

# MENDIVE

## REVISTA DE EDUCACIÓN

Translated from the original in Spanish

### Original article

## Africa in America, for the English teaching at the University

### África en América, para la enseñanza del Inglés en la Universidad

### África na América, para o ensino de Inglês na Universidade

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**Received:** November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

**Accepted:** January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

### ABSTRACT

The African culture is an intrinsic part of the culture in America, understood as a continent, and not only as the United States of America. It is expressed in language, art, music, dance, literature, history, etc. The exclusion of the African culture in America in English language teaching at schools and universities is a reality due to various reasons, from discriminatory to indifferent positions. However, the intercultural education has the objective of learning how to live in an ethnically and culturally diverse society, for this reason, it is included as a guiding objective, together with the communicative and the interactive competence in teaching languages. This article aims to propose the inclusion of the African culture in America in English language teaching in the Foreign Languages training at the University of Pinar del Río. For this purpose, the research methods used were interview, survey document analysis, and the techniques of composition and group discussion. This was achieved with the design of texts and digital tasks that shows the relationship between language and culture and offers opportunities for the development of communication, which can be used in hybrid learning and flipped classrooms. These digital products show the contributions of the African culture in the American culture and their benefits in English language teaching from an interactive, reflective and cultural approach in the interest of building a better citizen.

**Keywords:** African culture; America; English teaching; intercultural education; University.

### RESUMEN

La cultura africana forma parte intrínseca de la cultura de América, comprendida como continente, y no solamente como Estados Unidos. Se expresa en la lengua, el arte, la música, el baile, la literatura, la historia, etcétera. La exclusión de la cultura afro en América en la enseñanza de la lengua inglesa en escuelas y universidades es una realidad debido a diversas razones, desde posiciones

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discriminatorias hasta indiferentes. Sin embargo, la educación intercultural tiene el objetivo de aprender a vivir en una sociedad diversa, étnica y culturalmente; por ello, figura como un objetivo rector, junto con la competencia comunicativa e interactiva, en la enseñanza de lenguas. El presente artículo tiene como objetivo proponer la inclusión de la cultura afro en América en la enseñanza del inglés en la formación de profesores de lenguas extranjeras de la Universidad de Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca". Para ello, se han utilizado como métodos de investigación: la entrevista, la encuesta, la revisión documental y las técnicas de composición y discusión grupal. Se logró el diseño de los textos y tareas digitales que demuestran la relación entre lengua y cultura y ofrecen oportunidades para el desarrollo de la comunicación, las cuales pueden ser utilizadas en los aprendizajes híbridos y aulas invertidas. Estos productos digitales muestran las contribuciones de la cultura africana a la cultura americana y sus beneficios en la enseñanza del inglés desde un enfoque interactivo, reflexivo y cultural en aras de la formación de un ciudadano mejor.

**Palabras clave:** cultura africana; América; enseñanza del inglés; educación intercultural; Universidad.

## RESUMO

A cultura africana é parte intrínseca da cultura da América, entendida como continente, e não apenas como os Estados Unidos. Expressa-se na linguagem, na arte, na música, na dança, na literatura, na história, etc. A exclusão da cultura afro na América no ensino da língua inglesa nas escolas e universidades é uma realidade por vários motivos, desde posições discriminatórias até posições indiferentes. No entanto, a educação intercultural tem como objetivo aprender a viver em uma sociedade diversa, étnica e culturalmente; portanto, aparece como objetivo norteador, juntamente com a competência comunicativa e interativa, no ensino de línguas. Este artigo tem como objetivo propor a inclusão da cultura afro na

América no ensino de inglês na formação de professores de línguas estrangeiras na Universidade de Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca". Para isso, foram utilizados os seguintes métodos de pesquisa: a entrevista, o levantamento, a revisão documental e as técnicas de composição e discussão em grupo. Foi alcançado o design de textos e tarefas digitais que demonstram a relação entre língua e cultura e oferecem oportunidades para o desenvolvimento da comunicação, que podem ser utilizados em aprendizagem híbrida e salas de aula invertidas. Esses produtos digitais mostram as contribuições da cultura africana para a cultura americana e seus benefícios no ensino de inglês a partir de uma abordagem interativa, reflexiva e cultural em prol da formação de um cidadão melhor.

**Palavras-chave:** cultura africana; América; ensino de inglês; educação intercultural; Escola Superior.

## INTRODUCTION

Africa, from the first settlements in America, influenced the region's language, literature, music, art and dance. In political life, their struggles for civil rights have been linked to freedom; American black intellectuals have identified with African culture and black national organizations have been constantly agitating for their civil rights. The African cultural influence in the American continent turns out to be a component in the formation of the identity of the peoples, from the cultural, historical, demographic and religious point of view. African slaves brought languages, music, beliefs, and traditions there in the early 16th century (Dodson, 2009). African American culture refers in this article to the contributions of African Americans to the culture of America, as part of it, and not to the culture of the United States as many sees it.

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May 25, 2021 is the day of Africa, a fact that should not be forgotten due to the hardships and sufferings that COVID-19 and the global financial and economic crisis leave behind on a daily basis. African culture continues to thrive in the United States, Brazil, Peru, Colombia and Cuba, among other countries on the American continent, particularly in the Caribbean: Haiti, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, for just cite a few.

