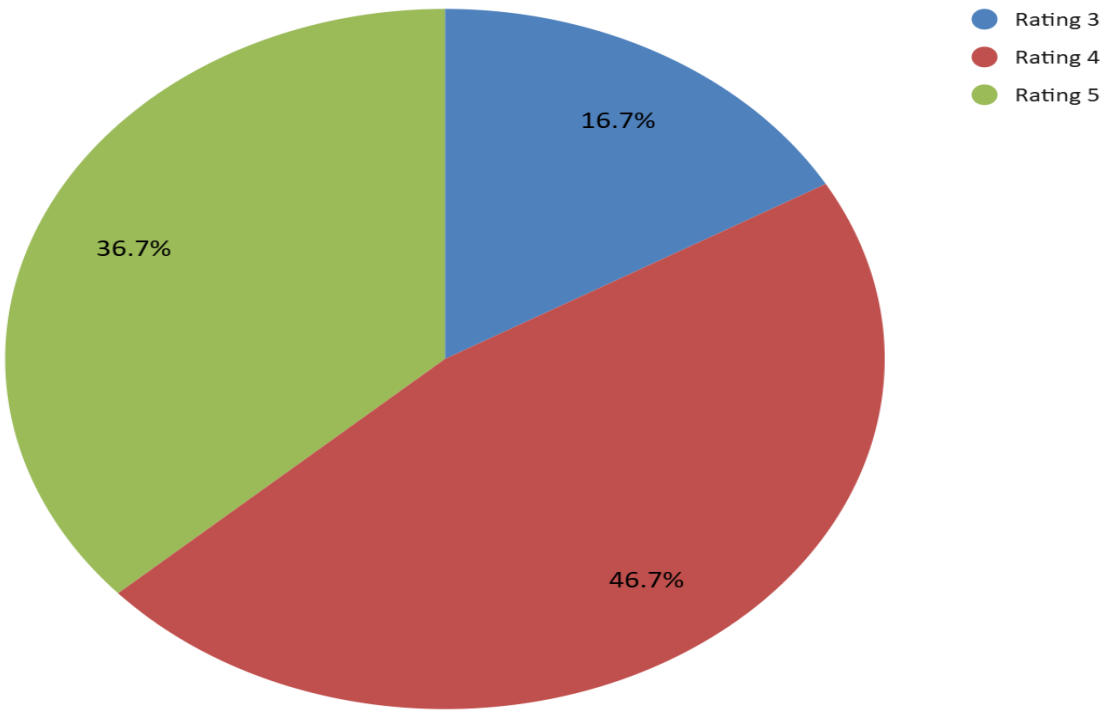


Note: Source: own elaboration. (2026).

In this graphic it is shown the results of the following question “Does the English teaching book that is recommended for the university (English File elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) include topics related to social values (e.g., empathy, teamwork, respect for diversity)? The students' answers show that the English File book includes information about teamwork and respect for diversity, all 3 participants answered the option “yes”. Even with the lack of representation, social aspects are still present and recognized by the students.

Figure 9

How well does the English File represent diverse cultures and social backgrounds?



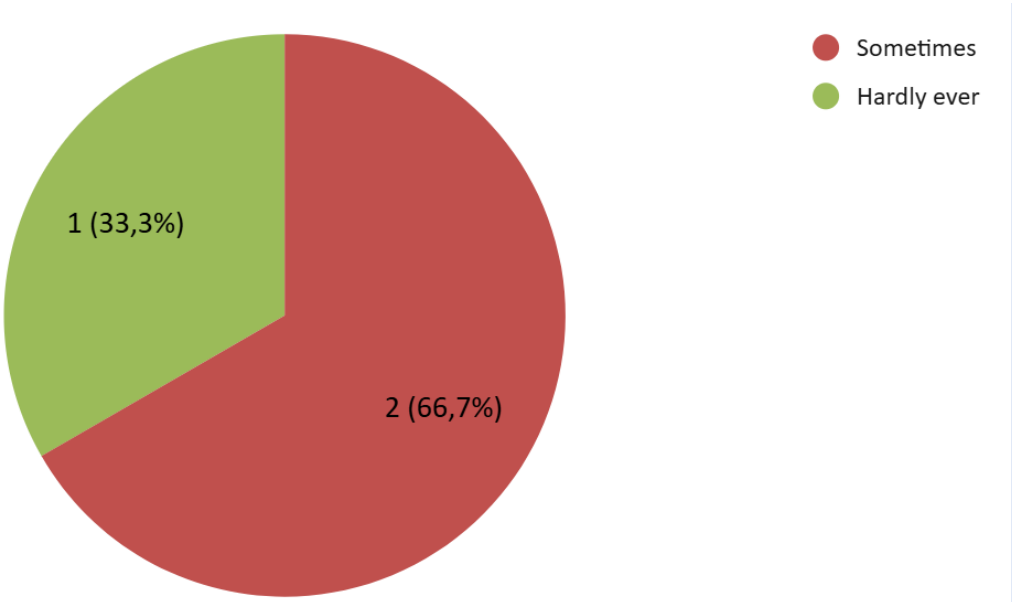
Note: Source: own elaboration. (2026).

