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Mayara Volpato

**INTERCULTURALITY IN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE  
TEACHING, REALITY OR JUST ANOTHER DREAM?**

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Mayara Volpato

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Prof.<sup>a</sup>, Dr.<sup>a</sup> Viviane Maria Heberle  
Coordenador do Curso

**Banca Examinadora:**

---

Prof.<sup>a</sup>, Dr.<sup>a</sup> Glória Gil,  
Orientadora e Presidente

---

Prof.<sup>a</sup>, Dr.<sup>a</sup> Simone Sarmiento  
Examinadora

---

Prof.<sup>a</sup>, Maria Ester Moritz,  
Examinadora

---

Prof., Dr. Marcos Antonio Morgado de Oliveira.  
Examinadora



To everyone who was part of this journey



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## ABSTRACT

Considering that English is no longer a language that belongs only to its native speakers, but to anyone who wishes to use it, there is a need to change the way the language is taught. An intercultural approach to language teaching aims at preparing the learner not only to be able to speak the language, but also to develop cultural awareness, that is, be able to reflect upon their own culture as well as the culture of the other, being careful not make generalizations and create stereotypes. Having this in mind, this study aimed at understanding the relationship between language and culture in an English as an additional language classroom. For such, two classrooms, from curso extracurricular from UFSC, were observed throughout one semester to investigate if and how culture was approached during these classes. Besides the classroom observation interviews were also carried out with the two teachers responsible for the classes. It was possible to conclude that an intercultural approach to language teaching may be beneficial to the students, in the sense that it helps them be more critical about their own culture as well as the other, and also instigate them to reflect upon their actions.

**Palavras-chave:** interculturality, additional language teaching, culture.





## RESUMO

Considerando que o inglês não é uma língua que pertence apenas aos seus falantes nativos, mas a qualquer indivíduo que deseje usa-la, há uma necessidade de mudar a forma como a língua é ensinada. Uma abordagem intercultural para o ensino de línguas visa preparar o aluno não apenas para ser capaz de falar o idioma, mas também para desenvolver uma consciência cultural, isto é, ser capaz de refletir sobre sua própria cultura, bem como a cultura do outro, cuidando para não fazer generalizações e criar estereótipos. Considerando essas questões, este estudo teve como objetivo compreender a relação entre língua e cultura em uma sala de aula onde se leciona inglês como língua adicional. Para tanto, duas turmas, do Curso extracurricular da UFSC, foram observados ao longo de um semestre para investigar se e como a cultura foi abordada durante essas aulas. Além das observações das aulas, também foram realizadas entrevistas com os dois professores responsáveis pelas turmas. Foi, portanto, possível concluir que uma abordagem intercultural para o ensino de línguas pode ser benéfica para os alunos, no sentido de que ela os ajuda a ser mais crítico sobre a sua própria cultura, assim como a do outro, e também os instiga a refletir sobre suas ações.

**Keywords:** interculturalidade, ensino de língua adicional, cultura.



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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

Ss: Students

S1: Student one

S2: Student two

S3: Student three

S4: Student four

S5: Students five

S6: Student six

G: Guest

R: Researcher

T: Teacher

ILT: Intercultural Language Teaching





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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Statement of the problem

When we think of English<sup>1</sup>, it is no longer suitable to think of it as a language that belongs to specific countries, English nowadays can be considered an international language (Widdowson, 1997) or a *Lingua Franca* (Jenkins, 2006). The use of those terms implies that when using English, its users are expected to interact with English speakers from all over the world, and not only native speakers. In order to meet this change in the status of the language, the way English is taught and learned has also changed, and a new approach, the intercultural approach to additional<sup>2</sup> language teaching, has been widely advocated by many researchers (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993; Corbett, 2003).

It is important to highlight that although the internationalization of the language might be one of the factors that lead to the change in teaching approaches, it is not the only one. Kramsch (1993) actually advocates that for many years the approaches to language teaching have focused only on the linguistic features of the language, while the connection between language and culture has been insufficiently explored. As Sellami (2000, as cited in Agudelo, 2007) points out, it is naïve to teach language without considering its interrelationship with culture.

In order to understand what this intercultural approach to language teaching is, it is important to understand two concepts: identity and cultural non-essentialism. First, when we engage in a conversation, even though one of our main goals may be to exchange information, we do so by taking into account that the interlocutor is part of a group with specific identity traces: man/women; adult/child, teacher/student, employer/employee, etc. Thus, that will influence our word choices, the

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<sup>1</sup> When teaching a foreign language, culture should always be part of the curriculum regardless of the language being studied. However, for the purpose of this work I will always use English as a reference.

<sup>2</sup> Additional language is a term used to express that English no longer belongs to its native speakers, but to anyone who wishes to use the language. It also implies that the language is used for intercultural and intra-cultural communication, and that the users of the language may adapt it to their needs. I will be using the term additional language throughout this dissertation, but the terms foreign and second language will also appear due the fact that this are the nomenclatures some author choose to use.

way we behave, and the response we expect to get. In other words, when we engage in conversations, we are not only exchanging information, but also constructing our social and individual identity. In post-modernity, identity is considered 'dynamic, multiple and fluid' (Gu, 2009, p. 140), as it is constantly changing depending on the interaction we engage in.

Also, when engaging in a conversation with a foreign language speaker, we tend to rely on our national identities, and see the other as a representative of a country or nation (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002). Consequently, we need to be aware that by making general statements about people from other countries, we are basing our views on stereotypes or over-generalization, thus we are reducing the "individual from a complex human being to someone who is representative of a country or culture" (Byram *et al*, 2002, p. 9). Therefore, an Intercultural approach to language teaching would 'help language learners to interact with speakers of other languages on equal terms, and to be aware of their own identities and those of their interlocutors' (Byram *et al*, 2002, p. 7).

Although an intercultural approach to language teaching is seen as important, it is still not the reality when it comes to the actual classroom (Sarmiento, 2004; França, 2007; Bullio & Del-Ré, 2009). Teachers face many difficulties in implementing the intercultural approach, which might be due to several reasons, "lack of knowledge, fear, and ineffective teaching practices with respect to culture" (Turkan, 2007, p. 21), restricted time in class, strict curriculum to follow, not enough access to different sources of materials, e.g. textbooks, songs, internet, are just some of them.

## **1.2. Objectives of the study**

This study aims at understanding the relationship between language and culture in an English as an additional language classroom, keeping in mind that an intercultural approach to language teaching may be relevant considering that it may broaden the students' view of their own culture and the culture of the other. For such, it aims at answering the following research questions:

1. What kinds of culture-oriented episodes can be found in the interaction of the classroom investigated?
2. Are there any episodes that are interculturally oriented?

3. What are the limiting factors for the incorporation of an intercultural approach in the classrooms observed?

### **1.3. Significance of the research**

It has been pointed out by Sellami (2000) that it is naïve to teach language without considering its relationship with culture. Knowing only the linguistic aspects of the language does not guarantee successful communication, there are many other aspects to be considered when communicating, e.g. gender, power relation, ethnicity. An intercultural approach to language teaching helps students become intercultural citizens, to learn how to communicate across culture, and to understand that our actions are culturally shaped.

Having this in mind, I intend to contribute to the language teaching context in general and also to the research fields, considering that there has been almost no empirical research on this topic, as attested above.

### **1.4. Organization of the thesis**

This dissertation is divided into five chapters organized as the following: Chapter I brings the statement of the problem, objectives of the study and significance of the research. In Chapter II the relevant literature to this study is presented. In Chapter III, I present the methodology used in this study, and also the context of investigation, providing an overview of the participants and the procedures for data collection and analyses. Chapter IV is composed by the data analyses, and in Chapter V a summary of the findings, the pedagogical implications and limitations of the study and suggestions for future research will be presented.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

In order to answer the questions that have been proposed, this next section will bring the theoretical background to support the analysis of the data. Central to this study is the concept of culture, therefore the first topic to be dealt with is the different definitions of culture presented by different authors and points of view. After that, the different ways in which language and culture relate to each other in an English as an additional language classroom will be explained. Then, the intercultural approach to language teaching will be reviewed, bringing the contributions to the field from authors such as Byram (1997), Crozet et al (1999), Corbett (2003) and Kramsch (1999). Later, some empirical studies having the Brazilian context as background will be reviewed. And lastly, although the intercultural approach to language teaching is widely advocated by many authors, this is still not the reality when it comes to the classroom, thus the difficulties of teaching culture in the classroom will be explored.

#### **2.1. Definition of culture**

It is not new the idea that language and culture walk hand by hand in the teaching and learning process. In fact, researchers argue that it is impossible to teach one without teaching the other, even if only implicitly culture is always part of language classes (Genc & Bada, 2005). According to Samovar, Porter, and Jain, (1981 as cited in Lessard-Clouston, 2003),

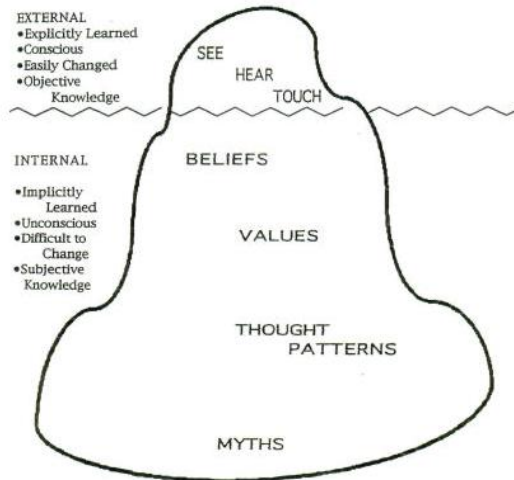
Culture and communication are inseparable because culture not only dictates who talks to whom, about what, and how the communication proceeds, it also helps to determine how people encode messages, the meanings they have for messages, and the conditions and circumstances under which various messages may or may not be sent, noticed, or interpreted... Culture...is the foundation of communication. (p .3)

Specifically in the field of additional language teaching and learning, throughout the years the concept of culture has changed, the focus has shifted from culture as literature, arts and philosophy to a broader view of it.



Many authors have pointed out that it is not easy to define culture (Nemni, 1992; Street, 1993 as cited in Lessard-Clouston, 1997, p. 4), but several attempts were made, and for instance, a simple definition presented by Hammerly states that culture is “the total way of life of a people” (1982, p. 513). Sysoyev presents a broader definition of culture, for him it is “a **system** [my emphasis] of symbols, meanings, and norms passed from one generation to the next, which differentiates groups of people united by certain characteristics such as origin, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, socioeconomic class, or political views (as cited in Savignon & Sysoyev, 2002, p. 513). On the other hand, for Lessow-Hurley (2000) culture is “a dynamic, creative, and continuous **process** [my emphasis] including behaviors, values and substance learned and shared by people that guides them in their struggle for survival and gives meaning to their lives” (p. 95).

Liddicoat (2002) claims that when culture is seen as dynamic, as advocated by the intercultural perspective, we deal with it as being variable, “we move away from the idea of the national culture and the idea of a monolithic ‘French culture’ or ‘Japanese culture’ and recognize that culture varies with time, place and social category and for age, gender, religion, ethnicity and sexuality” (p. 8). Thus, learners are required to actively engage in cultural learning, “rather than only learn about the cultural information about the target culture in a passive way” (Ho, 2009, p. 65). This dynamic view of culture also helps to raise learners’ awareness about their own culture by helping them understand that behaviors are culturally shaped (p. 66). On the other hand, when culture is seen as static the relationship between language and culture is not recognized, its only function is to transmit cultural information to learners. Weaver (1993 as cited in Ho, 2009, p. 66) uses the metaphor of culture as an iceberg. According to the author most of our culturally-shaped knowledge is invisible and it is mostly applied to our everyday life in an unconscious way.



**Figure 1. The Cultural Iceberg (Weaver, 1993 as cited in Ho, 2009, p. 66)**

Figure 1 illustrates the cultural iceberg. The author places some of our behaviors and beliefs just at the top of the iceberg, what is above the water are the aspects we can easily notice. But the largest portion of culture is under the water, i.e., the reasons things happen the way they do, or the rules that allow us to consider certain things as being socially acceptable or wrong, those are the things under the water, the things we do not realize about culture.

Having in mind that not all cultural aspects are visible, and that culture is also determined by the experiences we have in life, Basnett (1997: xix as cited in Ros and Solé, 2003, p. 149) claims that

for culture is a complex network of signs, a web of signifying practices, and anyone studying a culture needs to construct their own map of knowledge, recognizing also that any such map will need to be modified as the contours of the cultural landscape shift and evolve.

It is important to bear in mind that when learning an additional language one should not deny his/her own culture, in fact, central to the concept of intercultural communicative competence<sup>3</sup> is the idea of

<sup>3</sup> Intercultural communicative competence is a complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself. (Fantini, 2006 as cited in Sinicrope, Norris and Wanatabe, 2007, p. 1)

cultural awareness<sup>4</sup> (Baker, 2003). Cultural awareness implies not only an understanding about the culture of the other, but also the learner's own culture. Fenner (2000) says that if education concerns "development and personal growth", the objective of foreign language education should be "to give the learner opportunity to develop cultural knowledge, competence and awareness in such a way that might lead to better understanding of the foreign culture, the 'other' as well as of the learner's own culture, the 'self'" (p. 142). In fact, Ros i Solé assert that "the treatment of culture should entail a process where the individual not only absorbs, but also interprets and becomes critical about the information presented" (2003, p. 142). Here for, the language teacher has to always keep in mind that language and culture cannot be separated, since "language, as a code, reflects cultural preoccupation and constrains the way people think" (Kramsch, 1998, p. 14).

Thus, taking into consideration what has been discussed so far, for the purpose of this study, *culture* will be seen as dynamic including the beliefs, laws, arts, types of knowledge, habits acquired by people representative of a social group, but also influenced among other aspects by gender, religion and ethnicity.

After having defined what culture is within the context of this thesis, the next section deals with the relationship between language and culture in the language classroom.

## 2.2. The relationship between language and culture

Crozet, Liddicoat and Lo Bianco (1999) assert that it is important to understand that just like other aspect of language teaching, the teaching of culture has also undergone some changes, and that understanding how the "teaching of culture in language education has evolved gives us further insights into how we will come to view intercultural language teaching as new paradigm in the decades to come" (p. 7).

Crozet et al (1999) describe four broad approaches to culture in language teaching:

1. **The traditional approach:** the traditional approaches to culture teaching deal with what is called high culture, in this case, exclusively literature. "Cultural competence, in foreign language

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<sup>4</sup> Cultural awareness 'involves not only an understanding of the culture of the language being studied but also the learners' own culture'. (Baker, 2003, p.3)

teaching, is viewed as a control of an established canon of literature, which can be measured in terms of the breadth of reading and knowledge about the literature” (p. 8). Although the ideal role model is the native speaker, the learner is not expected to communicate with him/her, the contact is more likely to happen through literature itself. The relationship between language and culture as a dynamic process is very tenuous. Culture is in the text, which is expressed through language.