According to Christine Torres (2002), the Latin American countries with the highest proportion of the population of African descent are Haiti (95%), the Dominican Republic (more than 84%), Cuba (62%) and Brazil (46%). The latter country is -even in light of the most conservative estimates- the one with the largest population of African origin in the region, with estimates ranging between 73 and 111 million people. It is followed by Colombia (30%) and the United States (12%), a country that despite this relatively low proportion ranks second in absolute terms, with 30 million African-Americans.

The corona virus has imposed isolation between countries and people. For this reason, multicultural (or intercultural) education continues to be the object of study as a resource to maintain peace, respect and admiration for others in this immense diversity of human beings that make up earth planet. On the other hand, the epidemic has transformed everything from African-American culture to the vocabulary of the English language, which has been considerably enriched since the creation of new words to express the qualities and demands of the disease (Rodney HJ 2021). . These are issues that emerge in new social contexts, which should be investigated.

Intercultural education was developed as a philosophy of education in the 1990s, in some European countries and the United States, thanks to the growing development of various population minorities characterized by ethnic,

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cultural, linguistic and religious diversity and inequality. It is aimed at learning to live in ethnically and culturally diverse societies (Leeman, YAM 2003). The author associate's education and intercultural skills with the interconnectedness of today's world, which gives priority to international communication and the possibility of travel: "The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page" (St. Augustine).

Intercultural education stimulates people to know different cultures, and not just one; education defines the term as equity of creating curricula, academic activities, programs, and projects that truly increase respect for other cultures. In this way, it is defined as a philosophy that tries to create culturally diverse environments to ensure the understanding of diverse cultures, help people to appreciate and enjoy their contributions to life, and ensure full participation of citizens, thus reducing cultural barriers.

March 21 is the international day of racial discrimination. This scourge of humanity cannot be overcome in a day, but it can be reduced with permanent education and social changes in favor of justice and peace. For this reason, it constitutes a transversal axis of cultural studies, intercultural education and critical pedagogy.

Unfortunately, today this aberration of the human being continues to be irresistible for countries where racial violence has found space in attempts to demonstrate white supremacy. Known is the case of George Floyd who has visualized racism in systems and institutions as an eloquent manifestation of profound racial discrimination. That is why it is important to talk about race and educate against racism, highlighting the values of the so-called marginalized minorities. It is objective to understand that racial discrimination is the practice and exercise of racism, underlying racial prejudice, which is expressed in negative stereotypes about the other (Medina *et al.*, 2021).

African culture has marked the formation of culture in the American continent, to the point that Dodson (2009) considers it as part of the American national identity, as a journey between Africans and Americans. African slaves, and later immigrants, brought languages, beliefs and traditions to the Americas. Music invaded the continent: *jazz, blues, ragtime and swing*; later, in the middle of the 20th century, *rock and roll* and *soul* developed, all with roots in African rhythms.

The teaching of foreign languages in America has its antecedents in the seventeenth century, when Plato still had more followers than Aristotle. When the Spanish colonization, the aborigines were forced to learn some other word in Spanish, while the colonizers assimilated some other phrase from the indigenous languages. In 1517, according to Borges, Father Bartolomé de las Casas had great pity for the Indians who were exhausted in the laborious hells of the Antillean gold mines and proposed to Emperor Charles V the importation of blacks. Thus, the Indians were replaced by blacks from Africa, who had to learn Spanish and English (in the United States) while the masters learned some words of African languages.

According to Borges, in *The Father of the Waters*, the Mississippi, brother of the Paraná, the Uruguay, the Amazon and the Orinoco, was the theater for the Indians and blacks back in 1517 to produce cotton, tobacco and sugar, and learn to say: *God own Moses* or *Run away to sea*. On the banks of the Mississippi also lived the *poor whites*, the white scoundrel, who had to learn to communicate with the black slaves in order to manipulate and deceive them. Thus it began the mixture of African languages with the English language. English had already begun to mix with the language of the North American Indians when the *Mayflower pilgrims* settled on the shores of Plymouth. Later, English would be incorporated into the universal language of capitalism.

Then, the most common surnames of the black race imposed by whites in the United

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States began to be known: Williams, Johnson, Smith, Jones, Brown, Thomas, Harris, Robinson, Taylor, Lewis, Walker, Thomson, Green, Wright, Jackson, etc. In other countries such as Cuba and Colombia, surnames such as Córdoba, Rodríguez, García, etc. were imposed. During the slave trade, these had been brought from Central Africa (The Congo) and fundamentally from West Africa, south of the Sahara, precisely from the Ivory Coast and from the areas called the Gold Coast (current Ghana) and the Slave Coast, today part of the Gulf of Guinea: Nigeria, Togo, Benin and eastern Ghana (Díaz, 2017).

African culture in the Americas has found a niche through which it has enriched American and Latin American history and culture. Likewise, it has considerably influenced American English, to the point that today Black English is spoken. However, many of the more than 40 million African-Americans living in the United States, of whom 76% profess the Christian religion, according to the 2010 census, have integrated into white society, from which they have assimilated English standard. According to Aguilar (2014), some have been assimilated by white culture while others defend and are tied to it, but have been inserted into the society to which they belong today. However, there is still racial discrimination and diverse conceptions of race in education professionals.