In this graphic bar it is evidenced by the answers from the students to the following question "How well does the English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) textbook represent diverse cultures and social backgrounds?" The English File book represents diverse cultures and social backgrounds and it is evidenced in the graphic, with 2 participants rating it with a 3 and one other student, rating it with a 4. With this information can be detailed that they are in a moderate area, not too low and not too high. Teachers feel that the book does a good job when it comes to adding other cultures' information, but there is more to improve about it.

Source: own elaboration. (2026).

Figure 10

How frequently do teachers need to modify or add materials to address social aspects?

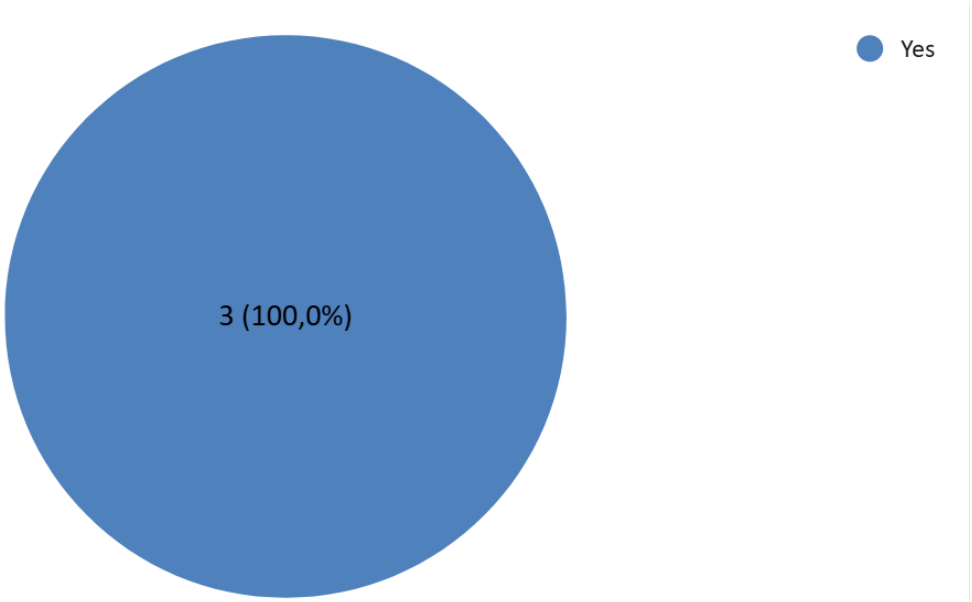


Note: Source: own elaboration. (2026)

The graphic addresses the question "How frequently do you need to modify or add materials to address social aspects in your classes?" 66.7% of teachers said they sometimes need to modify or add materials in order to adapt the class to their context, while 1 (33.3%) said they hardly ever do it. With this is clear that not all the teachers are up to do changes in order to improve the understanding of the topics regarding the English class, sometimes they just prefer to only use what the text book provides, however, is not all of them who made use of this practice.

Figure 11

Does English File provide activities that encourage collaborative learning?