2. **The ‘Culture studies’ approach:** the changes between the previous and this approach started during the 1970’s, when culture started to be seen as an area of studies, and learners started to learn about history, geography, and institutions from the target country. There was a shift from texts to settings and from people to policies. Cultural competence here is viewed “as a body of knowledge about the country, which is part of the knowledge the native speaker can be expected to have” (p.8). Although the learner is expected to interact with the native speaker, this interaction happens in a more tourist-like way, learners know about the country but remain external to it. The relationship between language and culture as a dynamic process is still tenuous, language is used “for naming events, institutions, people and places. There is no inherent connection between language and the institutions, history and geography of the country (p. 9).

3. **The “Culture as practices” approach:** here culture is treated as practices. How the target community behaves, “what members of a particular cultural group are likely to do based upon known ways of acting and beliefs” (Saunders, 2005, p. 11). Cultural competence here “leaves the learner primarily within his/her own cultural paradigm, observing and interpreting the words and actions of an interlocutor from another paradigm” (p. 9). Culture and language are strongly related to each other, however it sees culture as “relatively static and homogenous” (p. 9).

4. **Intercultural language teaching:** the most recent approach to language teaching differs significantly from the previous ones. Culture here is seen as the lived experiences of individuals. Students are expected to develop cultural competence from the beginning of the learning process. Interactions “between people are context-sensitive, negotiated, mediated and variable” (Saunders, 2005, p. 11). Learners are expected to understand their own culture in relation to the culture of the other. Through the Intercultural approach to language teaching learners engage in situations where they are required to make choices about what to hold on to and what to let go when engaging in meaningful communication in the target language.

Due to the importance of the Intercultural Approach to language teaching for the present study, the next section provides a more detailed explanation of the topic.

### **2.3. The intercultural approach**

For a long time in the history of teaching and learning English, teachers were only concerned with the four skills; speaking, reading, listening and writing. Several methods were developed throughout the years to fulfill the desire of developing those skills, e.g., the grammar-translation, the audio-lingual and the most recent and widely adopted by many institutions the communicative approach. The communicative approach proclaims that in order to successfully learn a language learners need to be involved in real communication, the language should be learned as if the student was inserted in the community where he will be using it (Galloway, 1993).

Lo Bianco, Liddicoat and Crozet (1999) point out that although the communicative approach aims at teaching people to communicate across cultures, it does not treat culture as an integral part of the language, and state that

The Communicative Approach as the most current and widely spread approach for language teaching in the Western world today has not significantly improved the teaching of communication in a foreign language. It also has not significantly contributed to the promotion of intercultural competence or cross-cultural understandings. (Lo Bianco *et al*, 1999, p. 10)

According to Corbett (2003), the way the communicative approach is dealt with in the classroom does not promote intercultural communicative competence because teachers “assumed that language was largely concerned with ‘doing things’” (p. 21), without taking into consideration that culture is a dynamic process. The activities developed during classes of this type do not lead to an intercultural communication, and have a tendency of overvaluing the native speaker. Furthermore, although there is a time gap between Lo Bianco *et al* (1999) and Corbett’s (2003) studies, the authors assure that the communicative approach does not offer learners enough opportunities to develop their intercultural competence, Corbett’s ideas are more concerned with learners inserted in English as a second language environment and not on English as an additional language.

Thus, in order to fulfill the necessity of teaching students to communicate across cultures and not only to learn the linguistic code, a new approach to language teaching has been widely advocated by many researchers (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993; Corbett, 2003), the intercultural approach to additional language teaching.

An intercultural approach to language teaching has as its main objective help students develop intercultural competence. For Byram (2011) intercultural competence is “a matter of constant awareness of the mutual relationship between people of another country and ourselves as speakers of our language and inhabitants of our country, i.e. how ‘we’ observe ‘them’ and how ‘they’ observe ‘us’ – and vice versa” (p. 13). Fantini (2006) defines it similarly, arguing that being intercultural competent means to have the ability to “perform *effectively* and *appropriately* when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself” (as cited in Sinicrope, Norris & Wanatable, 2007, p. 1 – emphasis original). Therefore, the aim of the intercultural approach is not to communicate as a native speaker, but rather, to be able to understand and be understood by the other. As argued by Lo Bianco *et al* (1999) the language learner should not be viewed as a “‘defective native speaker’ but as ‘a **user** of language drawing upon the resources available to him/her’” (p. 181 – emphasis original).

The following sections will review how the intercultural approach is defined by different authors. The authors to be reviewed are the ones with the most significant contributions to an understanding of the intercultural approach.

### **2.3.1. The intercultural approach according to Byram**

As already suggested, for Byram, being intercultural competent means being aware of the “mutual relationship between people of another language and country and ourselves as speakers of our language and inhabitants of our country, i.e. how ‘we’ observe ‘them’ and how ‘they’ observe ‘us’ – and vice versa” (Byram, 2011, p. 13). The benefits of this comparison and contrast are twofold; first, it helps on the communication since both sides are attempting to be aware of how one is seen by the other. And secondly, this ability to see us as the other does help us critically think of things otherwise taken for granted.

When interacting with people from other languages, we see them as someone who is a representative of a certain group, a ‘student’, a ‘teacher’, a ‘child’, and an ‘adult’, for example. This will influence

what we say, how we behave, and what we expect to get in response to what has been said. Therefore, Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002) state that when we engage in a conversation we are not only speaking the language, but also constructing our social identities.

Also as suggested before, national identities are constructed through conversations with people from other countries. This will also influence what is said and how it is said, because the other person is viewed as a representative of a country or nation. The risk with focusing only on national identities is relying on assumptions based on stereotypes, which end up reducing the individual from a “complex human being to someone who is seen as a representative of a country or ‘culture’” (Byram et al, 2002, p. 9).

Byram (1997) presents five *savoirs* which constitute intercultural competence, and are types of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values crucial to “understanding intercultural human relationships” (Byram et al, 2002, p. 10). Figure 2 illustrates the five *savoirs* proposed by Byram as the main constituents of intercultural competence.

	<b>Skills</b> <i>(savoir comprendre)</i> <i>Interpret and compare</i>	
<b>Knowledge</b> <i>(savoirs)</i> Knowledge about ‘other’ and ‘own’...	<b>Education</b> <i>(savoir s’engager)</i> Critically evaluate	<b>Attitudes</b> <i>(savoir être)</i> Openness and curiosity
	<b>Skills</b> <i>(savoir apprendre/faire)</i> <i>Acquire new knowledge</i> <i>(and apply in real time)</i>	

Figure 2. The five *savoirs* by Byram (1997 as cited in Byram, 2008, p. 128)

In the figure, **critical cultural awareness** (*savoir s’engager*) is strategically placed in the centre of the diagram, since it is one of the most important and relevant elements of intercultural competence. It is defined by Byram as “an ability to evaluate – critically and on the basis

of explicit criteria – (some of the) perspectives, practices and products in one’s own and other cultures and countries” (Ibid.). The reason for it being so important is because learners need to be aware of their “values and how this values influence their views of other people’s values” (Byram et al, 2002, p. 13)

Another constituent deals with **intercultural attitudes** (*savoir être*), and means being able to reflect upon ones’ own values and beliefs and understand that they are not the only correct ones, and also be able to see how these values and beliefs might look from an outsider’s point of view, someone who has different values, beliefs and behaviours. In order to have this *savoir*, it is necessary to have attitudes of openness and curiosity.

The third constituent is called **Knowledge** (*savoirs*), yet, it is not primarily knowledge about a specific culture, “but rather knowledge of how social groups and identities function and what is involved in intercultural interaction” (Ibid). Byram (1997, p. 35) defines it as “knowledge about social groups and their cultures in one’s own country, and similar knowledge of processes and interaction at individual and societal levels, on the other hand”. Having these *savoirs* will allow the interlocutor to have culture-general knowledge, such as gestures people make, symbols they believe in and cherish, etc.

**Skill of interpreting and relating** (*savoir comprendre*) it is the ability one acquires to interpret a document from another culture and relate them to their own culture. Since it is impossible to anticipate all the knowledge one needs to acquire, it is important that the learner develops “skills of finding out new knowledge and integrating it with what they already have” (Byram et al, 2002, p. 13). Therefore, intercultural speakers need **skills of discovery and interaction** (*savoir apprendre/faire*), which is the “ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction” (Ibid).

As any other approach to language teaching, Byram’s model has strengths and weaknesses. Its main strength is that is it easy for language teachers to develop these *savoirs* because it does not demand as much effort as cross-cultural training does. And its weaknesses being the fact that there is no explicit evidence about the connection “between the linguistic components which form communicative competence, and the other components which form intercultural competence” (Byram, 2011, p. 14).



Therefore, it is possible to notice that for Byram an intercultural approach to language teaching will help prepare students to effectively communicate across culture, leading them to an understanding that the way we talk and behave is culturally determined. The next section will discuss the approach as proposed by Crozet, Lo Bianco and Liddicoat (1999).

### **2.3.2. The intercultural approach according to Crozet, Lo Bianco and Liddicoat**

According to Crozet et al (1999), the aim of teaching people to communicate across cultures has been around for many years, but although it has been pointed out the necessity of teaching language and culture as one, even many years after their study been published this is still not the reality. McMeniman and Evans (1997, as cited in Crozet *et al*, 1999, p. 10) “argue that the failure of language teaching policy and practice has been to underplay the importance of teaching a foreign language as the most overt expression of culture”.

The authors state that although language teaching is the most “versatile tool available to understand and to experience how language and culture shape one’s and others’ world view” (p. 11), it is not the only way through which it can be achieved. Language is the core of all human activities, and if language is culture, it “pervades all the possible ways of doing things i.e. ways of being human” (p. 11).

According to the authors, there are three fundamental aspects to intercultural language teaching:

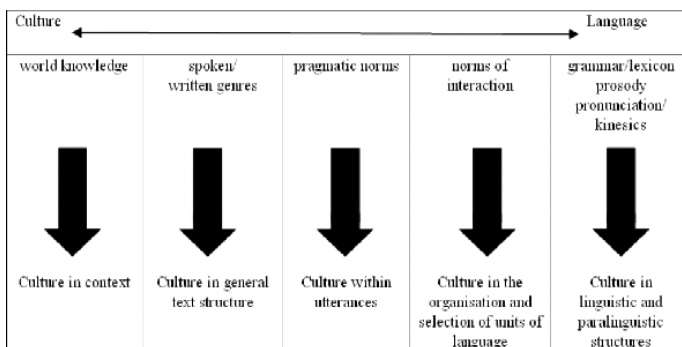
1. **The teaching of a linguaculture:** some aspects of the culture can be taught easily, without even requiring the teacher to know aspects from the target culture, such as food, music, arts. But culture as embedded in the language is not that simple, it requires “an approach which delves into the micro levels of culture as entwined in language use” (p. 22)

2. **The comparison between learner’s first language/culture and target language/culture:** studying an additional language implies studying another language and culture different from the learners own language/culture, even simple comparisons like we do this, and they do that is already embedded in cultural aspects.

3. **Intercultural exploration:** Just like Kramsch (1993) (see below), the authors discuss the necessity of creating a ‘third place’, a place where there is mediation between our own culture and the

culture of the other. They also introduce the term ‘meeting place’ as a reference to a place between more than two cultures. According to the authors this is the essence of the intercultural approach, “the ability to recognize where and when culture is manifest in cross-cultural encounters and the ability to manage an intercultural space where all parties to the encounter are comfortable participants” (p. 13).

Figure 3 shows the different points of articulation between language and culture, based on the assumption that there is no level of language that is not connected to culture, “language and culture interact with each other in a way that culture connects to all levels of language use and structures” (Ho, 2009, p. 64).



**Figure 3. Points of articulation between culture and language**  
(Liddicoat et al., 2003 as cited in Ho, 2009, p. 64)

In sum, Crozet *et al.* suggest that all human interactions involve language, and that there is no level of language that is not connected to culture. They also state that when it comes to language teaching there are three fundamental aspects to intercultural language teaching, the teaching of a linguaculture, the comparison between the learners’ first language/culture to the target language/culture and an intercultural exploration. The next section will present the intercultural approach according to Corbett.

### 2.3.3. The intercultural approach according to Corbett

According to Corbett (2003), since the 1980’s the intercultural approach to language teaching has been leading teachers to re-examine the role of language in the classroom. “Stern (1992: 206) notes that, despite a sustained and consistent body of work, particularly in America,

drawing attention to the importance of culture in language teaching, ‘the cultural component has remained difficult to accommodate in practice’” (as cited in Corbett, 2003, p.1).

More recently, there have been several attempts to incorporate culture into language teaching, and it has been argued that by incorporating an intercultural approach to language teaching not only the transactional functions but the social functions of the language need to be included. Corbett (2003) stresses that a course that deals with culture broadens the students’ ‘horizons’ as the focus is no longer on only teaching reading, writing, listening and speaking, but in teaching its students to serve as “mediators between different social groups that use different languages and language varieties” (p. 2).

Furthermore, as already suggested, Corbett (2003) highlights that the main goal of an intercultural approach to language teaching is not for students to acquire native speaker competence, but rather for them to be interculturally competent. An intercultural competent learner would be one that is able to understand the culture of the other and explain it to members of his/her own community, and vice versa. The author further states that although native speaker fluency is not objective of the intercultural approach, “one key goal of an intercultural approach remains language development and improvement; however, this goal is wedded to the equally important aim of intercultural understanding and mediation” (p. 2)

In sum, although Corbett states that an intercultural approach to language teaching is not an easy topic to deal with in the language classroom, he also states that a course that deals with an intercultural approach broadens the students ‘horizons’ as it can help learners to interact with people from different social groups. He further states that the focus of the intercultural approach is to teach students to be interculturally competent, meaning that learners should be able to understand the culture of the other and explain it to their own community, and vice versa. The next section presents Kramersch’s insights on the intercultural approach.

#### **2.3.4. The intercultural approach according to Kramersch**

According to Kramersch (1993), what has been done in second language teaching is talking about one’s own culture (C1), and the culture of the other (C2), without considering the fact that “culture is a social construct, the product of the self and other perceptions” (p. 205).

She claims that the way the relationship between language and culture is seen has changed, suggesting that four new lines of thought have emerged, and that these new lines of thoughts are a much richer way of looking into the relationship between language and culture than what has been done so far. These lines are described as follows:

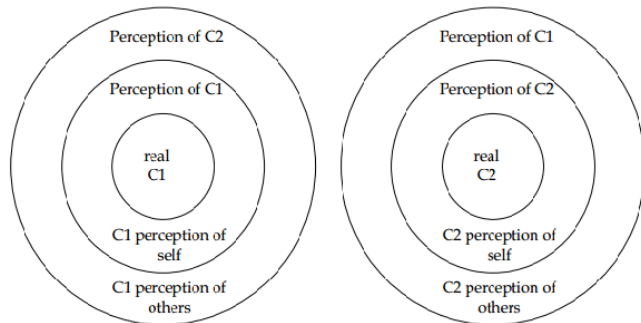
1) **Establishing a ‘sphere of interculturality**: Meaning is not given, it is constructed and negotiated. The intercultural approach to language/culture teaching is not a transfer of information from one culture to the other, but a reflection on both the native and the target culture.

2) **Teaching culture as an interpersonal process**: since meaning emerges from interaction it is pointless to teach “fixed, normative phenomena of language use” (p. 205), we should actually “replace the presentation/prescription of cultural facts and behaviors by the teaching of a process that applies itself to understanding foreignness or ‘otherness’” (p.206).