Most foreign language courses in the world have prioritized the culture of the elite classes to the detriment of knowledge and respect for minority and marginal cultures. Spanish as a foreign language courses present family from Spain with huge mansions that have several bathrooms, numerous rooms, large yards and gardens. Likewise, the English courses offer the North American lifestyle, with Caucasian gallants strolling in a convertible along the Miami beaches, together with beautiful blonde women with blue eyes. Blacks are not exactly the ones that abound in movies, magazine models and English courses.

According to the exploratory studies carried out in the training of English teachers in the Foreign Languages career at the University of Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca" by the authors of this article, it is revealed that full inclusion in the teaching content of African culture as part of America, which goes beyond the United States. On the other hand, Black English is not included as part of the American English taught at the University. Such exclusion deprives students of the possibility of developing the ability to become familiar with various social and cultural contexts of that culture and language.

It is a strong idea to defend that, as Caribbean and Latin Americans, students must know their origins, their historical evolution and the great events and contributions that have been possible thanks to the African influence on the American continent. Being proud of their roots is essential to their personal and national identity as elements of who we are. Added to this are the contributions that in terms of language learning could derive from the study of the culture of America, strongly nuanced by African culture, including the actual use of English. Nothing better than recognizing the values of the actors in the story to respect and love it.

The teaching and research on Africa and its Diaspora in Latin America has been the object of study by a group of professionals edited by Diego Buffa and María José Becerra (2008). Likewise, it was the object of analysis at a meeting convened by the South-South Program of CLACSO in Salvador de Bahía in 2006, where academics from very diverse areas and from different Latin American countries discussed new approaches and lines of research and on the teaching and dissemination of the subject. There, a pluralistic and multifocal perspective of reality was advocated in non-traditional fields such as the impact on the teaching of African culture in America.

Within the strengths of the students of the English teacher training career at the University of Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saíz

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Montes de Oca", the strong influence of English-speaking countries appears, thanks to the media, tourism and the internet. In addition, they have a marked interest in Cuban culture and foreign culture, in areas such as music, love, youth, cinema, television and literature. On the other hand, the students have been educated in anti-racism and respect for diversity and show admiration and solidarity with other cultures and peoples. They are also eager to study real English, which has been used by real people in real situations. Among the weaknesses appear insufficiencies in the existence and access to materials that consciously direct their attention towards the language in African-American contexts in which it is used, as well as lack of tasks for its learning. To this is added that teachers need advice and methodological help about African culture and its inclusion in the current teaching of the English language at the University.

The Foreign Languages degree in Cuban universities has the essential function of training English teachers for the various levels and types of schools. According to the program of the Integral Practice of the English Language discipline (updated in 2016), by the authors O' Farrill, IE, Góngora, A. and Roda, JC (2016), the main objective of teaching English in The pedagogical training in the Foreign Languages career is the development of communicative competence in the English language, which implies the expression, interpretation and negotiation of meanings in the interaction between two or more people, or between a person and a written or oral text. It also points out that in order to carry out the English Teaching-Learning Process, it is necessary to develop the communication skills of teachers in training, which allow them to use the language in their study activity, in their professional development and, fundamentally, to teach the new generations. The cultural development of the student is assumed as part of the communicative competence. Therefore, the study of interculturality is a necessity, in particular the contribution of African culture to the American

continent and to the English language. However, there are authors such as Acosta, R., Pérez, JE & Vasconcellos, A. (2016) with a different vision, considering communicative, interactive and intercultural competence as the objective. Thus, the role of interculturality is highlighted as an objective in itself and a means of contextualizing the language under study.

It is in this context that the present investigation is undertaken for the improvement of the teaching of English in the Foreign Languages career of the University of Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca", with the demonstration, through texts and tasks, of how Afro-descendants have contributed to the development of the American Culture, whose main means of expression is the English language. The built digital products, texts and tasks, offer opportunities to students for the development of intercultural competence outside and inside the classroom, through the demonstration of the relationship between the language, its use and the cultural context in which it is used.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

From the linguistic position, the textual analysis method was used to establish the relationship between the elements of the text and the external factors in the context. Therefore, the comprehensive analysis of the text in search of the cultural dimension was an essential criterion for its selection. This method allows collocations to be studied and associated with elements in their environment. The concept of collocation comes from the idea that the meaning of words is not inherent in the primary form of the word, but arises from the typical combination of the word with others in the context of use.

The texts for the analysis were selected from authorized sources in the areas of culture, linguistics, history, music, painting, literature,

sports, among others. The texts highlight great writers, personalities, times, wars, movies, poems, etc. They were taken from sources like *Nexis*, *the New York Times*, *USA Today*, and *the Los Angeles Times*, among others. Internet pages in various areas of knowledge were essential to obtain information about African culture in America.

The general methodology is the historical-pedagogical explanation, which makes it possible to establish the historical-educational context in which the object of the investigation has been produced and relate them dialectically. A qualitative research strategy is established, with the combination of office and field work from participant observation, which allows both the analysis of documents and the search and interpretation of historical problems. Due to its focus, it is a case study, since it deals with specific cases of African culture in America.