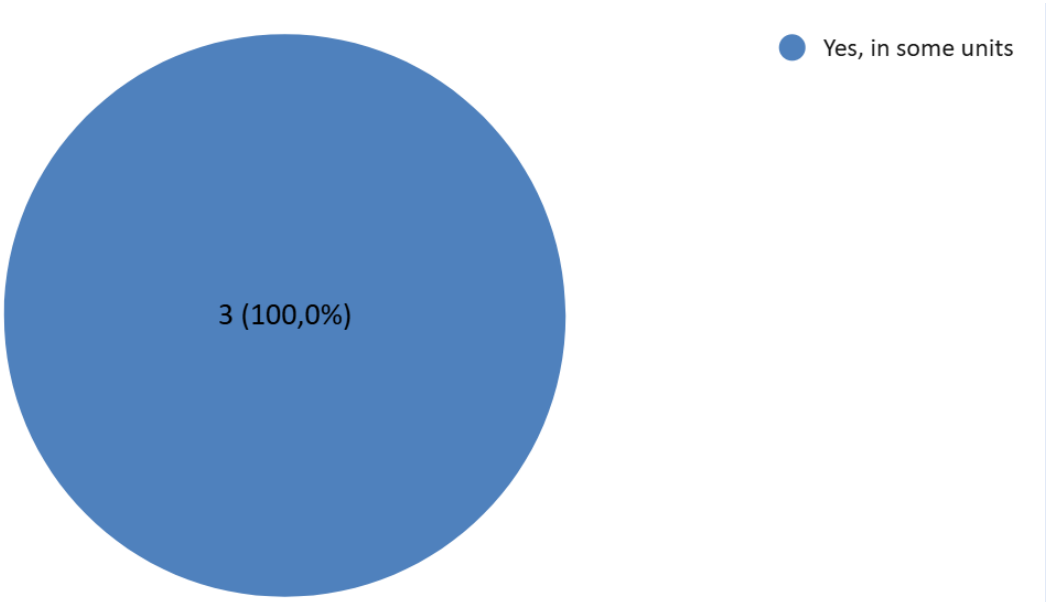


Note: Source: own elaboration. (2026)

The graphic shown above, reveals the answers done by the students regarding the following question "Does the English file (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) book provide activities that encourage collaborative learning and peer interaction?". All the teachers agreed that the English File book includes activities that encourage students to work in teams and interact with others. Even with the lack of cultural representation, students are interested when it comes to collaborative work.

Figure 12

Are social topics explicitly covered in the English File?



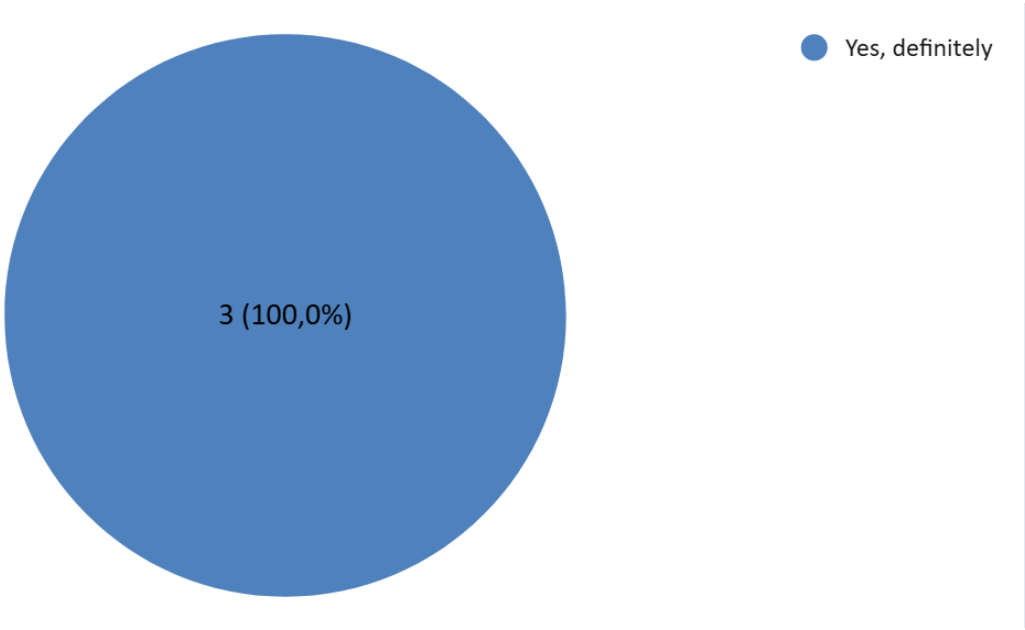
Note: Source: own elaboration. (2026)

The graphic shown above, reveals the answers done by the students regarding the following question “Are there social topics explicitly covered in the textbooks?

(Gender equality, environmental responsibility, digital citizenship)” All 3 teachers answered "yes, in some units" to the question above. the aspects, indeed, are covered in the Text book, but not in all the units. Students are clearly exposed to this cultural content exposed in the book, however, it remains insufficient since it is not in all units. The exposure is there, but it is minimal and not enough to the language learning of the students.

Figure 13

Should textbooks include more real-life social scenarios to enhance learning?