3) **Teaching culture as difference**: we have to be careful not to reduce culture simply to national traits, Germans are like this, Brazilians like that. We also have to reflect upon other characteristics such as age, gender, ethnic background, and many other aspects about a person’s culture.

4) **Crossing disciplinary boundaries**: we have to broaden our reading beyond the usual disciplines that are academically recognized for the teaching of culture, such as anthropology sociology and semiology. Include readings from ethnographers, sociolinguists, social scientists on both their culture and the culture of the language they study (p. 206).

Kramersch proclaims that when dealing with culture there are two aspects that should be taken into consideration, first we have a cultural reality and secondly we have a cultural imagination. The teaching of culture becomes even more difficult given the fact that both myth and reality both “contradict and reinforce one another” (p. 207). Kramersch then asserts that the teacher of culture is faced with a ‘kaleidoscope of at least four different reflections of facts and events [...]’ (p. 207), as shown in Figure 4.



**Figure 4. Cultural reflections involved in language and culture teaching (Kramsch, 1993)**

All learners have perceptions about their own culture which at some degree is stereotyped and differs from the reality of their own culture. That is, when experiencing our own reality (Real C1), we do not do so directly, we do it through an “interpretative framework in which aspects of the culture are mythologized” (Liddicoat, Papademetre, Scarino and Kohler, 2003, p. 22). In addition to the fact that learners have perceptions about their own culture (Perception of C1), they also have perceptions about the culture of the other (Perception of C2). Learners will also have perceptions of themselves as individuals (C1 perception of self) and perceptions of the other developed through socialization in their primary culture (C1 perceptions of others). Kramsch states that understanding another culture involves “exploring all these possibilities: how the learner’s culture views itself and the other culture, how the other views itself and the learner’s culture, and how the learner’s identity as self and as other is culturally constructed within each cultural framework (as cited in Liddicoat, Papademetre, Scarino & Kohler, 2003, pp. 22-23).

Kramsch goes further on the issue stating that

The only way to start building a more complete and less partial understanding of both C1 and C2 is to develop a third perspective, that would enable learners to take both an insider’s and an outsider’s view on C1 and C2. It is precisely that third place that cross-cultural education should seek to establish. (Kramsch, 1993, p. 210)

Therefore, the “ability to find/establish/adopt this third place is at the core of intercultural competence” (Kramsch, 2011, p. 355), since being able to interact with the other and having this insider/outsider

view on both the native and foreign culture enables the learner to “see relationships between different cultures – both internal and external to a society – and to mediate, that is interpret each in terms of the other, either for themselves or for the people” (Byram, 2000 as cited in Kramsch, 2011, p. 354).

Therefore, it is possible to state that central to Kramsch’s idea of an intercultural approach is the fact that the perception of our own culture and the culture of the other is never direct but always tainted by the lenses of our own culture, and that is why we usually have a somehow stereotyped view of both. It is also necessary to point out that she believes that it is fundamental for learners to be able to create a third place, a place of mediation between their own culture and the culture of the other.

Having in mind what has been presented in this section about the intercultural approach, the upcoming section will present some empirical studies having the Brazilian context as background.

#### **2.4. The Brazilian context – some empirical studies**

In the Brazilian context, there are few studies regarding the teaching and learning of culture in additional language classes. Here, I will review four empirical studies that deal with the subject.

One of them is the enlightening study carried out by Sarmiento (2004) with teachers and students in an English school. In her article ‘Aspectos Culturais Presentes no Ensino da Língua Inglesa’, Sarmiento aimed at analyzing which types of cultural aspects were found in a class of English as a foreign language. In order to do that, she observed seven teachers and thirty one students from a private English course in Porto Alegre, RS. After classroom observation, she interviewed the teachers. To analyze her data she created four categories based on the definitions of culture presented by the teachers during an interview. The categories are:

**Culture as information:** She was able to find nine occurrences during the observation. By culture as information she meant that culture appeared as knowledge or information about something or somewhere. Culture was seen as synonymous of intellectuality. As an example of this category, she presented an excerpt from her classroom observation (excerpt 9, p. 253).

Joana - You create questions using your imagination.

S – To be or not to be?



Paul – Ignore this one a little. In fact, no, don't ignore [Teacher erase the word 'please' that was on the bottom of the list and puts it on the top.] 'Please, pick up the newspaper'. If we go from here [pointing to the top and the bottom of the list], this is informal and this is more formal. 'Please' is more informal and the 'can you' a little more formal. So 'would you mind' is the same as 'can you', Yeah?

S2 – But he speaks with her first time, so, formal.

Paul – Yeah, exactly so he uses a formal way to say yeah. Maybe when he knows her better he will say 'can you' or 'could you'. Ok. So this is the same, but it's more formal. Remember I said, 'please open the window' is informal. But if I say to you 'Would you mind opening the window?' it's more informal OK? Take a look at page 38: 'Requests with modals and would you mind'. So modals are these words like 'can' and 'could'. We have in fact another one 'would'.

And the last category that Sarmiento was able to identify but could not find any occurrences within her data was **culture as history**.

After having analyzed the data she gathered, Sarmiento concluded that the classroom practice did not offer enough opportunities for the students to develop their intercultural competence. She stated that the reason for that to happen is that in the moments where culture was part of the class appeared out of context, valuing the culture of the other and diminishing the students own culture, and also at times creating stereotypes. As one of her examples, she shows a moment during the class where the teacher is talking to her students about how to report to one's boss, and, at some point, she uses the expression 'uga-uga' (Sarmiento, 2004, p. 260) to show that the way the students talk is primitive, whereas the way English speaking people talk is civilized. She pointed out that what we need is for teachers to help students develop critical cultural awareness, pointing out cultural facts and instigating them to reflect about it. And she also suggested that teachers help their students realize that their cultural characteristics should be valued and not neglected.

Another empirical study on culture in the additional language classroom was carried out by França (2007), on her master's thesis entitled "o Discurso do professor frente ao ensino de cultura em uma sala de aula de LE (inglês) e os parâmetros curriculares nacionais", where she aimed at identifying two foreign language teachers' views about the teaching of culture and what cultural approach they used in



class. The study was carried out in a public university in Brasilia with two non-native teachers. The data on this qualitative ethnographic research was gathered through classroom observation, interviews and questionnaires. The author came to the conclusion that the two teachers behaved differently during their classes, and even though they both stated that language and culture walk hand by hand in the learning process and that it is important on the teaching and learning process, she was able to notice contradictions between the teachers' discourse and practice. One of the teachers works with culture superficially, and although the other one does not work with it systematically, he explores it. It was also possible to observe that one of the teachers worked with culture in an intuitive and implicit way, very closely to what can be considered intercultural. França points out that the teaching of culture should walk hand by hand with the teaching of the other four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking), and that it is also fundamental that teachers know what an intercultural approach to language teaching is. Only then the teacher will be able to consciously reflect on his/her teaching practices and decide what kind of cultural experiences s/he wishes his/her students to have.

The next article to be reviewed here was written by Bullio and Del-Ré and entitled 'A aprendizagem de ingles como língua estrangeira e a mediação cultural'. The authors aimed at investigating if English students, 22 years old and older with an intermediate level of English proficiency, construct social and ideological relations in English, and what are the aspects of socialization that are present in this context. A total of sixteen classes were recorded during two months, and a questionnaire was also answered by the participants.

Just like with the other articles previously reviewed, the authors came to the conclusion that cultural mediation did not happen in a purposeful and explicit way. And once again, the fact that the teachers and the students did not explicitly deal with cultural aspects was probably due to the fact that they did not seem to be aware of the importance of dealing with cultural aspects in the learning process. With the questionnaire, the authors were able to observe that there is a lack of cultural and social consciousness among the participants. They stated that although cultural facts implicitly were part of the class, the students were not aware that they were dealing with culture, and, they especially did not consider talking and learning about Brazilian culture. It was also possible to observe that the students were not aware of what culture meant, therefore possibly leading them to believe that learning about culture is irrelevant.

On the other hand, the authors assured to be surprised with the fact that they did not find any evidences during their data analyses of an idealization of the foreign culture, what lead them to believe that the researched school did not have as an objective lead the students to value the culture of the other over their own, the school just aimed the students would be able to learn a foreign language.

Finally, the authors believe that it is crucial for students to become aware of what culture is and its importance to learn a foreign language, always taking into account the context and the social, cultural and ideological aspects that permeate both the students' own culture and the foreign culture. They were also able to observe that cultural aspects were part of the classes because of the textbook, since it brings cultural facts from other countries leading the students to talk about their own reality.

The last study to be reviewed is the only one I was able to find that actually tried to investigate the effects of an intercultural approach to language teaching. The article is called 'Os efeitos da interculturalidade no ensino de língua inglesa' and was written by Zacarias and Freitas (s.d.). The research was carried out in Paraná, with students from the last year of high school from the morning and night periods in a public high school. Two units that dealt with *Taste and food* and *Celebrations* were developed to be worked with these students during a two month period. The classroom schedule did not have to be altered because of the project, they had planned in order to cover the subjects that the students were supposed to study during that period of time.

Since students usually hesitate studying an additional language because they believe they will never use it, the projects' objectives were to broaden the students' world knowledge, offering them opportunities to talk about their ideas and thoughts in the classroom and interact with their classmates. The main goals of the project were: (1) to prepare the students to the reading process through contextualization approaching the facts to their own reality, and emphasizing the cultural aspects; and (2) to allow the students to understand the multicultural practices that permeate what is been studied relating it to their own culture, leading them to understand that there is no culture that is better than the other, and it is necessary to respect the cultural differences and notice that each person has to value the culture of the country they live in.

When the teachers were preparing the material for the classes, they had in mind the necessity to create a lesson that could value the cultural differences that the students might be exposed to. The purpose

of the lessons was to complement the reading ability with activities that were different from the ones that simply require the students to extract information from what is being read, and to help the students to observe themselves and critically position themselves in the world and also to recognize the attitudes and intentions of the author when writing the text.

The receptivity of the students towards the material was great, and they got engaged during the classes. The authors recover two moments from the classes, one where they were talking about foods and one of the students mentioned that the pizza was not invented by the Italian but by the Chinese, and another moment where the student said that in China not everybody likes to eat insects, in fact that is used as a marketing strategy to get more tourist. The authors stated that they did not check the information presented by the students but that these comments were a proof that the activities were able to stimulate the students' reflection about the subject being studied, leading them to position themselves in a more critical way during the classes.

Alongside the classroom activities the teachers were tutors of a group called Grupo de Trabalho em rede – GTR, a course that was offered to teachers from public schools in the state of Paraná, where the materials being used in the English classes were analyzed and commented on. The teachers stated that the focus on the classroom has to shift from only dealing with the culture from English speaking countries to a more global view of it, also valuing the students own culture.

The authors final remarks were that the way culture was dealt with in the classroom made it possible to build a bridge between the students own reality with what was being studied, therefore making the classes more meaningful to them, and helping them develop critical cultural awareness.

To sum up, as pointed out before, incorporating an intercultural approach to the English class environment would benefit students in the sense that along with learning the language, they would broaden their view of the world, and would be able to communicate with people from different background without feeling like an outsider.

On the other hand, the challenges faced by teachers might lead them to reject such an approach, considering, for example, that textbooks might not often incorporate culture into their content, and mainly because teachers may feel unprepared or lack knowledge to work with culture, and because teachers sometimes have a tight curriculum to follow, making it hard to incorporate an intercultural approach to their

classes. Taking the Brazilian context into consideration, what was possible to observe in the studies previously reviewed was that one of the main causes that an intercultural approach to language teaching is not part of the classroom is because teachers' lack knowledge about the approach, that is, they do not know what it is and how it can be applied to their everyday practices.

Considering what has been presented so far in this review of literature, the upcoming section will discuss the difficulties of teaching culture alongside language in an additional language classroom.

## **2.5. Difficulties of teaching culture in the classroom**

Although some researchers (Lo Bianco, Liddicoat & Crozet, 1999; Byram, 2002; Baker, 2003; Genc & Bada, 2005) have shown that an intercultural approach to additional language teaching can be profitable, they have also shown some difficulties to implement it. For instance, Crozet et al. (1999) point out two main reasons why the relationship between language and culture is still underplayed in language teaching and policy and therefore, why it is very difficult to have an intercultural approach to 'real' language teaching. Firstly, differently from grammar, culture is not given to the teacher. Dealing with culture in the classroom requires some effort from the language teachers, as they need to investigate and experience about this on themselves. Also this still requires them to rethink what language is, how "it shapes human interactions and relationships" (p. 10). Understanding this relationship between language and culture is, thus, the first step required from language teachers and policy makers to support an intercultural approach to language teaching.

The second reason pointed out by the authors is that the aim of Intercultural Language Teaching (ILT) has to be clearly identified by teachers. According to Crozet et al. (1999), ILT aims at "supporting the development of intercultural competence through the learning of foreign languages and by the extension through the learning of how language and culture connect in one's first and target language" (p. 11)

Furthermore, Paige, Jorstad, Siaya, Klein and Cobby (2003) assert that culture is central to language teaching, but 'developing appropriate goals and assessments remains a major challenge' (as cited in Schulz, 2007, p. 10). Schulz (2007) states that one of the reasons for that to happen is the fact that even though over the past 50 years many attempts were made to define what culture learning is researchers still have not come to an agreement.

For Turkan and Celtik (2007), the problem lies in the fact that “teachers lack the necessary knowledge of the target language culture and training in how to teach it, resulting in a state of insecurity to even approach culture” (p.22). In that regard, Schulz (2007) has a somewhat different view, and suggests that even though it is not difficult for teachers to have access to “culture specific practices [...] or products [...], most teachers lack sufficient background knowledge and experience to determine relationships between those practices and products and the cultural perspectives that gave (or give) rise to them” (p. 10).

Although teachers might feel unpowered or unprepared by the idea of having to deal with a culture other than their own, Byram et al (2002) points out that they do not need to know everything about the target community, that is, in fact, impossible. There are many cultures associated with one particular language, within English speaking countries, for instance, one is able to find different beliefs, behaviors and values. However teachers should be able to provide students with enough information, and let them draw their own conclusions based on what they already know about the target culture. The students’ background information always has to be taken into consideration when thinking of an intercultural approach to language teaching, after all, they are not blank pages, student’s have previous experiences and that has to be taken advantage of.

A survey carried out by the Social Science Education Consortuim in 1999 found evidences that:

[...] Foreign language teachers’ perceptions of what and how they teach about culture are quite different from their actual teaching. Teachers generally express support for the teaching about culture, select rather sophisticated rationales for teaching about culture, and describe their own teaching of culture as extensive, using varied teaching materials and strategies. When they are asked to define culture and to describe in detail how they teach about culture, however, their answers suggest that much remains to be done .... A gap remains between theory and what the foreign language teachers know, do, and believe they need.

... most teachers’ culture lessons are not well integrated with the language instruction and lack the depth that would be needed to truly illustrate the relationship between language and culture.

... the lack of systematic and in-depth teaching about culture allows the focus on similarities and differences to occur without a context that

would help students make sense of the information presented. (as cited in Schulz, 2007, p. 11)

Therefore, in order to overcome these difficulties, teachers should set goals and strategies to put their cultural awareness into practice. Seeleye (1997 as cited in Schulz, 2007, p. 14) points out six goals that should be followed by language teachers. They are, “help the student to develop *interest* in *who* in the target culture did *what*, *where*, *when* and *why*” and “some sophistication in evaluating statements about the culture and finding out more about it” (p. 18). Each goal is defined as follows:

Goal 1 – Interest: The student shows curiosity about another culture... and empathy towards its members.