The methods used are: the analytical-heuristic, which allows an adequate interpretation from the work with the written and oral sources; synthesis-hermeneutic, enables interpretation starting from its objective and subjective bases; the critical method analyzes the relationship of the specific projection of a hypothesis or theory in a given historiographical context; and the comparative method, which confronts fragmented data from primary sources.

The research required the use of empirical methods:

The documentary analysis, with the revision of official documents, didactic materials, publications, photos and literary and cultural manifestations. Textual analyzes of books from various eras were carried out, from slavery in America to the present day.

The interview with teachers and students allowed the exploration of the theme and its presence in them, so that it worked as a diagnosis that revealed the situation of mastery of African culture in third- and fourth-

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year students of the Foreign Languages career, English. Likewise, the survey helped students and teachers explore territories in the search for data, people and sources of information related to the presence of African culture in the teaching of English in the Foreign Languages career.

The texts and tasks for the students are written in English to favor their use in pedagogical practice by teachers and students, while the rest of the information is written in Spanish, in order to facilitate understanding and review by student's specialists and interested readers.

The object of search was the use of the African culture in America as a resource for the improvement of the teaching of English in the training of teachers at the University. The group discussion also contributed to perfecting the texts and the tasks. Two group discussion sessions were held once the participants had individually analyzed and criticized the proposed texts and tasks.

On the other hand, the criteria for the selection and elaboration of the texts and tasks have been the following: impact of the African culture in America; linguistic values and educational values; text length; and richness of elements of the culture of Afro-descendants present in the text. The texts appear in this article summarized or referenced in their digital sources. Thus, technology was used as an essential resource for the presentation of texts and tasks.

Promoting and valuing the impact of Afro-American culture through the teaching of English is one of the objectives of this article, following the line of Dr. Carter Godwin Woodson, American historian and educator, Afro-American author and professor at Harvard University, who in 1926 established *Negro History Week*, which would later give rise to *Black History Month*, a publication aimed at making all Americans aware of freedom and equal opportunity, a celebration of the many African achievements.

## RESULTS

This section initially demonstrates the results of the diagnosis and how living conditions influence the formation of consciousness, culture and language of Afro-descendants in a poor country in America; next, the selected texts and tasks and the tasks created for the study of English from African culture in America are presented. Finally, the interactive, reflective and intercultural methodology that accompanies the proposal is briefly described.

### Diagnosis of the problem

The evidence of the application of the survey and interview methods to 60 third- and fourth-year students of the 2019-2020 academic years reveals the low command of the students of elements of the Afro-American culture. The results are the following:

#### a) Racial discrimination

The question asked to mention three events that reveal black discrimination in the United States. Three students out of 60 mentioned three events for 5%; four students mentioned two events, for 6%; while 16 students mentioned an event, for 27%. The rest of the students, that is, 37, did not mention any event, for 62%. It is significant that the 23 students who responded to the survey and expanded on their answers in the interview referred to the abuses and murders that have taken place in recent years on the streets of the United States. However, they do not specify the cases, whether George Floyd, Alton Sterling, Philando Castile, or Freddie Gray, among others.

#### b) Black musicians

The question asked for the names of three black musicians from the United States. Two students out of 60 offered the names of three

musicians: Bob Marley, Whitney Houston and Steve Wonder, for 3%; five students named two each, for 8%; while 11 students indicated a musician, for 18%. It is noteworthy that two of the 42 students who did not get their answers right confused Bob Dylan with Bob Marley.

#### c) African American Movies and Shows in America

The name of three African-American movies or shows, or that dealt with this topic, was requested. A student indicated three films, for 2%; three students indicated two, for 5%; while seven students named a film each, for 12%. It is notable that, of the two options, movie and show, the students referred only to movies. Among them, the one with the highest votes turned out to be *Gone with the Wind*, while *Purple color* was once named. However, in the interview none of the students who cited these films could explain the plot.

#### d) African Literature in America

The names of three black writers were required. Three students named three, for 5%; four students indicated two, for 7%; while 19 students named a writer, for 31%. It is worth noting that the most named writer was Langston Hughes, perhaps because of the coverage he has had in the treatment of this topic in the pedagogical research in Pinar del Río. His poem *My People* appears in two books written in this province and is frequently used in text analyses.

#### e) Famous African-Americans in sports

Three names of African-American athletes were requested. 11 students named three, for 18%; 14 students indicated two, for 23%; while 25 students named an athlete, for 42%. It is curious that the students included in their responses Cuban baseball players who play in the major leagues nowadays. However, Jack Robinson, the player who made history in 1947 when a black baseball player was first

accepted into the major leagues, is not named by any student. On the other hand, the great NBA basketball players such as Michael Jordan and LeBron James were cited.

Only 14% of the students manage to correctly answer one, two or three options in the 15 opportunities offered by the five survey questions, whose answers are extended through the interview. Thus, 46% of students fail to answer any of the options offered. This shows a weak domain of Afro-American culture, conceived as a resource for the contextualization of learning the English language.