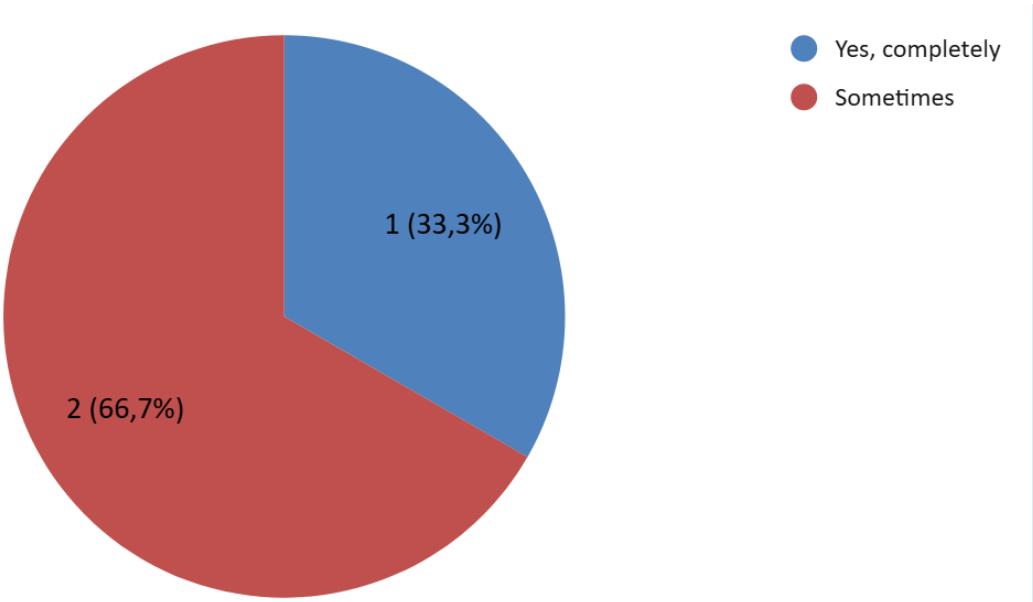


Note: Source: own elaboration. (2026)

The graphic shown above, reveals the answers done by the students regarding the following question “As a teacher do you think textbooks should include more real-life social scenarios to enhance learning?” All the teachers answered "Yes, definitely" when asked if textbooks should include more real-life social scenarios to improve learning. This shows that teachers are aware of the situation. This type of content can make a big difference in how students engage with the material and encourage themselves to learn if it is more related to their contexts. When the content feels closer to them, students are more likely to pay attention and participate. The book accomplishes with providing quality material when it comes to English culture, however, the English File book does not cover as many social topics as it should , teachers still feel that they can go further and expand the knowledge of their students by applying context related activities.

Figure 14

Do students participate actively during discussions on social topics?

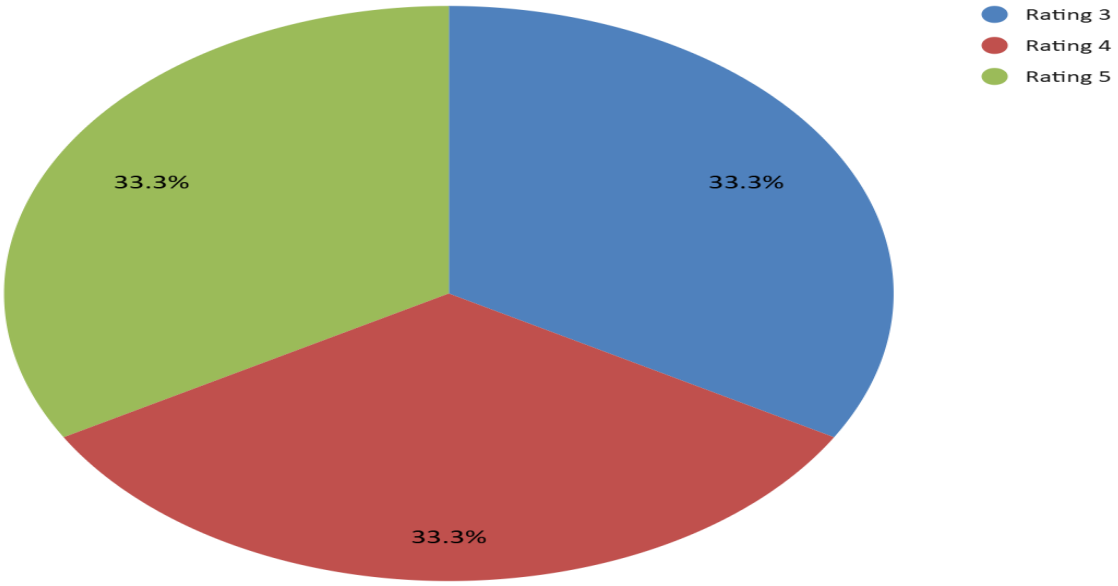


Note: Source: own elaboration. (2026).

The graphic shown above, reveals the answers done by the students regarding the following question “Do your students participate actively during discussions on social topics?” When asked “ Do your students participate actively during discussions on social topics, 2 teachers answered “sometimes” and 1 answered “yes, completely”. This shows that student participation is not too present when these topics are in the class, and it depends on the situation. Since some students may feel more comfortable talking or exposing their opinions than others, this can be different depending on the topic that is discussed. The fact that no teacher answered that students never participate is a good sign, but also it is a point to show that still missing a part of content which may be useful for the student in order to learn.