Goal 2 – Who: The student recognizes that role expectations and other social variables such as age, sex, social class, religion, ethnicity, and place of residence affect the way people speak.

Goal 3 – What: The student realizes that effective communication requires discovering the culturally conditioned images that are evoked in the minds of people when they think, act, and react to the world around them.

Goal 4 – Where and When: The student recognizes that situational variables and convention shape behavior in important ways.

Goal 5: Why: The student understands that people generally act the way they do because they are using options their society allows for satisfying basic physical and psychological needs, and that cultural patterns are interrelated and tend mutually to support need satisfaction.

Goal 6 – Exploration: The student can evaluate a generalization about the target culture in terms of the amount of evidence substantiating it, and has the skills needed to locate and organize information about the target culture from the library, the mass media, people, and personal observation. (Seelye, 1997 as cited in Schulz, 2007, p. 14)

It becomes clear, then, that other than knowledge about the target culture, teachers should have access to a variety of resources, textbooks, songs, texts, videos, photos, maps, internet, just to name a few. It is also important that the teacher bears in mind that subjectivity is important when dealing with culture, this way students will be instigated to reflect on what has been presented to them and come up with their own opinion on the account that has been presented (Ros I Solé, 2003).

Sometimes intercultural activities can be found on textbooks, but that does not always happen. There is no agreement by textbooks authors on a minimum cultural content a book should have. Therefore, it

seems to be the language teachers' responsibility to find practical solutions to integrate culture into their teaching in one way or another. Also, authors such as Ros I Solé (2003), Peck (1998) and Henden (1980) assure that the language learner should be exposed to culture since the beginning of the learning process. Ros I Solé (2003) states that even though the students' linguistic abilities are limited at the beginners' level, they can use other "intellectual skills and previous knowledge to engage in cultural reflection" (p. 144). She also points out that "the textbooks need to take the students' subjectivity and world experience into account, only then a dialogue with the target culture will be personal, dynamic and realistic" (p. 149).

The following chapter will present the methodology of this study, by presenting, first, an overview of the method to be used, second, the context of the research and the participants, and third, the procedures for data collection and analysis.

## CHAPTER III

### METHOD

Considering the purpose of this study, the approach that will be used to conduct the research is qualitative. According to Shank (2002 as cited in Ospina, 2004, p. 4) a qualitative research is “a form of systematic empirical inquiry into meaning”. Ospina (2004) then explains that

by *systematic* he means planned, ordered and public, following rules agreed upon by members of the qualitative research community. By *empirical*, he means that this type of inquiry is grounded in the world of experience. *Inquiry into meaning* says researchers try to understand how others make sense of their experiences. [emphasis in the original]

Therefore, conducting a qualitative research offers the researcher some advantages (Ospina, 2004, p. 2), which include:

- Flexibility to follow unexpected ideas during research and explore processes properly;
- Sensitivity to contextual factors;
- Ability to study symbolic dimensions and social meaning;
- Increased opportunities
  - To develop empirically supported new ideas and theories;
  - For in-depth and longitudinal exploration of leadership phenomena; and
  - For more relevance and interest from practitioners.

Within qualitative research, several are the research designs that can be explored; “case studies using participant observation, semi-structured interviewing and document analysis, multiple case studies design adding comparative analysis, narrative inquiry, action research, grounded theory and ethnography” (Ospina, 2004, p. 4).

In the particular case of this study, the choice for an ethnography-oriented study is due to the fact that it allows the researcher



to be part of the community under study. In fact, Brewer (2000) defines ethnography as

The study of people in naturally occurring settings or ‘fields’ by methods of data collection which captures their social **meanings** and ordinary activities, involving the researcher participating directly in the setting, if not also the activities, in order to collect data in a systematic manner but without meaning being imposed on them externally. (p.6 – emphasis original)

### 3.1. The context of the research

This study was carried out during the first semester of 2013 at Curso Extracurricular at Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC). The Course offers English, Spanish, French, Italian and German classes to any person who wishes to learn a foreign language. The environment previously mentioned was chosen because it enables the observation of teachers and students of the teaching and learning process, and it was thought to be suitable for the possible identification of the cultural contents present in class.

The two classes that observed were of a pre-intermediate and an intermediate level. The choice of these two groups was due to the fact that I had easy access to the teachers of the two classes. The choice of a group from the pre intermediate level was important as it would allow me to see how language and culture relate in a class where the students still did not know how to communicate effectively in the additional language. The choice for a pre intermediate and not any other basic level was due to the fact that although the students did not know how to communicate effectively in the additional language, they still had enough knowledge that allowed them to communicate in the additional language.

The book used at the course is *Interchange 4<sup>th</sup> edition*, from Cambridge University Press. It is designed to teach North American English to people all over the world. The philosophy of the course is that language is best learnt when it’s used for meaningful communication, hence the book focuses on activities that promote communication. The 4<sup>th</sup> edition is the latest revised book from the company, and it features contemporary topics and a strong focus on both accuracy and fluency. Each student is asked to purchase the book at the beginning of the semester. The teacher has thirty meetings when the class is twice a

week, and fifteen meeting when the class is once a week to cover 8 units of the book. The classes last 1 (one) hour and thirty (30) minutes twice a week (Mondays and Wednesdays or Tuesdays and Thursdays), or 3 (three) hours on Fridays. The teachers are required to plan their classes, therefore, although they have the units to cover, they have freedom to bring activities other than what is brought by the book.

### **3.2. The participants**

This study's participants are two teachers, both students at the Master's program at UFSC and graduated from Letras undergraduate course. Alison is 22 years old and is currently studying phonetics and phonology for his Master's degree. He has been teaching English for 6 years and lived abroad for 4 months. Sabrina is 27 years old and is currently studying interculturality in foreign language teaching for her Master's degree. She lived abroad for two years, and has been teaching English for 3 years. In Sabrina's class, there were fifteen students, eleven studied at UFSC, two worked for the university, and two studied at different schools. In Alison's class, there were thirteen students, one worked for UFSC, two worked outside the university and ten were students from undergraduate and graduate programs at UFSC. The choice for two groups was because it would give me an idea of how teaching practices can be similar or different depending on the teacher who is conducting the class. The names used in this study are the participants' real names, they have decided it was unnecessary to use fake ones. Considering that the focus of this research is to investigate the interaction between the teachers and students in the classroom, it is not relevant to give a more detailed description about the students that were observed.

From the beginning it was made clear to the participants that the focus of this study was not on their linguistic performance, so they did not have to be concerned about it. However, no details from the study were given to them, so there was no risk of biasing the results. Since Sabrina is part of the same research group as me, she was aware of the study that was being conducted. But it is important to make it clear that this has not influenced her into changing the way she normally conducts her classes, through informal conversation I could notice that her teaching practice was not affected by me being in the class. Alison was aware of the main objective of this study, but he did not know further details.

### **3.3. Objectives of the study and research questions**

This study aims at understanding the relationship between language and culture in an English as an additional language classroom, keeping in mind that an intercultural approach to language teaching may be relevant considering that it may broaden the students' view of their own culture and the culture of the other. For such, it attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. What kinds of culture-oriented episodes can be found in the interaction of the classroom investigated?
2. Are there any episodes that are interculturally oriented?
3. What are the limiting factors for the incorporation of an intercultural approach in the classrooms observed?

### **3.4. Procedures for data generation**

To assure the reliability of the research, different data collection procedures were used, which made it possible to triangulate the data. According to Allwright and Bailey (1991) and Fetterman (1998, p. 93), data triangulation is a fundamental procedure to assure reliability to the research, assuring the trustworthiness of the results (as cited in França, 2007, p. 80). For such, the *corpus* of this study is composed of 18 (eighteen) classes recorded in video for each group that was observed, which comes to a total of 36 (thirty six) classes (the number of classes I watched were influenced by the fact that both teachers asked me to start watching the classes only after the students had their course books, as well as the bus strike that happened in Florianópolis during the second semester of 2013), field notes from the researcher's own journal, interviews with the two teachers, and transcriptions of the relevant moments from the classes and from the interviews.

#### **3.4.1. Classroom observation**

According to Gil (1999), classroom observation has a crucial role during the research process because it allows a close contact between the researcher and what is being researched, without any direct interference. In addition, Ludke and André (2005, as cited in França, 2007, p. 80) assert that when inserted in the context being researched,

the researcher is able to observe the reality of the participants, and the meaning they assign to it. Valdes (2001, p. 121) states that research within the classroom is of great importance, because it is where theories are “found to be true or false, productive or useless [...]”.

I started observing the classes only after the students had their course books, (the two teachers asked me to do so) which was about two weeks after classes had started. As a first contact, I talked to the students about my research and asked for permission to stay with them through the whole semester observing their classes, I also asked them to sign a consent form (see it in appendix A, p.105). As already mentioned, I made sure to inform them that they were not under any kind of evaluation.

I video recorded all the classes that were observed, and, although I was there only to observe the classes, Alison often included me in their discussions and activities. Sabrina also included me in her classes’ discussion, but not in the activities she had planned for her students. For most of the classes observed, I would sit right next to the door, which allowed me to pay attention to all the students and teachers at the same time. Figure 5 shows a diagram of the class.



Figure 5. : Diagram of the classroom

### 3.4.2. Field notes

According to Fetterman, (1998, p.63, 114) field notes allow the registration of the researcher’s reflections and impressions. The field notes were taken in order to guide the analysis of the data, allowing this

researcher to solve any doubts related to the classes that were recorded. While the classes were being observed, I would write down my impressions .I also wrote down the moments I thought could be relevant to the research.

### **3.4.3. Interviews**

A semi-structured interview was an important part of this study because it allowed me to have in depth access to the teachers' feelings and ideas, in the sense that it made it possible to ask further explanations about certain moments from the classes that were observed. According to Kerlinger (1980), through interviews the participants can go beyond what can be seen by the researcher, they can explain their reasons, motives and attitudes.

The choice of a semi-structured interview was due to the fact that I felt I would need some guidance about what was to be asked, but it also gave me the opportunity of changing the questions depending on what was answered by the participants.

It is important to state that the interviews were only conducted with the teachers. This choice was made because of the fact that the teachers were the ones conducting the classes, therefore it was their choice to promote intercultural discussions during classes or not. And since interviewing the teachers before observing the classes could lead them into changing the way they would conduct them, I chose to carry out the interview only after all the classes were observed so I would not take the risk of biasing the results .

The interview was important to understand how the teachers feel towards the language and culture relationship, and to understand if they were familiar with the term interculturality in additional language teaching, and how they could incorporate that into their classes.

### **3.4.4. Transcription of the data**

The transcription of the data happened as soon as it was gathered, so that I would not miss any important detail. It is important to mention that only the data relevant to this research was transcribed without using any special transcription conventions and using ordinary written English conventions, such as punctuation signals. By relevant is meant the instance in class where culture was part of the interaction between teachers/students or students/students.

### 3.5. Data analysis procedure

The first part of the analysis consisted in the organization of the transcribed data, from the classes and interviews, and the researcher's field notes. Second, since qualitative analysis is basically made through verbal categorization or coding (Dörnyei, 2007), I deeply analyzed the transcripts from the classroom interactions and the interviews and the field notes in order to find patterns. This allowed me to understand how language and culture related to each other in an English as an additional language classroom and to identify the kinds of culture-oriented episodes found in the interaction of the classrooms, the kinds or signals of interculturality in the observed classes and the limiting factors for the incorporation of an intercultural approach in the classrooms observed.

Question number One was answered having as point of departure Sarmento's research<sup>5</sup> categories. The reason why her categories were used to answer this question is due to the similarities of the culture-oriented moments found during the observed classes. Other authors such as Kramsch (1993), Byram (1997; 2002; 2011) and Crozet et al (1999) were also used to answer this question.

To answer the second question proposed in this study, I based the analysis on what authors such as Byram (2011) and Barrett (2008) understand by interculturality, and also on Kramsch's (1993) four lines of interculturality, namely, *establishing a 'sphere of interculturality, teaching culture as an interpersonal process, teaching cultural difference and crossing disciplinary boundaries*<sup>6</sup>. The data that was gathered was looked at having in mind that the teaching of language and culture should not be reduced to the transfer of information from one culture to the other, an intercultural approach to language teaching should promote a reflection on both the native and the target culture. Thus, this question aimed at finding out whether or not the two teachers have intercultural moments throughout their classes.

The last question which focuses on understanding the limiting factors on the two observed classes for the implementation of the intercultural approach was answered using the transcripts from the interview carried out with the teachers and the researcher's field notes.

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<sup>5</sup> See Page 34.

<sup>6</sup> For a more detailed explanation of Kramsch's four lines of interculturality turn to page 31.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present and discuss the findings of the qualitative analysis carried out in order to answer the three research questions proposed in this study, namely:

- a) What kind of culture-oriented episodes can be found in the interaction of the classroom investigated?
- b) Are there any episodes that are interculturally oriented?
- c) What are the limiting factors for the incorporation of an intercultural approach in the classroom observed?

The chapter will be divided into four main subsections, three of them devoted to answer the research questions proposed in this thesis and the fourth to conclude the chapter. In section 4.2 some of the culture oriented episodes that were found throughout the classes will be described and analyzed. Section 4.3 presents firstly a definition of what is meant by interculturality, and then transcriptions from the classes and parts of the interview carried out with the teachers will be analyzed to see how interculturality was dealt with in the observed classes. In section 4.4 the limiting factor to the implementation of the intercultural approach to language teaching will be looked at having in mind the authors that discuss the issue as well as the data from the classes observed and the interviews with the teachers. Section 4.5 will be a conclusion of what was previously presented.

#### 4.2. The culture-oriented episodes found in the interaction of the classroom investigated

This section aims at identifying which types of culture-oriented episodes were present during both observed classes. Throughout this section, I will be looking at the moments where culture was part of the class and the episodes that were identified will be discussed in the light of Kramsch (1993), Byram (1997; 2002; 2011), Sarmiento (2004) and Crozet et al (1999) studies.

As mentioned in the methodology chapter, the classes were observed and recorded. After carefully watching them, the episodes that were significant to this study were transcribed. The categories used to answer this question were based on Sarmento's study entitled, "Ensino de cultura na sala de aula de língua estrangeira" (2004). As previously mentioned in the review of literature chapter, in her study, Sarmento was able to identify four categories based on the definitions of culture brought by the teachers she interviewed, namely, culture as habits/behaviors, culture as language, culture as history and culture as information. Yet, in some cases the categories proposed by Sarmento seemed to overlap, specifically culture as habits/behaviors and culture as information as will be shown later.

Throughout the classes, it was possible to identify sixty-four (64) occurrences of cultural aspects. As mentioned before, these occurrences are categorized according to Sarmento's four categories, they are, culture as habits/behaviors, thirty (30) occurrences, culture as language, eight (8) occurrences, culture as history one (1) occurrence and culture as information twenty five (25) occurrences.