The evidence shows the need for the proposal presented in this article as a way to learn about Afro-American culture and a resource, at the same time, for the contextualized learning of the English language, as well as the formation of values from the analysis of the social processes that are experienced. These evidences are the result of a weak treatment of Afro-American culture in the English language programs and in the methodological preparation. However, the interview and the group discussions show the interest of both teachers and students in learning English from the Afro-American culture.

#### 1. Living conditions of African descendants

Some of the social indicators do not appear explicitly in the texts, but are inferred from the context they express. The profiles that are read later show the conditions in which Afro-descendants still live in America, and confirm the idea that human beings think as they live. They were requested from teachers in training in one of the poor countries of America. All subjects (52) who wrote the profiles qualify as economically disadvantaged.

#### *What makes us!*

*I am Lula. I was born in the south in 1970. My mother was 17 years old when I was born. Nine months later my father abandoned her.*

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*I have never known about him. I would like to know him. When I was 4, my mom left me with my siblings and came to the capital. My aunt sent me to an orphanage. Today I live with two aunts. I will be a psychologist, God willing.*

*I am Jorge. I was born in 1976. I went to the Baptist church since my early childhood. We are 10 in my house. They think that with the help of God I will change their conditions of life. "Each one is born of the same egg, but experiences divide us little by little, before we get together again in one single destination: death". I want to be a shepherd. My father grows bananas and my mother sells them in the town, she carries them in a small donkey.*

*I am Jane. I was born in 1975. We are 11. Nobody works. We are all unemployed. My bigger brother supports the entire family. He doesn't live with us. I don't know my dad. My mom has always spoken badly about him. She says that my father is dead. I guess it is not true. I am longing to know my father's family, which is also my own family. I am sure God will help me have a better future, not only on Earth, but also in Heaven.*

*Task: a) Read the profile and arrive at your own conclusions*

*b) Identify the cultural element in each profile.*

## 2. compositions

Compositions are a useful resource to express people's lives. This one that you will read was written by an Afro-descendant in high school in 2001. Based on this model, students can create their own compositions for the development of written expression.

*Dear Mom,*

*How is your stomach, Mom? Does Dad still walk? You know, Mom, yesterday I saw a woman in the street looking for a pharmacy while she was just in front of the sign that*

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*read Pharmacy, but she didn't know how to read. How sad! And I saw a policeman beating a driver. Terrible! And I saw a group of thirsty horses running toward a fountain to drink water, but the first one in arriving drank it all, while the others collapsed from thirst. How selfish!*

*Mom, as you say, I will always be at the head of your casket. I want to found a school in the country for those who cannot pay for their education.*

*Don't feel discouraged, my mommy, and wait for me. I'm going in December and we will go to church together. Take care of the he-calf and the little donkey. They will soon be able to work.*

*Good-bye Mommy.*

*With all my love, Ricardo.*

*Task: What kind of text does the student learn to write, description, narration, cause and effect, comparison and contrast, analogy, classification, process analysis, or definition? What is the writer's intention? What cultural elements does he express in his composition?*

## 3. jazz music

*Louis Armstrong, a Giant American Jazz Musician*

*Daniel Louis Armstrong (1900-1971) was a giant among American jazz musicians. He was born in New Orleans. His life as a musician began when he joined the school band at Orphans' Home Boys in 1913. In 1924, Louis joined Fletcher Henderson's Orchestra in New York City. In 1925, he returned to Chicago where he recorded a series of jazz classics with his "Hot Five" and "Hot Seven" bands. (Keep going)*

*Task: a) Make a semantic map to show the structure of the text. B) Locate on the map, New Orleans, Chicago and New York. c) Other great Afro-north American jazz artists were*

pianist Teddy Wilson, the great Duke Ellington, and Dizzy Gillespie who visited Cuba several times. Choose one and write a composition about him similar to the one about Armstrong.

#### 4. African American singers

Great Afro-American singers have been Michael Jackson, Bob Marley, Angela Davis, Steve Wonder, Whitney Houston, Dona Summer, Tina Turner, among many others. Take one and write a short bio on them of not more than 300 words.

#### 5. African American Movies and Shows in America

Many movies show the African culture in America, like "the Homesteader", "The Underground Railroad", "Gone with the Wind", "Malcolm X", "Martin Luther King", and "Africa", "Poetic Justice", "Judas and the Black Messiah", "One Night in Miami", "Queen & Slim", and "Twelve Years a Slave". Choose one, watch it, and comment it in class, in no more than five minutes. Shows: Godfather of Harlem, the Cosby Show.

#### 6. Great Afro-American events in America

a) Many institutions, movements, or events are bound to the culture of Black people in the United States and other nations in America, like, The Civil Rights Movement, the Ku Klux Klan, the NAACP, Black lives matters (2013), and George Floyd's Murder (2020). Choose one of these, and say what it means, when and where it happened and its importance for America's culture, in no more than 300 words.

b) Look for the Slavery Era, "The Civil War" in USA, and Black Panthers (Black History Month, 2021), and say what they meant, when and where they happened and their importance for the African American culture (oral speech, five minutes).

c) Look for Martin Luther King's March and Speech in Atlanta on March 1960, read "I

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Have a Dream", and say the intention of the speaker, and the situation in which he made his speech.