Figure 15

Have teachers noticed increased student interest when dealing with social issues in the English File?



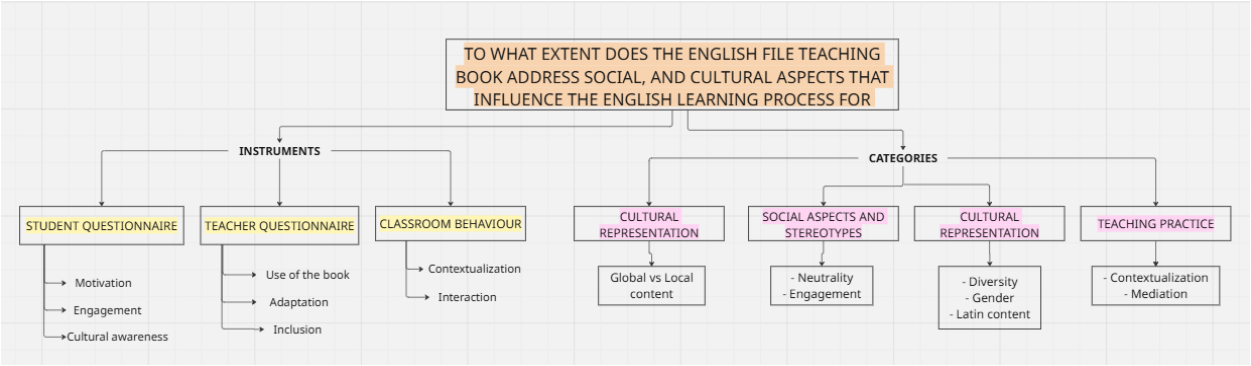
Note: Source: own elaboration. (2026)

In this graphic bar it is evidenced by the answers from the students to the following question " Have you noticed increased student interest when dealing with social issues in the English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) textbook? ". Each teacher gave a different score between 3 and 5, and nobody picked a 1 or 2, which already tells you that all of them have noticed some level of increased interest from students when social issues come up in class. With these results, it is suggested that this experience is not the same for everyone. It is probable that each teacher may be able to see a different type of reaction depending on the group of students they are working with, and how they include the topics into the class.

Number of answers: 30

Figure 16

Diagram



Note: Source: own elaboration. (2026).

The present diagram provides a brief overview of the research, in which it illustrates the different instruments used for gathering the data. Additionally it presents the categories that emerged from the data analysis.

CHAPTER VI

6.1. Conclusions

This study aimed to analyze how the English teaching book “English File” (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) textbook addresses the social and cultural aspects that are present in the book and how these influence in the learning process of the students in the foreign languages program at Universitaria Agustiniana - Uniagustiniana.

This research uses mixed methods approaches (quantitative and qualitative data), in the results is shown that the English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) addresses cultural aspects, and students mostly are aware about the presence of cultural content in the textbook, affirming that it has a positive impact on them. However, there is an important difference: while British and American cultural references are present and recognized by students, Latin American culture remains off the radar. This is shown in Figure 4, where 66.7% of students indicated that the book does not represent their own culture. Also, there is not a total loss of culture, but an unbalanced representation that excludes the students' culture, which in certain occasions limits their perspective when engaging with the material.

In order to go deeper into the conclusions, the research is organized into four subcategories which are: cultural representation, social aspects, cultural inclusivity and also teaching practices. These sub-categories were determined for the purpose of examining them in detail in the following sections.

Cultural representation

The first category for examining is cultural representation, this category explores how the English teaching book “English File” (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) represents the cultural aspects in the book with its activities and its examples, as well the perception of both students and teachers regarding these presentations.

Moreover the data gathered is organized into global and local culture, every day contexts and critical discussion about some different topics presented to them. The result of this analysis was that “English File” (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) suggest in its majority the British and United States elements (as famous figures, accents and contexts that refers to United States or Britain) and culture above other cultures, this regarding its main propose that is teaching British English to the students that are learning English throwing it use.

The representation of the local culture or other cultures is limited, which may affect students’ engagement with the class, as it reduces the capacity of students for relating the themes or examples proposed in the book with their own experiences. In this sense the students highlighted the lack of local or Latin American cultural representation, expressing their suggestion for the book of showing more Colombian culture and also an overview of Latin American culture elements that could engage students in a better understanding of the topics proposed.

In the same way the teachers accords that although the book provides useful discussion material for use in their classes, its focus on British culture can create a partial disconnection in the class with the students’ realities. This findings aligns with the third specific objective proposed for this research (examining how teachers perceive and implement the cultural and social aspects of the textbook in their teaching practices) as it shows teachers recognize this lack

of local/Latin American cultural situations and use other alternatives which includes related content that students can understand better and are related with, adapting the examples given by the book for enhancing the students attention, engagement and overall understanding during the class.