By **culture as habits/behaviors** is meant the instances in class where culture was seen as "behavior, habits, customs, aspects of everyday lives, among others" (Sarmento, 2004, p. 65). Differently from Sarmento's episodes, my data that fall into this category can be divided into two sub-categories, as, in some moments culture was seen as habits/behaviors that would represent a country/community, but in others the habits/behaviors were representative of the people who were inserted in the country/community.

This distinction is due to the fact that the teachers in some moments would generalize the cultural fact, that is, everyone in that country would behave that way; while, in other moments, they would mean that each person within the country/community would be acting in a unique way. In the following two dialogues, we can see Sabrina talking to her students about habits of some countries (Germany, Brazil and Thailand), and although she was trying to make learners aware of their own culture, which according to Byram (1997), Kramsch (1993) and Crozet et al (1999) is an essential element to develop the intercultural approach, it is possible to say that she generalized the information brought by the book and thus favored the maintenance of stereotypes.

This next dialogue took place at the audio lab, Sabrina took her students there to listen to a dialogue from a German girl who was on an exchange program in Canada and was going to visit a family for dinner



for the first time. The dialogue was about how one should behave on occasions such as this one. After the dialogue, the teacher talked to her students about customs related to some other countries, relating them to how the same custom would be dealt with here in Brazil. The examples of customs discussed in class were brought by the book.

### Episode 1

- In Germany you are expected to be on time. (sentence brought by the book)
- 1. T: What else are you expected to do?
- 2. Ss: Arrive on time.
- 3. T: Arrive on time, not early and not late, on time.
- 4. S1: If you are gonna be more than thirty minutes later  
...
- 5. T: You should call.
- 6. S1: Call and tell them.
- 7. T: Here in Brazil be fifteen minutes late is okay? If you are expecting someone for dinner, the person is fifteen minutes late it's kind of expected, no?
- 8. T: If you tell someone, be at my house at 8:00 and the person arrives at 8:20.
- 9. S2: It's common.
- 10. S3: It's like on time. (Classroom observation, 06/06/2013)

It is possible to observe with line (3) and line (7) that both the teacher and the students are considering that the whole population of Germany and Brazil behave the same way, Germans are always on time, and Brazilians are never on time. Such assertion contributes to the reinforcement of stereotypes, something Byram (2002) calls our attention to, be careful, we are complex human beings, and not just someone who is representative of a country or community. Let's consider the following episode where guided by an activity brought by the book, Sabrina was talking to her students about habits from other

countries using the course-book cultural information from Nigeria, Brazil, Egypt and Thailand.

## Episode 2

1. Thailand: Never touch anyone, specially a child, on the head. (Sentence brought by the book and read by the teacher)
2. T: That would be hard for us, no?
3. S1: We pet.
4. T: We pet them? So don't do that if you are in Thailand. If you ever go there, if you are traveling. (Classroom observation, 04/06/2013)

Although this discussion was very brief, it is possible to notice that even though the teacher tried to get her students to reflect upon their own culture and compare it to the other, there was a generalization of the information, every Brazilian likes to “pet” kids, and every person in Thailand does not, once again reinforcing the maintenance of stereotypes.

This following episode is an example of how culture is seen as representative of the people who are inserted in a country/community. The teacher, Sabrina, is talking to her students about their own culture, and interestingly, the dialogue promoted by the teacher called the students' attention to the fact that each person is different, that we cannot generalize and consider that everyone behaves the same way. Dealing with culture in the classroom can also help to teach students to be tolerant and understanding to habits that are different than their own.

This next episode was a result from a conversation Sabrina had with her students about culture shock. She asked them what they understood by culture shock, and since they answered that culture shock would be moments where you are inserted somewhere and that makes you feel uncomfortable, she asked them for examples that would illustrate moments where they would considerer to have a culture shock.

## Episode 3

1. S1: I am uncomfortable when people drink chimarrão on the beach (laughs).
2. T: Oh, aham, but that's something here, inside Brazil, no?
3. S1: Yeah, very uncomfortable. It's very hot, 40 degrees, the sun and the people drinking chimarrão.
4. (...) T: But here people do it, right? All the time. It's interesting because it varies from parts of the country, right? Where people, not everybody, drinks chimarrão as well, right, in Brazil? Usually, only, most here in the south of Brazil, no? Yeah, but it depends from person to person. So, if you think about it, something you only have here you think about it, Florianópolis we have things only from here, no? That people can, have to adapt when moving to Florianópolis, for example, food, or even the way the city works, and people and custom from here. The language, no? yes? The way people speak here, very fast.
5. S2: I guess in the past were more, now we have like half of the city Rio Grande do Sul (laughs), 25% São Paulo, and the other 25% manezinhos and different places.
6. T: So we have many people from different places living now here. It also changes many things in the city, no? Yeah?
7. S3: Yeah, I think they talk a little bit faster than (inaudible).
8. T: And some vocabularies as well, changes from place to place. The food we eat, because maybe here we have, we are near, closer to the sea, this is an island, so people eat a lot of fish. I don't know if that's true, right?
9. S2: People from different regions from Brazil says that I near them speak 'verde' different.
10. T: Oh, the word?
11. S2: I never has been in that situation, it's like Rio Grande do Sul people (inaudible).
12. T: Okay, but that's the pronunciation, right? Pronunciation of words can vary a lot!
13. S2: Yeah, but it was a surprise for me.
14. T: Yeah, because you never noticed, you never noticed, right? Aham. So you only noticed when someone from the

outside told you that the way you spoke. Sometimes that happens, we never think about it until we meet someone and the person says, oh here this is different, right? (Classroom observation, 13/06/2013)

When in line (1) and line (3) the student shows his disapproval when people drink chimarrão on the beach because the weather is hot and so is the beverage, he is expressing his dislike and at the same time showing no tolerance towards the habits/customs of other people, this is one of the motives why culture should be dealt with in language classes, to promote what Byram (2002) calls *savoir être*, the ability to evaluate our own values and beliefs and understand that they are not the only correct ones. In line (4), on the other hand, it is possible to notice that the teacher is trying to call the students attention to the fact that habits vary from place to place, and also that each person is different, hence promoting critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*), an ability necessary for the students to understand how their values affect the way they view the other (Byram, 2002).

It was possible to notice in the previously analyzed dialogues that it is very easy to create, and sometimes reinforce stereotypes, but if teachers conduct the class having in mind that each person is unique and that habits vary from person to person, they will be able to help students develop critical cultural awareness (Byram, 2002).

Culture was also found as **information**, that is, the knowledge one has about something or a certain place (Sarmiento, 2004). Both teachers and students at several points throughout the classes engaged in interactions as a way of transmitting and/or constructing cultural information. It is worth mentioning is that this information was not always only related to the culture of the other, there were moments that teacher and students would discuss things related to the students' own culture. The following dialogue is an example of how there were exchanges of cultural information within the students' own culture. Sabrina was talking to her students about professions, a topic brought up by the book. She asked her students to research at home the education someone needed to become a pilot.

#### Episode 4

1. T: (...) any other education the pilot needs, like a degree or something?
2. S1: Aham, a course, you have a course.

3. T: Aham, there is a course, aham.
4. S1: One hour flying R\$200. Depends of the city, but R\$ 200 or R\$ 290.
5. T: R\$ 290, depends on the place?
6. S1: Depends, yes. In Mato Grosso is more expensive.
7. T: Umm.
8. S1: Because technology and as peças? Quando quebram, combustível.
9. T: Aham, the gas.
10. S1: It's more expensive there. (Classroom observation, 25/04/2013)

Although there is no exchange of information relating the culture of the other to the students' own culture, there is an exchange of information within the students' own culture. Lines (4) "One hour flying R\$200. Depends of the city, but R\$ 200 or R\$ 290", (6) "Depends, yes. In Mato Grosso is more expensive", and (8) "because technology and as peças? Quando quebram, combustível", show us that the student is aware that things change from one place to the other, even within the same country things vary depending on where you are.

Sometimes people take things for granted, and dealing with culture in the classroom can help them rethink the pre-conceived ideas we have. The next dialogue is an example of how dealing with culture in the classroom can help us deconstruct this previously taken for granted information. Alison was talking to his students about ethnic foods, a topic brought up by the book. He very briefly discussed the foods from the other countries that were presented by the book, and quickly moved to ethnic Brazilian foods.

#### Episode 5

1. S1: Churrasco.
2. T: Yes, barbecue. That's something very, very Brazilian.
3. R: Argentinean?
4. T: A barbecue in the United States is like they have the grill and they put the hamburgers there and sausages, and that's it.
5. R: But Argentina has very good...
6. S2: It's a Spanish dish. Rio Grande do Sul, Paraguay, Argentina and Uruguay.

7. T: Well, so it's something from somewhere else.  
(Classroom observation, 13/05/2013)

Brazil is famous worldwide for its great barbecue, and many people just assume that this dish is originally from here, in line (2) “barbecue. That’s something very, very Brazilian”, it is possible to notice that the teacher is no different than many of this people and has a tendency to generalize. However, this information was questioned by the researcher (Argentinean?), and explained by S2 in line (6) “It’s a Spanish dish. Rio Grande do Sul, Paraguay, Argentina and Uruguay”, many other countries are also famous for this dish. The teacher also used the opportunity to talk to his students about how different barbecue is in the USA when compared to Brazil, trying to promote interculturality, “a barbecue in the United States is like they have the grill and they put the hamburgers there and sausages, and that’s it”. It is possible to notice that the teacher is not only comparing both cultures, but when he says that “that’s it”, that Americans barbecue is simply hamburger and sausage, he is trying to tell his students that the way Americans make their barbecue is different from ours, their barbecue is not as elaborate as the ones from South American countries. As Byram (2011) suggests, helping students develop intercultural competence helps them rethink things otherwise taken for granted, in this case that barbecue was invented in Brazil.

During one of her classes, Sabrina had a guest from the United States and she asked him where he had been to in Florianópolis, to which he answered he had been to *mercado público*. The reason why this dialogue is being mentioned is because he, as a foreigner, observed something we, as Brazilians, just take for granted.

### Episode 7

1. G: “The fish market has everyone selling the same thing (laughs), so, for the same price sometimes, so do I get fish from here for 20 reais or do I get fish from here for 20 reais.  
(Classroom observation, 06/06/2013)

Therefore, intercultural classes can help us not only be aware of how things work in the culture of the other, but also how they work within our own. Many times things are so automatic that we do not consider them as being cultural traits, we take them for granted, hence,

classes with an intercultural focus help raise students awareness to what happens around them, in their own reality.

This next episode is a conversation Alison had with his students about different holidays all over the world. This was an activity brought by the book in a section called ‘Snapshot’, which brings information related to cultural aspects from different countries, every lesson has a different snapshot. For this specific activity, the book dealt with the topic of holidays from China, Australia, Japan and Mexico. The teacher did not discuss the holidays from these countries in particular very much, what he tried to do was to compare them to the ones that exist in Brazil. It is worth mentioning that Alison believes that the students learn more when they are able to relate to what is being taught, or when they have had the opportunity to experience the event, that’s why during his classes he gives special emphasis to the students’ own culture, only comparing it to the culture of the other but without much attention given to it.

Although this next episode was categorized as culture as information, one could also say that it is dealing with culture as habits. During her analysis Sarmiento does not make a clear distinction between these two culture-oriented episodes, which makes it very difficult to differentiate them.

#### Episode 8

1. T: Okay, guys. Now have a look on the snapshots on your books, page 38. So, holidays and festivals. So you have the Chinese new year, the Australia day, Children’s day and the day of the dead. Do we have any of these holidays and festivals here in Brazil? Or similar ones?
2. S1: Children’s day.
3. T: Children’s day.
4. S2: The day of the dead.
5. T: So we have children’s day here in Brazil?
6. Ss: Yes.
7. T: Yes, it’s October 12<sup>th</sup>. And, but when is it in Japan? It’s may 5<sup>th</sup>, so it’s different. And what about the day of the dead?
8. Ss: Yes.
9. T: Is it the same day here in Brazil?
10. S1: It’s the last day of (interrupted).

11. T: It's the same day here in Brazil, but how is it celebrated here in Brazil?
12. Ss: Finados, finados' day.
13. T: Yeah, it's finados, but guys you are making too much noise. But how is it celebrated here in Brazil? How?
14. S3: The people go to the cemitério.
15. T: People go to the cemetery.
16. S4: They pray for the families.
17. T: Yes, they pray for the passed ones right?
18. S2: Take flowers.
19. T: They bring flowers.
20. S3: No happy.
21. T: It's not happy, right? But in Mexico is completely different, because they have parties ...
22. S3: In Mexico is very happy.
23. T: They have parades, they dress up like goddess and gods and go to the street to celebrate the dead, because they think the dead like to be remembered on a happy day.
24. S5: It's more or less the dead goddess.
25. T: There are gods, but I don't know the name okay! They pray for these, how can I say that?
26. R: Entities?
27. T: For these entities.

(There was a brief talk about the Chinese New Year, and how each year represents an animal, and that there are fireworks, but that was about it, end of first video).

(...)

28. T: And what about Australia day? So what about the Australia day? Do you know anything?
29. S1: No, but in Brazil have 7 de Setembro.
30. T: Oh, okay, in Brazil there is a similar one, right? 7 de Setembro. Very nice! Like in the United States there is the independence day. (the talk was over at this point, the teacher then asked the students to read the info that was brought by the book, once the student read the info the teacher added). Uhum, here in Brazil is 7 de Setembro, United States 4<sup>th</sup> of July, July 4<sup>th</sup>. Do you remember any others? Pedro?
31. S6: It's the 18<sup>th</sup> of September. (Pedro is from Chile)
32. T: September 18<sup>th</sup>.
33. S6: A lot of parties, drinks, typical food.



34. T: Very nice. (Classroom observation, 03/07/2013)

Line (1), line (5), line (9), line (11) and line (13) show us that the teacher is concerned with making bridges between the students' own culture and the culture of the other, trying to relate the holidays presented by the book and guiding the students to reflect upon their own culture. Alison is not only trying to get his students to think if there are equivalent holidays in Brazil or not, he is trying to instigate them to reflect on how they happen in the foreign country and compare it to how they are here in Brazil. Finally, after a discussion of how the holiday happens in Mexico and in Brazil, in line (28) the teacher asks his students what they know about the Australian day, if they know anything about it. In line (29) the student answers saying that he knows nothing about that holiday, but in Brazil there is a similar one, 7 de Setembro. The teacher then takes advantage of this comparison and relates the same holiday to different parts of the world (30).

As pointed out by Clark (1996, as cited in Sarmiento, 2004), it is important that students know more about different countries, as that raises their general knowledge and consequently their shared knowledge with other people. What one has to be careful, though, is not to deal with culture as isolated facts. According to Hadley (1993, as cited in Sarmiento, 2004, p. 76), presenting cultural facts isolated from a context might be inefficient considering that the facts: "(1) are in constant mutation, being hard to be updated; (2) may establish stereotypes, once they don't take into consideration cultural variation; and (3) leave students unprepared for situations that were not previously studied".

Throughout the classes, culture was also explored in connection to linguistic aspects, the class named by Sarmiento **culture as language**. Here, I will analyze two different episodes of that class. In the first one, Sabrina talked to her students about ways they could express themselves through language to express different degrees of politeness. In the next dialogue, after playing a dialogue where a girl was asking her friends to do some favors, Sabrina then talked to her students about the girl's word choices to ask for the favors.