#### 7. African Literature in America

*Malcolm X*

*I stopped her. The Negro men loved her. And she just seemed to love all Negroes. Two or three nights a week, we would go out together. Sophia admitted that she also has dates with white fellows, "just for the looks of things", she said. She swore that a white man couldn't interest her (Taken from Autobiography of Malcolm X, page 66).*

*Task: Who is "I" and "her" in the first line? Why Negro is written with capital letter as well as its plural? What is the meaning of "dates"? What is the meaning of "just for the looks of things", why did Sophia need "things"?*

*Martin Luther King (1929-1968)*

*Martin Luther King, Jr. was born in Atlanta, Georgia, on January 15, 1929. His religious upbringing in the King home shaped his destiny, and thereby shaped the destiny of Black Americans, now and forever more (Continued).*

*Task: a) Make a semantic map to show the structure of the text, b) Say why Martin Luther King became a leader, c) what was his method of fighting.*

#### 8. The Great Jack Robinson (Jackie) (1919-1972)

*Robinson can run, and he can bunt, he can steal and he can hit. Bellow, Robinson lines a double into the left-field corner. He steals third; He scores on a short-passed ball, sliding clear around the catcher, Del Dice. The stands erupt. The Dodgers win. We beat the Cardinals. That colored guy has got balls, I tell you that! (Keep going)*

*Observe Ⓓ*

- The use of Baseball words *Ð run (run), bunt (touch the ball), steal (steal bases), hit (bat), make a homerun (darun homerun), he scores (he scores a run), the stand erupt (Las bleachers explode), has got balls (has guts).*
- The use of *can* to express physical ability *Ð he can run, he can bunt, he can steal, and he can hit. The expression, "sliding clear around the catcher", meaning in Spanish, "sliding cleanly around the receiver".*

*Task: Who was Jack Robinson, and why did he become world famous? What are the names of some MLB teams? Which are the two best teams? How was racism expressed in the MLB at that time? Where are the Dodgers and the Cardinals from? What is New England? How to express the main actions of baseball?*

#### 9. Celebrities in African culture in America

*a) Could you look for short bios about the following Black English singers, and be ready to report briefly about them? Ella Fitzgerald, Lionel Richie and Bob Marley (1945-1981)? Support your speech with digital devices.*

*b) Could you find information about the following books of Black English writers, and tell who wrote them, the date they lived, and what each of the books is about? Roots, Autobiography of Malcolm X, I know Why the Caged Bird Sings, the Color Purple, the Young Negro in America: 1960-1980, and Listen Children.*

*c) Could you read the following poems of Black English writers, and say who wrote them, the date they lived, and what each poem is about? My People, Brothers, Ancestors, My Pa Was Never Slave, Lineage, Andre, A Change's Gone Come.*

*d) Could you hear a song of a Black English singer and say who sings it, what the song is about, and how it helps you in your English Study?*

*e) Could you find information about the following Black American athletes, and tell who they were, what they did, when and where? Michael Jordan, Willie Mays, Carl Lewis, Usain Bolt, Theophilus Stevenson, etc.*

The suggested methodology for carrying out this proposal is based on learning through complex cultural and linguistic tasks. In this way, they draw attention to the elements of African culture in America and its relationship with the use of English. The procedures to follow are as follows: preparation for listening or reading the text, carrying out the listening and reading, searching for cultural elements and analyzing how they are expressed in English. The procedures include the pragmatic semantic analysis of the text and its relationship with the context, the elaboration of semantic maps as a resource for understanding and reproducing the text, critical analysis, paraphrasing and the elaboration of new texts related to the topic. Thus, an interactive model based on cultural content is achieved for learning the functional structure of the language and its real use. All tasks and texts have digital support on the Internet. Digital assignments can be done at home as part of hybrid learning and the flipped classroom. They are the source of interactive workshops for learning English. It is a mission of all teachers to educate students in a new culture of learning English within the paradigm of learning to learn, and to teach.

## DISCUSSION

The struggles of Afro-descendants have contributed to democracy in many countries of the continent, particularly in the abolition of slavery, the right to vote, national independence and the defense of their human rights in the nations: Dominican Republic, Haiti, Cuba, Colombia, Brazil and the United States, among others. His achievements have been notable in spirituality, sports, music and art. The dark color has bathed America for

*Translated from the original in Spanish*

centuries to be able to say today: Africa is also America. It is evident that if it had not been for Afro-descendants, the history of America would have been different.

It is worthwhile for all of America to remember its roots and to increase respect for the achievements of African culture in the region, just as Abraham Lincoln did when he signed the Emancipation Proclamation that freed the slaves on December 18, 1865 and Toussaint Louverture when he led the Haitian Revolution to achieve Haiti's independence in 1804, establishing the first black republic.

The conquest of independence of the Caribbean and Latin American countries is a sign of the strength of the Creoles and African culture in the region. The non-violent method of Martin Luther King (MLK), his peaceful demonstrations against violent racism and his fight for civil rights are facts that have marked the path of democracy and the formation of better citizens in the United States, for example.