Nevertheless, it is a matter of fact the development of real intercultural competence. Therefore it is essential the inclusion of local cultural content for the allowing students to achieve a deeper and a meaningful understanding of the topics. In this order, the findings also suggests that the limited content of cultural inclusivity may affect students' motivation and classroom participation, underlining the importance of incorporating more diverse and local culture in which students are related with, in order to enhance engagement in A1 and A2 learners from first and second semester of the foreign languages degree at Universitaria Agustiniana - Uniagustiniana.

Social Aspects

Regarding this category, the findings indicate that the English teaching book "English File" (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) presents different situations such as jobs, travel, daily life situations and general situations in a non offensive manner. Nevertheless, the neutral approach that the book handles, owing to this the book may limit opportunities for deeper engagement with the diversity of social aspects that could be found in a classroom. The content presented by the book focuses only on the surface of concepts such as identity, diversity and social realities. On the contrary, the classroom observations revealed that the students of Universitaria Agustiniana - Uniagustiniana showed a higher engagement and participated actively while the teacher uses familiar references in order to explain the topic presented by the book.

In this sense, the role of the teacher becomes fundamental at the time of using the book for teaching English, the social awareness and critical thinking is influenced by the pedagogical mediation. The teachers that had been observed during the classroom observation not only adapt the content by including typical food, popular culture or even locations in which students can easily rely with their own culture, teachers also encourage students to compare, contrast and reflect about it, fostering empathy and inclusivity while the students are learning the language.

Even though the English teaching book "English File" (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) presents easy-going examples of certain cultures that appears in the book, is almost mandatory for teachers to implement, complement and expand these topic proposed by the book with culturally relevant examples that are familiar to students, in order to enhance the comprehension in the classroom during the English classes.

Cultural Inclusivity

For the sub-category of cultural inclusivity it is focused on how the English teaching book "English File" (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) can affect the students perception at the moment of the learning process, this part includes aspects such as gender, culture and identity which have a clear impact in the students development during the learning process of English while using the English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) textbook.

The main objective for this study addresses in how the lack of students cultural context in the English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) textbook can affect the way students learn, mainly since all the examples, situations, people and culture are mostly related to United States and United Kingdom culture, which even though have some similarities and sometimes

relation and mention to Colombian/Latin American culture, in those books remain an important gap of culture from Latin American countries, being mentioned just in few sections but not with a significant impact regarding to students English learning process.

There is no real connection between the book and the students, since the cultural topics seem to be apart from what they live in their real lives, showing only the information mentioned above.

To continue with this sub-category it is mandatory to set the following points:

- **Representation of cultures:** The English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) book focusing mainly in US/UK cultures and vaguely mentioning cultures aside from those 2 mentioned before, barely using Latin American references, this affecting students learning achievements since there are not references or examples regarding their real context, only US and UK contexts

- **Gender representations:** In the book there are punctual examples where it is possible to evidence many different stereotypes regarding to people, gender roles and professions, not too exaggerated but existent, there is no equilibrium between those aspects since still away from Latin American culture, showing with this the lack of inclusion in the books

- **Inclusion of Identities:** In this section we can evidence how there is a lack of people real life context inside the content of the book, most of the examples show situation where the common student will not feel like he can be a part of the exercise, since most of the examples have no relation to his immediate context. It is not enough just to include the country where the Latin American student belongs to, the inclusion should go beyond than only the solely mentioned and variated stereotypes, exploring further the culture of the other countries.

To conclude this sub-category, it is evident that the book shows culture from the US/UK, but it is important to clarify that the content related to other countries aside from those two mentioned above, is reduced or poorly explored, relapsing in stereotypes that may affect the perception of the student regarding to their country and their culture, the inclusion is not enough and in order to improve the reception of the information for the students during the learning process, it is mandatory to have an additional assistance by the hand of a professor, which can complement the exercises by adding real life aspects from the student reality and culture regarding to their country and directly contributing to the analyzation of the efficacy of culturally inclusive content in the English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) textbook, in enhancing the motivation and classroom participation of the students from A1 to A2 English level.

Teaching Practices

For the sub-category of teaching practices it is addressed the point about how teachers can lead their own classes not only based solely on the book examples but also finding a way to include topics and elements related to the students close reality of their surrounds, all this based in talking about latin american culture in the Universitaria Agustiniana - Uniagustiniana, gathering all this information it is accurate to point out that with this method, there is a certain improvement in the students learning processes at the moment of applying the exercises proposed in the English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) book since the teacher leads the exercises not only in the way it is intended in the book, but also applying elements from Latin American and the immediate context where the students are living and constantly interacting with.