#### Episode 9

1. T: So, did you pay attention how, how did she ask that favors? For example, what does she said to (tries to pronounce the characters name). I don't know how, what's his name. Ammm. How did she ask him for the camera?

2. S1: She explain first.
3. T: She explains first, right? The situation. She goes like, my best friend has a band. Aham, and then what was the question?
4. S2: Would you mind
5. T: Would you mind if I borrow your new camera. Okay, I'll write here on the board. (writes the sentence on the board). Okay, so the question is would you mind if I borrowed your new camera? And how did she ask her friend, the girl, for the t-shirt?
6. S3: I was wondering
7. T: I was wondering, okay! I'll play again here so you can pay attention to the questions, okay?! (the teacher plays the audio once again and writes the following sentence on the board: I was wondering if you could do me a favor?  
(...))
8. S4: Would it be okay?
9. T: Would it be okay if I borrowed that shirt that I like so much? Uhum, and let's see how she ask the guy (plays audio again). And I was wondering if, if what?
10. S4: If I could borrow.
11. T: If I could borrow your car to get there (she then has a talk about how the students' friends would ask them for something). So, am, you told me that for example, if your friends need a ticket, a ticket for RU probably your friend come and asks you. Hey, can you borrow me, lend me an RU ticket, right? Could you?! That's what you said, can you, right? Can I borrow your book, right? Okay, why do you think this girl Iana didn't ask these people like that (pointing to some sentences on the board). She asked like, would you mind if I borrow your camera, I was wondering if I could, if you could do me a favor.
12. S5: To be more subtle.
13. S4: To be more polite.
14. T: Look, would it be okay if I borrow that shirt of yours that I like so much? I was wondering if I could borrow your car? Okay, so if, aaa, if I ask you to turn on the air conditioning imagine, okay. So then you say, can you please or can you turn on or off the AC please? That's usually the way we talk here in the classroom, right? Okay, now imagine if a professor, I don't know a very formal person, some situation

like that. So you can go and just ask/say can you please turn off the air or turn on the air conditioning? Yes?

15. S1: You can't, you have to speak formal.

16. T: It's not like it's, it's more formal okay, then could you, would you mind, okay? So, she is asking for the car, okay, so it's not something that you ask everyday for people, right? So, and then she's; that's why she said, she just couldn't go there and say can you borrow me your car, can I borrow your car? Right? So that's why she said, I was wondering if I could borrow your car to get there. And there was an explanation before, she explain why she needed the car. (Classroom observation, 30/04/2013)

The teacher is trying to call the students' attention to the fact that there are different degrees of politeness when talking to people, and that word choices vary depending on the situation you are engaged in, and also with whom you are talking to. When engaged in a conversation the interlocutor will be representative of a group with specific identity traces, man/woman, father/mother, adult/child, and that will influence how we behave and the words we choose to use. Sabrina talks to her students about the fact that expressions such as "would you mind ... (line 11)", are not always used in formal situations, as suggested by the one of the students (line 15), and she calls their attention to the fact that the girl was talking to her friends, but since her request was not something you ask people every day she tried to be more careful with her word choices. The teacher does take into consideration the relationship between the people who are engaged in the conversation, the treatment changes depending on who you are talking to.

The second way in which culture was connected with linguistic aspects during the observed classes was when the teachers used aspects from the students' everyday lives to explain grammatical rules. In the following dialogue, Alison is teaching his students how to you *as ... as* in a sentence. The reason why I have considered this to be a moment where culture is expressed through linguistic aspects is because both teachers in many cases instigated their students to think about examples that are related to the students' own culture, and not only hypothetical situations.

This next dialogue took place in one of Alison's class while he was teaching his students how to use the comparative properly. In order to do so, he asked the students to think of examples about things that actually happened around them, he did not use hypothetical situations,

he chose to use real ones, making the examples more meaningful to the students.

### Episode 10

1. S1: Florianópolis isn't as safe as São Paulo.
2. T: Florianópolis isn't as safe as São Paulo. Isn't? Because I think São Paulo is more dangerous than Florianópolis.
3. Ss: Oh yeah!
4. T: So, Florianópolis isn't as dangerous as São Paulo. Do you agree?
5. Ss: Yes.
6. T: Now it makes more sense, right? (Classroom observation, 24/04/2013)

In the episode, Alison is not only teaching his students grammatical rules through culture, but he is also promoting cultural awareness. When in line (2) the teacher compares São Paulo and Florianópolis, and how one is safer than the other, he accomplished his intentions of getting the students to understand the new grammatical rule, and also got them to think about both cities.

During Sabrina's classes, there were also similar situations. See an example below of how she was teaching her students how to use the comparative, and asked them to use the information they had previously discussed about professions to create sentences. The sentences were:

*A factory supervisor earns more money than a volunteer teacher (sentence created by the students).*

*A factory supervisor earns as much as a volunteer teacher (sentence created by the students).*

And that triggered the following dialogue:

### Episode 11

1. S1: Poor supervisor.
2. T: A poor supervisor, yes probably! Because volunteers, it's kind of weird right? Because we were discussing that volunteers usually they don't get paid. But then he (pointing at one of the students) said that there is a kind of volunteer that you make money, right?

3. S2: Yes, in *Legião da boa vontade* they make by (inaudible), because they call to home. Ah, we need donations. And the attendants receive but donations.
4. T: So, if you get people to donate ...
5. S2: About 5%.
6. T: 5%?
7. S2: Yeah, it's usually something like that. (Classroom observation, 23/04/2013)

It is possible to notice with the sentences created by the students that they were using grammar rules that had just been taught to them, but also talking about cultural aspects while doing it. Line (1) shows us that student one (1), Paulo, was able to reflect upon the sentence that had just being created, when he says “poor supervisor”, he is able to express his ideas towards the fact that volunteers do not get paid, therefore if the supervisor gets paid as much as a volunteer teacher, he gets paid very little money. The teacher complements his thoughts by adding information that was new to her, and for most of the students, the fact that volunteers at *legião da boa vontade* get commission over the donation they are able to collect.

For one of his final assignments, Alison had asked his students to interview foreigners who have live(d) in Brazil, and ask them to compare their own culture to Brazil's. Simone, who is a teacher at UDESC (Universidade do Estado de Santa Catarina), interviewed a girl from the United States who was taking music classes at the university she worked at. There were many questions asked by Simone to the girl throughout the interview, but the one that is relevant to this study is when she asks the girl what she came to Brazil for.

## Episode 12

1. S1: When I asked her: what did you come to do in Brazil? She answered me: I came to Brazil to study music and experience the culture.
2. S1: 3<sup>rd</sup> topic about culture in general. When I asked her about what are the aspects of the Brazilian culture which attracts you the most? She answered me: the history of the country is very interesting, also the music which is related to history, is very rich and connected with the culture. (Classroom observation, 01/07/2013)

Simone's interviewee was the only person throughout all the observed classes who thought culture is closely related to the history of the country, none of the other students reflected as deeply in the matter as to realize that culture is also historically driven. Culture varies with time, and our decisions are shaped by the culture of the place we are inserted in and also by our own. Considering that history is made by the decisions we make, and the decisions we make are culturally driven, history and culture are very closely related.

In conclusion, it is possible to state that this study, even though carried out almost 10 years after Sarmiento's, has characteristics similar to hers. Just like in her findings it is possible to state that both teachers researched chose to deal with more visible aspects of culture, sometimes generalizing the national and regional aspects of the culture favoring the creation of stereotypes. In some moments, there was also a tendency to overvalue the culture of the other, diminishing the local culture. Even though the teachers dealt with cultural aspects during the classes, there was still a tendency to focus on the communicative approach instead of the intercultural approach, which promotes fewer possibilities for the students to develop intercultural competence. Just like in Sarmiento's findings, pragmatic rules were presented as neutral, there were pre established ways of speaking, students were given a model that should be followed when engaging in a conversation. There was not a creation of critical perspectives, a place where students would be able to reflect on the ideology present in the English language.

#### **4.3. Interculturally oriented episodes in the classrooms observed**

As already hinted in the previous sections, the two teachers did create situations which seemed to promote interculturality. Therefore, in this section, I will try to answer the second of the questions by deepening the issue of interculturality in the classes that were observed. Yet, before looking into more data, it is important to make it clear what is meant by interculturality in this thesis. As defined by Barret (2008), interculturality is

the capacity to experience cultural otherness and to use this experience to reflect on matters which are normally taken for granted within one's own culture and environment. ... in addition, interculturality involves using this heightened awareness of otherness to evaluate one's own

everyday patterns of perception, thought, feeling and behaviour in order to develop greater self-knowledge and self-understanding (p.1).

Barret's definition of interculturality matches the definitions of interculturality by authors such as Byram (2011), Kramsch (1993) and Crozet et al (1999), namely that to be intercultural means to understand the culture of the other without forgetting one's own. For these authors, the key to the intercultural approach is *the development of intercultural awareness*. Therefore, in order to find out whether there are intercultural oriented episodes or not in the classes that were observed these concepts will be central to the analyses.

By analyzing the data, it was possible to notice, at several moments throughout the classes that the teachers tried to raise the students' intercultural awareness. Also it was noticed that at times the intercultural approach was brought about in a planned way, and, at other times, it was completely spontaneous, i.e., unplanned. In this regard, Sabrina seemed to be aware of the two types of intercultural moments, and during her interview, she pointed out that when planning her classes she tries to take cultural facts into consideration. Yet, she suggested that sometimes when in class a teacher might face difficulties, "because sometimes complicated things appear in the book and then you plan ahead how you are going to deal with that. But sometimes no, sometimes that only happens in the classroom, so it's hard to control" (Interview, appendix B, p. 109), therefore, one cannot control everything that goes on in the classroom. Therefore, a teacher has to be prepared to deal with facts s/he understands and with facts that s/he does not. On the other hand, even though Alison did not mention the difference between planned and unplanned intercultural activities, he explicitly stated that he always tried to get his students to relate their own culture to the culture of the other; as for him, students learn more when they are able to make bridges to what is being presented, "if they have lived, if they have experienced that they would relate better to the content I was trying to teach them" (Interview, appendix C, p. 118).

Both Sabrina and Alison tried during their classes to encourage their students to reflect about their own culture and the culture of the other, instigating them to critically think what was given to them, and not only take things for granted. Kramsch states that it is important to have in mind that we all have a cultural reality and a cultural imagination, and in the classroom myth and reality are always present, reinforcing and contradicting one another (1993, p. 207).

The dialogue below, from one of Sabrina's classes shows us that the teacher is trying to get her students to reflect upon what they are saying.

### Episode 13

1. S1: Recently I broke my earphone, so when I am in the bus I have to listen to another ones' stories. So I was going to Canasvieiras and we have like this couple of Argentinos, oh it's so boring, the voice, the tone of the voice, the fast they speak. It's, it's, make me uncomfortable, but I'll not tell them that. I was like, oh my God.
2. T: But they were speaking in Spanish?
3. S1: Yeah.
4. T: In the bus?
5. S1: Yes.
6. S2: I think that's wrong.
7. T: Wrong?
8. S2: Only if they don't know to speak Portuguese, but they know.
9. T: Yeah, but they were in a group of (interrupted).
10. S1: Couple, two.
11. T: They are probably friends.
12. S1: Yeah, probably.
13. T: That's why they were speaking.
14. S1: Oh, they were screaming.
15. T: So you didn't like because they were loud?
16. S1: Too (laughs).
17. S3: It seems that their voice, it's kind of annoying.
18. S1: Yes.
19. S3: The sounds it's annoying, it seems there (inaudible).
20. T: And do you think that they think Brazilians can be annoying too?
21. S1: I think everything is possible.
22. T: Everything is possible? Because sometimes we say people from other places are annoying but we never thought that might be, they might think that we are also annoying, right? (Classroom observation, 13/06/2013)



In the conversation, line (1), line (6) and line (8) show us that both students have no tolerance for the habits (culture) of the other, in this case of the Argentinians who spend the summer in Florianópolis. The teacher, on the other hand, does not accept what the students are saying, and tries to show them that just like they have ideas about the other, they also have about us. When she says, on lines (20) “T: And do you think that they think Brazilians can be annoying too?”, and (22) “T: Everything is possible? Because sometimes we say people from other places are annoying but we never thought that might be, they might think that we are also annoying, right?”, she calls the students’ attention to the fact that we all have pre-conceived ideas about how the other should be or behave. She tries to help them develop what Byram (2002) calls *savoir s’engager* (critical culture awareness), “an ability to evaluate – critically and on the basis of explicit criteria – (some of the) perspectives, practices and products in one’s own and other cultures and countries”.

Dialogues such as this one are important opportunities for teachers to try to establish what authors such as Kramersch (1993) and Crozet et al (1999) call the “third place”. As already mentioned on the review of literature chapter, for these authors, there is a need for the creation of a place of mediation between the students’ own culture and the other, a place where the students can have an insider/outsider view on both cultures. For Byram (2000, as cited in Kramersch, 2011, p.354) having this insider/outsider view allows the learner to “see relationships between different cultures – both internal and external to a society – and to mediate, that is interpret each in terms of the other, either for themselves or for the people”.

Kramersch (1993), as already presented in Chapter 2, suggests that the way language and culture have been dealt with in the language class has changed over the last decades, and that four lines of thoughts have emerged which offer a richer way of dealing with the relationship between language and culture, they are, *establishing a ‘sphere of interculturality, teaching culture as an interpersonal process, teaching cultural difference and crossing disciplinary boundaries*. The following dialogue has signs of three of Kramersch’s four lines of interculturality, ‘establishing a sphere of interculturality’, ‘teaching culture as an interpersonal process and teaching culture as difference’.

Episode 14 comes from a conversation Sabrina was having with her students about what they understood by culture shock. She asked them to give a definition of what they believed would properly describe it, to which one of her students gave an example of an experience he had

abroad, for him that passage described what culture shock was better than any definition he could come up with. The event described by S4 triggered a discussion about situations the students had been in that could be considered culture shock.

#### Episode 14

(...)

1. T: Have you heard this expression before? What comes to you mind, culture shock? What would be a culture shock for you?

2. S5: Your impressions.

3. T: Aham, your first impressions when you first arrived in the place.

4. S4: When I went in 2007 to Barcelona, I went to a bar and there was two men kissing each other, and that was normal, for me it was crazy. In 2007, six years ago so people were kissing each other. Here in Brazil, even six years after that isn't common, right? (inaudible) in a bar, since isn't a bar gay (inaudible) normal bar (inaudible) people were kissing each other and this was common.

5. S5: And how do you know it wasn't a gay bar?

6. Ss and t: (laughs)

7. T: Okay, but then you noticed that in Barcelona it was common?

8. S4: Yeah, but it's common, right. *Na balada, tipo uma boate que tem na frente da praia, não era um bar gay, mas normal tá.*

9. T: In Barcelona it was common, nobody cares about it, and here in Brazil...

10. S4: *Se tu vai num, barzinho, sei lá, Chopp da Bhrama, sei lá, e tem dois homens se beijando ali "fecha a porrada".*

11. T: Aham, okay, so it's different? So, maybe there people are more open, do you think?

12. S4: Yeah, (inaudible).

13. T: Then here in Brazil, and I don't know. That could be a culture shock, yes? Because it is very different from country to country, right? Any other idea about culture shock?