Precisely, the proposal for the inclusion of African culture in America in the teaching of English in the Foreign Languages career at the University of Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca" is aimed at exposing the harmful effects of racial prejudice in the American region, from the Rio Grande to Patagonia, including North America and the Caribbean.

The texts and learning tasks seek to recognize the significant contributions inherited from African culture, including artists, musicians, scientists, political figures, educators, leaders and athletes. It is no coincidence that opportunities are offered for students to learn English from the African work and thus appear texts and tasks on the Civil War, the Civil Rights Movement, the legacy of Martin Luther King (MLK), the songs and poems of Maya Angelou, and the enigmatic Malcolm X and Jack Robinson, among many other famous figures of African origin.

The formation of values is one of the objectives of the inclusion of the Afro-American culture in the teaching of English. All texts and tasks contribute to contradictory, logical and critical thinking; to the reflection of the students; decision-making in favor of justice and peace. Contributing to this are the profiles and compositions of black students, the struggles of great personalities, the work of black writers in defense of human rights, the films and songs that reveal the suffering and hopes of blacks in various regions of the world. American continent. It is worthwhile for students to learn about MLK's efforts in organizing demonstrations and peaceful protest marches in the southern states, mainly; of his method of non-violence (following the philosophy of Mohandas "Mahatma" Gandhi), compared to Malcolm X's method of violence early in his life as an activist; or trace the story of Michael Jackson, Stevie Wonder, Whitney Houston, or the story of Rose Parks, who refused to give up her seat to a white man and move to the back of a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, on December 1 of 1955. Knowing and being able to decide between good and evil forms values.

The learning of English is the center that dominates the inclusion of African culture. The texts and tasks are rich in ideas and ways of saying, in the informal and formal use of the language, in Black English expressions, in communicative practice of grammar and vocabulary richness. Above all, students enjoy the opportunities offered to view, listen to, and read the actual use of English in Maya and Malcolm's autobiography, in MLK's *I Have a Dream*, in the *Africa for USA* song, or in Muhammed Eljad's speech illustrating the characteristics of Black English: "I *don't* have a degree like many of you out there before me. But history doesn't care anything about your degrees". That complex and flexible grammar (DON'T).

Nothing better to learn English, according to the students themselves, than songs, movies, literature, comics and conversations with others. Added to this is the educational power they have, as they reflect the contradiction

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between the beautiful and the ugly, the valid and the corny, the human and the monstrous. No more than one song and the students change their expression, their hearts beat faster, and they quickly personalize it. Likewise, the song is full of ideas and ways of expressing them, of interactions, functions and linguistic forms. To this is added that the English learner learns how to approach the song, the film, the text, if learning strategies are properly taught and a new culture is created that they did not possess to learn to learn the language (Acosta & Gomez, 2017).

The texts and tasks are mounted on a digital platform, so that it tempers with the current times and the types of students, while benefiting from it. For this reason, the complete texts do not appear in the proposal, but the references are offered for teachers and students to search on the Internet. This is the case of Elijah Muhammad's speech, about which he wonders who he was, the intention of his speech, to whom it was addressed, what was the main idea, and what criticism does it deserve. These components of discourse are complemented by linguistic analysis by searching for synonyms and antonyms, references, pronouns, word formation, meanings, and collocations. Added to this are the uses of "so" "fear" "preach" and "slave master" united, as well as the use of the expression, "so-called black", those called black because they are not. Likewise, the complex expression is analyzed: "since he brought the First ship load of us black people here", in which he refers to the white man and us to us blacks, emphasized with *Black people* and *here*, referring to the United States. United.

Note how in the speech Lord Muhammad, Allah's representative on earth, is revered and how Muslims are taught to reverence him. When Lord Muhammad paused, the Muslims in front of him shouted: "Little Lamb!" ... "All pray is due to Allah!" ... "Teach, Messenger!" He would continue.

The self-criticism of the ignorance and self-hatred of the black race is expressed by

*Translated from the original in Spanish*

Muhammed as the result of the teachings of the white man, thus: "the white man is telling you: You can't live here. You can't enter here, you can't eat here, drink here, walk here, work here, you can't ride here, you can't play here, you can't study here", while the black crowd yelled: "YAH, Man!" ... "Tell `em!" ... "You are right!" ... "Take your time up there, little messenger!" ... "Oh, Yes!" And so and so, our students learn English and the black and white culture it expresses.

In the proposal, the existence of tasks that require technology for the search and processing of information and, with it, responding to interactive learning tasks is appreciable. That is why tasks without text appear whose answers are searched on the Internet; thus, it has been possible for students to explore writers, poets, singers, movies, athletes, great personalities and events that have shaken humanity, without the need to present here the texts in which the requested information Tasks appears. Knowing how to search for and process information is essential in the Learn to Learn paradigm, and to teach; in this case of students who are trained as English teachers. It is worthwhile for students to seek out, analyze and feel the deep emotions that flow from the reading and enjoyment of poems, even sung, such as A "Change Is Gonna Come" (Sam Cooke) that expresses and symbolizes the vicissitudes of blacks in gone times. The students end the class singing.