With the inclusion of these local elements to the English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) book exercises the motivation in the students is noticeable, since they feel like they are part of the exercise, motivating and encouraging them to participate and complete the activities proposed.

Adding the inclusion of external material, such as videos and digital tools, helps the teacher to create a better space for the students when it comes to learning English and acquiring knowledge from those resources previously mentioned in this paragraph.

Even though the English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) textbook is important in order to learn English for the students, the teacher role in this part becomes more relevant since without that authority and lead by the hand of the teacher, the knowledge will not be transferred as effective as it could possibly be with the teacher assistance by including those local elements in the book activities.

What this analysis reveals is, indeed, the English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) textbook brings out a very solid structure when it comes to English learning processes for the students. However it is focused mostly in American/English cultures and their local traditions. This lack of inclusivity leads to a misconnection to the language and the students real life context, affecting their motivation and participation in class regarding the English class. It is necessary that the inclusion should be more diverse, covering in a much further way other different customs and cultures from other countries, without reinforcing stereotypes or gender roles in the process, all this specially regarding to the Uniagustinana University since the institution is located in Bogotá, Colombia, and the culture contrast with the ones presented on the English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) textbook.

The teacher role becomes the most important when it comes to teach students the language, since they are the indicated to transform, provide and create the material to integrate local examples to the students, using many different tools in the process such as the digital sources available in the internet or real material created by them, teachers act as cultural mediators since they can take aspects from Latin American culture and adapt them into the cultural elements presented in the English File (elementary and pre-intermediate 4 edition) textbook, so that even though the book has great material for the English learning process of the students, it still insufficient without the contribution of a teacher who can adapt the material to the students context.

Finally, this study highlights the importance of an approach to teaching that not only focuses on the language but also helps students connect with the cultural aspects, making the learning experience more attractive and meaningful for the students.

6.2. Pedagogical implications

The pedagogical implications of the present research suggest that teachers should not only focus on the explanations and examples given by the English textbook “English File”, teachers rather to adapt them and also complement the contents by incorporating culturally relevant examples in which students understand better thanks to their own experiences and cultural background. This approach may enhance students’ engagement, comprehension and motivation. Additionally, the promotion of a balance between local, global and target cultures is essential for the development of intercultural competence through the English classes.

In this regard, the appropriate teacher training process is a matter of fact, because teachers' programs should emphasize strategies for integrating cultural inclusive content in order

to foster critical thinking through meaningful discussion in real-life classroom settings. This preparation would promote teachers to move beyond the use of textbooks as the unique tool or source of knowledge and instead adapt and complement materials in ways that reflects students' own cultural background. In doing so, teachers can create a more inclusive and engaging learning environment, supporting intercultural competence and enhancing students' learning experience.

From an institutional perspective, these findings suggest that the university should promote the ongoing professional tools for implementing culturally responsive teaching practices. Additionally, the curriculum design should consider the inclusion of locally relevant cultural content, ensuring that teaching materials align with students' cultural backgrounds, By fostering more critical and inclusive learning approaches.

6.3. Future implications

This research has findings which are essential implications for the future of English language teaching such as the Colombian educational context. One of the implications is by contributing to institutional decision, particularly in curriculum design and material for implementing within foreign language programs, moreover this research takes into consideration the need to reconsider the role of internationally published textbooks, for instance English File, for ensuring a balance and inclusive representation of cultures. Finally, as the study demonstrates, teachers have a fundamental role in mediating socio-cultural content since they adapt and contextualize teaching materials, therefore future teacher training programs should support educators on how to evaluate and adapt textbooks according to students' needs and context.

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Attachments

Figure 17

Classroom Observation Rubric

OBSERVATION - DATA COLLECTED

Date: 21/10/25	Teacher: Johan Acuesta N.Students: 19	Lesson topic: First Conditional		
ASPECTS	**Description of What Happened**	**Evidence (Examples, Quotes, Behaviors)**	**Challenges or Limitations Observed**	**Researcher Reflection**
Cultural Representation	During the warm-up the teacher shows some examples using first conditional with some Colombian examples	If nequi doesn't work, I'll… (ask for money) If Colombia wins the world cup… I'll(drink with my friends) The teacher asked: "Do you think the girl should be with an older man?" that appeared in the english file book, promoting critical thinking.	Not all the students could participate because the limited options and they arrived late at class	The teacher successfully used the book to promote cultural reflection, helping students connect the topic with real experiences. However, linguistic limitations affected participation in some cases.
Cultural Diversity/ inclusion	Use of Colombian culture during the warm-up Use of U.S.A example during the first activity	References to Colombian daily life and U.S. culture appeared during the warm-up and reading activity.	Some students focused mainly on local culture and showed little interest in the foreign examples.	Including both Colombian and global examples helped students understand diversity, although more guidance was needed