14. S2: Anything that here is normal or not, that can the opposite.

15. T: Aham, what is considered normal in one place cannot be normal in a different place.
16. S2: Like in Russia they kiss each other as a cumpriment (greeting).
17. T: Like men you mean?
18. S1: Yes, everyone. Mouth, not on the face.
19. T: Here we are not used to that. Do you think you would get used to this custom, if you moved to a place? But culture shock is also about how you feel in a place, not only things that happen, sometimes your feelings about being there, about making new friends. Sometimes where you live, the people you live with.
- (...)
20. S5: Sometimes you don't have a (inaudible). I shared a room with a *muçulmano*.
21. T: Aham, muslin.
22. S5: Yeah, and he do the (makes a sign showing that the guy bows to do his prayes).
23. T: So he prays. That's praying right?
24. S5: Yeah.
25. T: And that was?
26. S5: I was like waking up and I looked and he was like doing this stuff, and I looked and oh, so?!
27. T: That's right, that's right. Sometimes if you have a person that has very different customs than you can feel, right? That's a culture shock. You were like, what is he doing?
28. S5: Yeah, I don't know like, oh my God, I can wake up and (inaudible), I can walk and go away or I have to stay there, quiet.
29. T: Aham, while he does his things.
30. S4: So I think that (...)
31. T: But did you talk to him about it, did you ask him?
32. S4: No.
33. T: No?! (Classroom observation, 15/06/2013)

As mentioned before, it is possible to identify three of Kramersch's four lines of interculturality in this dialogue. Line (4), shows us that the student was able to relate an episode that had happened to him in his own culture, and not only that, he was able to reflect upon the fact that even six years after the episode had happened it would still not

be acceptable if it were here in Brazil. Similarly, on line (10), the student is also able to compare what happened in Barcelona to what would have happened if the same situation were to happen in Brazil. Therefore, doing what Kramersch (1993) calls *establishing a 'sphere of interculturality* in intercultural interaction, students are able to compare the culture of the other to their own, and this will help students to understand the foreign culture. Line (11), line (28), and line (31), show us that both students and teacher were trying to understand the other, and that is Kramersch's second line of thought, *teaching culture as an interpersonal process*, we should "replace the presentation/prescription of cultural facts and behaviors by the teaching of a process that applies itself to understanding foreignness or 'otherness'" (Kramersch, 1993, p.206). When the teacher asks her student if he had talked to his roommate about the way he should behave when the other is praying, she is actually showing him that through communication many of our doubts and pre conceived ideas about the other can be solved. Finally even though in line (13), line (14), and line (15), they are talking about the country and not referring to people in particular, these lines are showing us that both the teacher and students are aware that things change from one place to the other, each person or community behaves a certain way, which might be normal to them but considered wrong or different to us. This is what is meant by Kramersch with her third line of thought, *teaching culture as difference*, we should always consider other facts that might influence the way people act the way they do, be careful not to reduce culture to national traits, Germans are like this or Brazilians are like that.

Teaching culture as difference is compatible with what Byram (2002) believes should be one of the objectives of the intercultural approach, we should be careful not to reduce the other from a complex human being to someone who is only representative of a country (or group), hence creating stereotypes. Deconstructing stereotypes was present in many moments throughout both classes, sometimes the initiative departed from the teacher, but at other times students themselves would make sure not to create stereotypes regarding other people, other cultures.

During one of her classes, Sabrina showed the students a video about French stereotypes, and later talked to them about it. The students were able to talk about the things they hear about other people, the ones that are true and the ones that are simply a matter of stereotyping. During this class, Sabrina tried to show her students that just like we create an image of the other, they do the same with us. After discussing

the French stereotype, she asked the students to think about Brazil, and how others view us. While constructing this stereotyped view of Brazilian people, it was possible to notice that the students would give their personal opinions about the matter, and not only try to think what a foreigner would expect from Brazil based on what is presented to the world about our country. One of these moments was when the teacher asked the students about Brazil's most popular kinds of music.

### Episode 15

1. T: (...) And what about samba? Is that the most popular music now in Brazil? No? what do you think is the most popular song now in Brazil? At least here (Florianópolis).

2. Guest: *Sertanejo*.

3. T: *Sertanejo? Sertanejo universatário? Sertanejo?* What else?

4. S1: Are you talking about popular or annoying?

(laughs)

5. T: Okay, sometimes popular can be annoying, I agree with you. But I mean popular, that people are always (...) Funk carioca?

6. S2: Pagode.

7. T: Pagode. Other kinds of music people here.

8. S3: Axé.

9. R: It depends where you are. If you are up north it is Axé, if you are down south it is sertanejo.

10. S3: Everything plays everywhere. Sometimes you are here at UFSC and in some part from a center is like playing sertanejo, and comes this guy with his car and sound and start playing like funk or tecno something.

11. T: Yeah, because now they have these electronic thing about mixing other kinds of music. I don't know how to call that, but anyways. What else people listen here in Brazil? We also listen to music that are not Brazilian music.

12. S4: Pop.

13. T: Pop, rock.

14. S2: Psy.

15. T: Electronic music in general are very popular here. If you go partying especially in these places. I don't know if you like it or not, but maybe this kind of music is more (popular)

than samba, I have the impression, what do you think? Yes, if you turn on the radio probably you won't listen to samba, probably you will listen, be listening to something like that, right?

16. S5: Samba is the only Brazilian real music.

17. T: You think so? Axé too, no? Funk carioca, no?

18. S5: But samba is more...

19. T: Characteristic you think? Interesting!

20. R: I don't think fun was born here.

21. T: No, no, funk no. But the carioca style.

22. S3: This kind of funk is, because the American funk is very different.

(...)

23. S5: Another stereotype in music is bossa nova.

24. T: Bossa nova, yes. We forgot to talk about bossa nova.

25. S5: Like the Girl from Ipanema, nobody listen to Girl from Ipanema.

26. T: Okay, that's funny, because the girl from Ipanema is a popular song almost everywhere. And in Brazil it's true, we almost never listen. (Classroom observation, 06/06/2013)

As previously mentioned, although the teacher asked the students to think of how foreigners see Brazil, it was possible to notice that the students at this point were Brazilians reflecting upon their own culture, and not as foreigners. When in line (1) the teacher asks her students what style of music is considered to be popular in Brazil, it shows us that the teacher is trying to get her students to reflect upon what is considered to be a popular music style here in Brazil, but not only in the country, she is bringing the discussion to the students' own context. In line (10), it is possible to notice that the student himself is starting to deconstruct the stereotype that each part of the country listens to a specific type of music, he is reflecting upon the information that was given to them by the teacher and critically analyzing it. This also happens in line (23), line (25), and line (26), the student and teacher are both aware of the fact that images that might represent a country are not always proven to be true. Brazil is famous for certain kinds of music, but that not necessarily means all Brazilians actually listen to them.

Deconstructing stereotypes was also part of Alison's classes. As mentioned before, as a final assignment he asked his students to interview foreigners who live(d) in Brazil. The objective of this

interview was for the students to find out what the person they were interviewing had to say about their own culture and Brazil's, making comparisons between the two. After having performed the interview, the students were required to make presentations with their findings and present it to the rest of the classroom. One of his students, Rosângela (S1), decided to play a 'guessing game' with the other students, while describing her interviewee she asked the others in class to pay attention to the hints she was giving and guess where the girl was from.

### Episode 16

1. S1: There não, not consume much booze, né?
2. T: Booze (correcting her pronunciation, laughs)
3. S1: And they consume a lot of tea. Booze, alcohol ao contrário, a lot of tea. (...) Agora, now what's the country of origin of my interviewee?
4. T: Mayara, she is talking to you.
5. R: Oh, yeah, what?
6. S1: What's the country of origin?
7. R: That's what Pedro and I were discussing, we were trying to get to that answer. It can be Italy, Italy has a good financial system. So it has to be a country in Europe, because all South American countries don't have good transportation.
8. T: What do you think guys?
9. Ss: Spain.
10. T: No, it's not Spain, it's not Greece.
11. R: The first language is not English, so it can't be England. I was going for Germany but the financial system wouldn't work.
12. T: It's not Germany.
13. R: A country that eats a lot of potatoes?
14. T: Yeah, they eat a lot of potatoes and sausages. They usually, they even eat sausage with salad.
15. S1: There is cool.
16. T: It's very cold there.
17. S2: Denmark?
18. T: No, it's not Denmark.
19. S1: The drink is vodka.
20. S3: Russia.
21. T: Yeah, it's Russia. Very nice, very nice, Rosângela.

22. R: In Russia they don't drink a lot of booze, just a lot of tea?
23. S2: O que mais bebem é alcohol.
24. R: In Russia they don't drink a lot of alcohol, they drink a lot of tea?
25. S1: *Yeah, ela ficou brava comigo porque eu falei assim, é as pessoas me perguntam eu já digo que meu de jejum é com vodka.* (Classroom observation, 03/07/2013)

From the hints Rosangela gave (lines 7, 11, 13, 24), students tried to guess where the girl was from by using the knowledge they had about specific countries. The reason why she decided to 'play this game' was because the girl who was interviewed was from Russia, and it is common sense all over the world that Russians drink a lot of vodka, but for her interviewee this was not true. Activities such as this one help the students not only improve their oral performance, as it was Alison's original idea, but also to learn more about different people, different culture, and thus showing the students that each person is different, and although they belong to the same community there are many other things that will influence who they are, and the way they act.

Considering that interculturality is the ability one has to experience the culture of the other without forgetting one's own, being able to reflect upon it and relate it to one's own culture, and also be aware that we should not reduce the other from a complex human being to someone who is representative of a country or community (Byram, 2002), it is possible to state that interculturality was a part of both Alison and Sabrina's classes. Both teachers were aware of the fact that culture plays an important role in language teaching, Sabrina states that "you cannot detach them for each other. Like only language, or only culture, it is all the time language and culture together" (Interview, appendix B, p. 109), a view also shared by Alison, "I try to make students relate to culture, to their culture through the target language, the L2 English in our case, right?! I think there is a very strong relationship between both" (Interview, appendix C, p. 118). Although both teachers believe language and culture walk hand by hand in the learning process, there were several moments throughout their classes where interculturality could have been more explored, but they chose not to. The possible reasons why they made this choice will be discussed more deeply in section 4.4.

During the interviews, both teachers were asked what was the objective of teaching culture, and they answered that when culture is



part of the class, and when students can relate to what is being taught they learn the language more easily. Sabrina states that she thinks “they (students) feel more comfortable if they understand more things about that (the culture), when they speak a language, they need to know, they need to feel comfortable speaking that language, that will include culture” (Interview, appendix B, p. 110), once again a view shared by Alison, “the objective of teaching culture is make the students relate more to the language, make students construct more meaning to what you teach them through culture” (Interview, appendix C, p. 119). Discourse and practice were proved to walk hand by hand in the teacher’s classroom practices, they both tried to explore (inter)culturality, some moments in more depth than in others, but always considering the student’s own culture as well as making comparisons to the culture of the other (Byram, 2011; Kramsch, 1999). The next section aims at trying to understand what might be the limiting factors for the incorporation of the intercultural approach, consequently trying to identify why there were moments where the teachers chose not to deal with the cultural aspects present in class more deeply.

#### **4.4. The limiting factors for the incorporation of the intercultural approach**

Some authors, such as Crozet et al (1999), Schulz (2007) and Turkan and Celtik (2007), point out several reasons why the intercultural approach to language teaching might still not be part of the language classes, some of them being the fact that the teacher might feel like s/he lacks knowledge about the culture of the other, limited recourses, textbooks that do not contemplate cultural aspects, strict curriculum to follow, among others. According to the authors, one of the factors why an intercultural approach to language teaching is not part of the classroom reality is due to the fact that culture is not one of the topics/disciplines that has traditionally composed the curriculum of the teaching education programs, such as the Licenciaturas in Brazil. Therefore, unlike grammar and systematic descriptions of the English language, the teacher himself/herself has to research and study about culture and think how it “shapes human interactions and relationships” (Crozet et al, 1999, p. 10). Thus, there is a lack of emphasis on culture in language teaching in the education curriculum, although there is a vast number of literature dedicated to showing that students can benefit from the intercultural approach (Schulz, 2007).

Teachers seem to have no difficulties in talking to their students about culture specific products (a special food, movies, literature) or culture specific practices (greeting, traditions, behaviour), what they lack is “sufficient background knowledge and experience to determine relationships between those practices and products and the cultural perspectives that gave (or give) rise to them” (Schulz, 2007, p. 10-11). Sabrina, for instance, mentioned during her interview that an intercultural approach requires more from the teacher, “... you have to reflect more I guess about your actions in the classroom” (Interview, appendix B, p. 114). According to her, it is not difficult to work with the approach, but the teacher has to adapt his/her practices, s/he has to bring other materials to complement what the book brings.

The workbook content is another problematic issue pointed out by the authors, as textbooks do not bring intercultural activities, or when they do, there is not a consensus between textbook authors on what is the minimum amount of culture that should be present in the book, “thus, the cultural content continues to be that selected for inclusion by textbook authors or for the intercultural experiences of individual teachers in a bits-and-pieces approach” (Schulz, 2007, p. 13).

Sabrina and Alison have diverging views about the textbook. Although both teachers believe that to some extent the textbook is designed to deal with culture, they perceive the subject differently. According to Sabrina, the book deals with culture in a very superficial way, “not to bring very deep discussion, I think also most of the time they forget a little about students’ own culture. I think they should ask more about the students, their daily life, their places, their families, you know to include their own information, I think it is still lacking that” (Interview, appendix B, p. 112). According to her, the book often brings facts from countries that the students have never thought about before, so, for her, it would be more interesting/meaningful for the students to talk more about their own lives, and compare them to those from the country/community the book deals with.

Considering that the textbook used by extracurricular, Interchange 4<sup>th</sup> edition, is designed to be sold in countries all over the world, it is not possible to expect that it could include specific cultural information from the students’ own culture, it is, in fact, impossible for the authors to emphasize one community over the other. It is the teacher’s responsibility to put the students’ own culture into evidence. In fact, this is one thing Alison did very well during his classes. Although the book brought cultural facts from different countries, he would always try to bring it to the students’ own reality, because for him

students learn more when they are able to relate to what is being taught, when they have experienced that fact. It is relevant to mention that Sabrina also related the students' culture to the culture of the other, but Alison did it more often, it is part of his teaching practice to always bring the students' own culture to the classroom, which many times leads him to deal with only the students' own culture, and very superficially with the culture of the other.

According to Alison the fact that culture is or is not part of language classes is more a choice of the teacher than a fact that the book does not bring cultural information. For him "the textbook presents a unit on different, for example different festivals, different holidays, and that is supposed to make the teacher deal with this different cultural facts that we can experience in the classroom. But for example, if the teacher just chooses to ignore those then it is very easy not to deal with culture in the classroom. So, in general yes, in general lines textbooks are designed to deal with culture but it is easier to manipulate them not to" (Interview, appendix C, p. 119). According to Turkan and Celtik (2007), the language teacher might lack the necessary knowledge or not have the necessary training to deal with culture in the classroom, and that is why he may choose to ignore culture, a view not shared by the participant teachers of this study. According to Alison, the reason why a teacher might choose to ignore culture in the classroom is because s/he is trying to avoid conflicts in the classroom, "you don't want students to argue over differences, maybe they might feel uncomfortable or they might feel excluded" (Interview, appendix C, p. 120). Sabrina also believes that the fact that textbooks only bring the external visible aspects of language and culture<sup>7</sup> is because they are trying to avoid conflicts, "I think they try to bring this perfect world, let's say. I think so, most of the time. If they bring something complex, like talking about a cultural fact that might be a conflict, they try to make it to the mediation terms, you know?! Not, not to cause conflict in the classroom" (Interview, appendix B, p. 111).