The profiles show that the living conditions of Afro-descendants in America are inferior to those of whites, and in some of the countries of the American continent they live in subhuman conditions, while in others they are victims of violence and racism; that poor black youth speak and write about their lives, their hardships, sufferings and hopes. That, the students of the whole world must know. *What make us!* It is an excellent title to demonstrate that the black race is as it is due to the universal racist system that has perpetrated racial discrimination since the very existence of the human being. The weaknesses attributed to it are the

weaknesses of the economic, political, ideological, social and cultural systems where they live.

The texts and tasks not only highlight the virtues of African culture in America, but also the disadvantages of being black or mulatto at various stages of historical evolution. Major crises and disastrous events have affected blacks more than whites, the poor than the rich, the South than the North. This has happened with COVID-19, and this has happened with the economic crisis of 1930, with the earthquake in Haiti, and with the environmental crisis that the planet is going through. According to Renner (1996), the struggle for the survival of the most dispossessed, including a large part of the black minorities, is also against the environmental crisis, social conflicts and the new era of insecurity. It is not strange that the author reflects with the photo of a 10-year-old black boy in the middle of the African desert the struggle for survival; however, the brightness of her eyes and her skin, the beauty of her soul and the hope of living stand out in the photo.

No one better than Langston Hughes (1902-1967) highlights the beauty of his people, when in his poem "My People", referring to his black town, he expresses: The night is beautiful / also the faces of my people / the stars are beautiful / also the eyes of my people / Beautiful, it is also the sun / Beautiful, too, are the souls of my people. (Translation of the authors). This and other black literature poems have been included in the original text and assignment proposal, along with her poem "Brothers" , Harriet Wheatley's "My Pa Was Never Slave" , and Gwendolyn Brooks ` "Andre" . They all express the greatness of the black race (Strickland, 1986).

Written expression is one of the communication skills to be developed when learning English at university. Ricardo's composition has the value of being really English, expressing his feelings and his hard life. Cultural elements of life appear in it,

*Translated from the original in Spanish*

expressed in hunger, precarious health, ignorance, police violence, selfishness and hope in a *burrito*. It serves as a model for students, following that rhetorical pattern, to develop similar compositions. The teacher will try to promote the use of writing strategies, personalize the activity and offer spaces for confidence when writing about their lives because they matter.

Jazz, mistakenly thought as the only musical contribution made in the 19th century, originated within black Americans and was based on the blues rhythms of Africa. Its strength is so great that it has been considered a National Treasure. It was born at the end of the 19th century in the United States and has expanded globally to this day. New Orleans and Louisiana became the center for the creation and performance of jazz music, which then spread throughout Europe. Symphonic jazz developed first, represented by George Gershwin's "The Creation of the World" and "Rhapsody in Blue" (1937-1998). Emphasis is placed on the greatness of Louis Armstrong, jazz trumpeter and singer, as well as other founders of American jazz, who never die (Díaz, op.cit).

African-American literature has been intrinsically linked to the complex racial realities that black writers have experienced. With rare exceptions, most literary endeavors have emerged, directly or indirectly, from the existential facts of black life in "white America." From the 1960s onward, black literature in the United States has continued to gain a reputation for outstanding literary achievement with the arrival of Alex Haley, Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, and Maya Angelou, among others. His autobiographies have been famous. According to Acosta and Careaga (2020), it is not about students developing literary competence, but about using literature to delve into the learning of the English language, to feel how reality is expressed and recreated.

Cultural elements are present in all texts. See how in the following text about Jack Robinson (Jackie) (1919-1972) various cultural

elements appear: "Jackie Robinson became the First Black major league baseball in 1947, when he joined New York's Brooklyn Dodgers. In 1962, Robinson also became the first African American to be elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame. Cultural Elements: Jack Robinson is a symbol of African culture for being the first black man to play Major League Baseball. The date also symbolizes the ban on blacks playing whites before 1947; the Brooklyn Dodgers were one of three Major League Baseball teams New York had, while California had none at the time; Robinson is once again a cultural element by becoming the first African-American elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962. In turn, the text offers the opportunity for students to practice the position of adjectives with respect to the noun in English, a difficult issue for them due to the difference with the Spanish language; for example: *The First Black major league baseball*, and the use of the possessive with the name of a city: *New York's Brooklyn Dodgers*. Added to this are added values such as the fact that the Dodgers moved to California in 1957, like the Los Angeles Dodgers. Famous black players from other countries have stood out in the ranks of the Major Leagues, such as Papi Ortiz, JA Contreras, Tony Oliva, Aroldis Chapman, among others, not counting the outstanding Omar Linares who the MLB and he was not found. Today more than 80 MLB players are black; however, there are hardly any receivers.

The methodology suggested at the end of the results is consistent with the line of methodological work that has been developed by the Foreign Languages career at the University of Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca". Three key words synthesize it: communication, interaction (Acosta & Alfonso, 2011) and interculturality, among the latter the theme of African Culture in America is inserted for the teaching of English. Therefore, the tasks are aimed at the linguistic and the pragmatic, following the classification of communicative competence by Ellis (1995).

*Translated from the original in Spanish*

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**Conflict of interests:**

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

**Authors' contribution:**

The authors have participated in the writing of the work and analysis of the documents.



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