				to balance attention between cultures.
Motivation and Participation	The students answer better with examples that they are familiar to	During the warm-up the students were more engaged with examples familiar for them, at the second activity with general sentences the attention is not the same	The loss of attention for the second activity , and some of them are shy for expressing opinions in English.	Familiar and controversial topics increased engagement. Future lessons could incorporate more debate-based activities to maintain motivation.
Teaching Strategies	Using Colombian examples in order to catch the students attention and extra materials from websites to explain new content.	Use of online resources, personal examples, and local situations.	None.	Combining textbook and real-life examples was an effective way to support comprehension and relevance.
Student Comprehension	The students comprehend better with examples that they are familiar to	The teacher used local references, and students responded more accurately and confidently.	None.	Relating language to familiar experiences improved understanding and participation.
Use of the English File teaching book	The teacher used the book mainly for texts, audios, and practice activities to reinforce grammar and vocabulary.	Use of readings, audios, and speaking prompts from the book.	Some contents were not fully contextualized to students' culture.	The English File book provides linguistic content but requires adaptation to make it culturally relevant for Colombian learners.
Use of complementary sources	Sentences created by the teacher Slides created by the teacher Rules gets for internet (the teacher doesn't use the rules suggested by the book) Videos	Use of slides, internet resources, and examples created by the teacher.	Sometimes the complementary materials were not fully aligned with the textbook activities.	The use of additional materials enriched the class and allowed flexibility, making the content more engaging and understandable.

Note: Source: own elaboration. (2026).

Figure 18

Classroom Observation Rubric

Date: 24/10/25	Teacher: Álvaro Bastidas N.Students: 18	Lesson topic: Past Participle		
ASPECTS	**Description of What Happened**	**Evidence (Examples, Quotes, Behaviors)**	**Challenges or Limitations Observed**	**Researcher Reflection**
Cultural Representation	• In the warm-up the teachers made an example of "teenager culture" • The mention of father Christmas in one of the examples • What is the weirdest food that you ever tried? • "Sound track of a film" that is too old for the students • The mention of the movie "coco" • The mention of Harry Potter for practice English • The mention of the series "chainsaw man" (anime)	• None • "What is that?" • Answering of the question that the teachers made one student said that he have eaten "hormiga culona" • None • "I always cry when I see Coco" • None • "What?" "I can believe it" "It is one of the best animes ever"	There was no limitations observed	The students participate more with examples or topics in which they are familiar to
Cultural Diversity/ inclusion	• Different forms of seeing weird food, in this case the teacher ate snake and one student ate fatty ass ant • The confusion with the Chinese rice that does not belong to that culture • The Argentinian student have tasted more food for other	• "Hormiga Culona" isn't a weird food" • "What? Chinese rice is not from China" • "I taste all the restaurant but I haven't tried Thai food" • "When I was in England I understood why people don't wash their hair frequently"	The most of the students does not have the enough knowledge of other countries	It is interesting seeing how Colombian students have no the enough awareness of European culture and the Argentinian student has

	countries than the Colombian ones • The teacher includes and explain other cultures • Culture: Colombian, Argentinian, Indian, Italian and french			
Motivation and Participation	• The students pay more attention with that example • When the teacher mentioned that he cried with the movie “coco” the students participate more • Most of the students (and the teacher) when one student said that “chainsaw man” was bored	• None • “I always cry when I see Coco” • “What?” “I can believe it” “It is one of the best animes ever” • None • None	There was no a challenge or limitation observed	It is interesting to see how the attention is catched instead when during the class the teacher or the book makes a reference about something that they know

	at the second season some of the students start reacting about that and start argue in English • Before listening The listening part there was a little debate with the Argentinian student • The students tends to participate more when the topic is related of culture			
Teaching Strategies	The teacher asked to discuss the suggested questions that the book has	• None	There was no a limitation or challenge observed	It is a great way to practice speaking skills
Student Comprehension	Some students were confused about the “father Christmas”	• “What is that?” “Ahh, it means Papá Noel”	The confusion of some students	Is normal to have those confusions at the learning time
Use of the English File teaching book	• During the warm-up the teacher ask for	• None	There was no a limitation or challenge observed	The instructions were well followed

	the students for doing activities of past participle • Questions • A listening of different worldwide cuisine (only one reference of latino-america)			
Use of complementary sources	Anecdotes of teachers experience (with an Indian guy)	• "Indian and latino-american people have different cultures about the cleanliness in the bathroom"	There was no a limitation or challenge observed	It was interesting to see this intervention form the teacher

Note: Source: own elaboration. (2026).

Figure 19

Classroom Observation photo



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Figure 19

Classroom Observation photo



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