From what it was observed from both Alison and Sabrina's classes, neither of them chose to ignore cultural facts because they lacked the necessary knowledge to deal with it. Even when they were not aware of the cultural information the book was bringing, they would talk to their students' about it, always trying to take into consideration their own culture. Trying to make bridges between the cultures, and instigating their students to be critical about what they were talking,

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<sup>7</sup> See page 18, the cultural iceberg according to Weaver.

calling their attention to the fact that each person is a unique individual and that they have to respect that, because just like we have images of what the other should be like, they also have about us, and respecting this differences and learning to deal with them will make the students intercultural individuals.

Important to mention is the fact that both Alison and Sabrina are not the rule when it comes to our school system, but an exception to it. They are both deeply engaged in teaching, are fluent in English and Sabrina has been in contact with (inter)cultural readings. Hence, it is possible to state that teacher education that has an intercultural orientation can make all the difference.

Since as part of her master's research Sabrina tried to use an intercultural approach to language teaching during her classes, I asked her what her impressions about it were. She answered that it was nice, she had planned different activities to do with the students and as a result they were very enthusiastic. But at the same time she pointed out it was complicated to deal with the approach, the reason being threefold, (1) the system, (2) the time and (3) the book (which has been already mentioned before). By the system she meant that the teacher has to follow the methodology of the course, "the school asks you to teach in a certain format, so you wanna do something different with the intercultural approach but sometimes things don't match, so you have to go around and try to adapt what you wanna do and the possibilities that you have" (Interview, appendix B, p. 113). For her, the time available for the classes is too short to work with certain things, you have a lot of content to be dealt with throughout the semester, and if you spend too much time in a certain activity the rest of the contents are going to be compromised. And lastly, the books, as already mentioned, for her, they bring cultural facts from places where the student is not able to relate to, since s/he has no previous knowledge about, and very often the book does not include the students' own culture.

From what it was observed, the biggest problem for both teachers was, in fact, time. In spite of the fact that both teachers carried out valuable intercultural activities during their classes, due to the tight schedule, these activities were not explored as thoroughly as they could have been. Alison's initiative to have his students prepare seminars with interviews they had performed with foreigner was a great way to explore culture in the class, but because he had many students and very short time the activity was not taken advantage of.

But even though time was short and the book at times did not help to promote culture, both teachers did work with culture alongside

language. At times, they explored the possibilities of using culture in the class more deeply and at others it was done more superficially, but it is possible to state that every time that happened it was significant for the students' learning process. Both Alison and Sabrina were able to notice improvements in their students' performance. For Alison "they (the students) improved their speaking skills, the use of grammar, and they related to that. They spoke much more because they were talking about what they experienced in their lives, and relating to cultural facts, cultural events. (...) It goes apart from only grammar, grammar, grammar. And give them topics they can relate through grammar to real life, to experiencing things they go through. (...)I wouldn't say that when you are dealing with culture you are playing on safe grounds, but culture gives you something to work with, something more reliable to work with. Teaching becomes less abstract when you have experience to relate to, and then you give them the chance to speak, and then the chance to practice what you are teaching them as regards to grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation" (Interview, appendix C, p. 121).

For Sabrina, the benefit of dealing with an intercultural approach to language teaching in the classroom is that it helps her deconstruct stereotypes, pre-conceived ideas the students might have towards the other, it helps them to be more critical and not only take things for granted. For her, working with the intercultural approach "made them (the students) more willing to discuss things, because then you bring something maybe more polemic and they got more interested in that, not only the superficial, okay people in India eat this kind of food, that's it. But if we start discussing other things about the place, and the way people view life, and how is it here in their daily life, so they start discussing about that. And probably that will make a big difference in their speech, probably things they are learning, vocabulary, things like that" (Interview, appendix B, p. 116).

Therefore, although there are some limiting factors to the intercultural approach to language teaching, as the ones discussed in the section, if the teacher knows and follows this approach s/he can benefit from it, and guide his/her students to being intercultural citizens.

#### **4.5. Conclusion to the chapter**

As advocated by the authors on whom this study is based, an intercultural approach to language teaching can be profitable to the students who not only learn how to interact with people from other cultures, but also to respect their own culture. Being intercultural,

therefore, means to learn how to respect the culture of the other as well as ones' own.

It was possible to observe in the previous analysis that both teachers treated culture as an important part of their classes. They chose to give emphasis to the cultural aspects brought by the book, and not to ignore it or simply read about the facts and do not explore them. As already mentioned, it is important to have in mind that these two teachers are not the rule when it comes to our school system, they are both deeply engaged in their practices, and one of them has been engaged in (inter)cultural reading, therefore, one can assert that teachers who have access to an intercultural education can benefit from it, enriching their classroom practices.

When it comes to the limitations in the classroom, it is necessary for teachers to be prepared to deal with lack of time, appropriate resources, or specific knowledge about the target culture community, but if they are open to learning, dedicated, and daring, they will be able to approach culture during their classes, helping their students to perceive that some of their ideas about the foreigner are based on stereotypes and not actual facts, and also that just like they have pre conceived ideas about the other, they do the same with us.

As Alison pointed out during his interview, activities that have a cultural focus are enriching the students' learning process. According to him, the textbook and the teacher alone are not enough when teaching, activities with an (inter)cultural focus give students what to talk about, they can relate to what is being taught and construct meaning through it. Hence, as one of Alison's students said during a discussion in class, "English is cultural", to which Alison added "yes, English is being taught through culture" (classroom observation, 13/05/203).

## Chapter V

### FINAL REMARKS

This chapter is dedicated to summarize the main findings of the present study, it is divided into three sections. Section 5.1 presents the main findings obtained from the data analysis. In section 5.2 the pedagogical implications are going to be discussed. Lastly, section 5.3 will bring the limitations of the study and suggestions for further research.

#### 5.1. Conclusions

This study had as its main objective to investigate the relationship between language and culture in an English as an additional language classroom. In order to do so, three research questions were proposed, (1) What kind of culture-oriented episodes can be found in the interaction of the classroom investigated?, (2) Are there any episodes that are interculturally oriented?, and (3) What are the limiting factors for the development of an intercultural approach in the classrooms observed? Therefore, this section aims at summarizing the main finding related to each of these questions.

It was possible to identify four different types of culture oriented episodes during the data analysis, culture as habits/behaviors, culture as language, culture as history and culture as information. Important to mention is that these categories were based in a study carried out by Sarmento (2004). In her study, she did not make a clear distinction between these categories, hence, at times, they seemed to overlap, making it difficult to distinguish to which category the episode would belong to, that happened especially with culture as habits/behaviors and culture as information.

It can be pointed out some differences between my study and the one carried out by Sarmento (2004). One of them was that the data that fell under the culture as behavior/habits category could be divided into two sub-sections: culture sometimes was seen as representative of a country/community, but at others it was seen as representative of the people who live in this country/community. Another difference is that I could identify was that Sarmento (2004) did not find any episode where culture was seen as history. I found one in my data.

Although there are a few differences between both studies, some similarities could also be pointed out, even though this study was carried out many years after Sarmiento's. In my study, both researched teachers had a tendency to focus on more visible aspects of the culture during their classes, favoring the creation of stereotypes, as the teachers, at times, made generalizations about national and regional aspects of the student's own culture. There were also few moments where the culture of the other was overvalued, hence, where the students' own culture was diminished.

Although it has been pointed out that an intercultural approach to language teaching may be beneficial to the students' learning process, both teachers seemed to be teaching following the communicative approach during their classes. Therefore, this choice did not give the students enough opportunity to fully develop intercultural competence, necessary to any language learner according to authors such as Byram (2011).

Another conclusion that was possible to be reached is that both teachers treated language as a pre-established set of rules and they gave students models that should be followed, as if language were static. Also, the teachers were able to foster few moments where the students would be able to reflect upon the ideology behind the English language and become critically aware of linguistic and cultural prejudices and stereotypes.

Regarding the presence/absence of interculturality in the observed classes, it is possible to state that the classes observed presented some intercultural moments. And, although, as already suggested above, both teachers worked with more visible aspects of the language, they were aware that invisible culture plays an important role in language learning, and they tried to plan and perform with the some inter-cultural activities which dealt with the invisible aspects. Nevertheless, sometimes cultural issues would come up in a spontaneous way, and this made it hard for the teachers not to deal with culture in an essentialist way. Even though dealing with culture in the classroom might be difficult at times, both teachers believe that students learn more when they are able to relate to what is being taught to some cultural context, that is one of the reasons for culture to be part of their classroom practices. During a few classroom discussions, both teachers tried to make students reflect upon what culture in a critical way without allowing the naturalization of cultural facts.

Some facts might influence why an intercultural approach to language teaching is still not part of present classroom practices: such as



time constraints, limited resources, strict curricula, and/or not enough knowledge about the approach. In Sabrina's opinion, teachers might choose not to work with the intercultural approach during their classes because it requires more effort from them, therefore making it easier to simply pretend it does not exist. The textbook might also be one of the reasons why the intercultural approach is not dealt with in the classroom. The teachers' opinions diverge when the subject is the textbook content, which in the case of this study was *Interchange 4<sup>th</sup>* edition from Cambridge University Press, in relation to culture. Sabrina believes the textbook deals with culture in a very superficial way. Alison, on the other hand, believes that it is the teacher's decision to work or not with culture, and not a matter of the book bringing the appropriate information.

To summarize, I may say that, according to the investigated teachers, the intercultural approach to language teaching may be beneficial to the students' learning process. They mention that the benefits of dealing with culture in the classroom are threefold, (1) students may deconstruct pre-conceived ideas they might have about their own and the other's culture(s), (2) students may learn more when they are able to relate in a cultural/contextual way what is been taught, and (3) it may help students to be more critical and not to accept naturalized views of culture.

It is necessary to highlight once more that when it comes to the actual school system, the observed teachers are an exception. They are both fluent in English, both deeply engaged with their classroom practices and Sabrina has been in contact with (inter)cultural readings, hence it is possible to state that teacher education that has an intercultural orientation may make a difference

To conclude this section, I would like to recall a situation previously mentioned in this study where one student said that "English is cultural", to which Alison replied "yes, English is being taught through culture" (classroom observation, 13/05/2013). Thus, this instance shows how interested the students were in the subject under discussion, and suggests that working with culture in the classroom may instigate students to participate more, hence both developing intercultural competence and communicative competence.

## **5.2. Pedagogical Implications**

The findings of this study showed that it is possible to incorporate the intercultural approach to language teaching. The classes that were observed did present some traces of the intercultural approach, making it possible to state that classes that are interculturally oriented may be beneficial to the students. Interculturally oriented classes may help students deconstruct previously conceived ideas, as well as reflect upon their own culture as well as the culture of the other.

As the researched teachers themselves pointed out, dealing with culture in the classroom is beneficial to the students in the sense that when they are able to relate to what is being taught they learn more. It also helps students to become more critical, reflecting about what they are studying and not only taking the information presented to them for granted.

Although it was shown with the results of this study that it is possible to incorporate an intercultural approach to language teaching, having the knowledge of how to work with the approach might still be a barrier to be overcome. Teachers should be presented with readings regarding the approach, as well as clear examples of how it can be used in their everyday classroom practice. It would be advised that the school promoted moments where teachers could have access to this new knowledge, through readings (as already mentioned) and seminars which would allow them to reflect upon their practices as well as have the opportunity to talk to their colleagues about the matter.

Another point that has to be made clear to the teacher is that they should go beyond what the textbook offers them, exploring other possibilities, such as bringing authentic materials to their classes, e.g., materials that were not designed with the purpose of teaching a language. This way their teaching practices can be much richer, making the class more meaningful to both teachers and students.

### **5.3. Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research**

This study was an attempt to investigate the relationship between language and culture in two English as an additional language classroom. It is important to make it clear, once again, that this study was carried out in a private English course context, which involves teachers who are fluent in the language, and students who are interested in learning, which are not representative of all additional language teaching environments in Brazil. Therefore, I would suggest that further

research is necessary to be carried in other teaching environments, such as public and private regular schools.

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Zacarias, R.C.R and Freitas, S.C. (s.d.) Os efeitos da interculturalidade no ensino de língua inglesa.

**APPENDIX A**

UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE SANTA CATARINA  
CENTRO DE COMUNICAÇÃO E EXPRESSÃO  
DEPARTAMENTO DE LÍNGUA E LITERATURA  
ESTRANGEIRAS  
FORMULÁRIO DE CONSENTIMENTO LIVRE E  
ESCLARECIDO

Prezado(a) aluno(a),

Gostaríamos de lhe convidar a participar de um projeto de pesquisa sobre a consciência cultural de alunos e professores em um curso de inglês como língua adicional, supervisionado pela Profa. Dra. Gloria Gil. Você está sendo convidado(a) a participar deste estudo por estar inserido no ambiente que visamos pesquisar. Por favor, leia este termo de consentimento e, se, concordar com a informação aqui apresentada e aceitar participar, assine onde indicado.

**Título do Projeto:** Uma investigação sobre a consciência cultural de professores e alunos em um curso de inglês como língua adicional.

**Objetivo do estudo:** O objetivo deste estudo é investigar a relação entre língua e cultura dentro da sala de aula.

**Procedimentos:** Se você aceitar participar deste estudo, suas aulas serão observadas e gravadas durante o primeiro semestre de 2013. Além disso, caso necessário poderei pedir que vocês preencham um questionário com o intuito de esclarecer alguns pontos que não ficaram claros durante minhas observações. Assim, para facilitar o contato peço que preencha, neste formulário, seu nome, endereço e telefone.

**Riscos e benefícios:** Não há riscos em participar deste estudo. Caso você tenha dúvidas sobre o estudo e os procedimentos, poderá tirar suas dúvidas comigo. Ao final da pesquisa, os resultados deste estudo serão tornados públicos, mas sua identidade será mantida totalmente preservada e não será incluída nenhuma informação que possa identificá-lo (a). Seu nome e telefone são úteis apenas para uma possível necessidade de contato no futuro.

**Natureza voluntária do estudo:** Sua decisão de participar ou não do estudo não irá afetar você ou sua relação com seu estabelecimento de ensino e nem seu rendimento nas aulas de inglês do extracurricular de nenhuma forma. Se você decidir participar e depois desistir, não há nenhum problema. Caso você desista, peço apenas que notifique a mim, Mayara Volpato. Não é necessário justificar-se.

**Contato:** A pesquisadora responsável por este estudo é a Mayara Volpato. Para contatá-la você pode telefonar (48-99846590).

**Declaração de consentimento:**

Declaro que li a informação acima. Quando necessário, fiz perguntas e recebi esclarecimentos. Eu concordo em participar deste estudo.

Nome ..... completo:

.....

Telefone: ..... E-mail:

.....

Florianópolis, ..... de Abril de 2013

Assinatura:

.....

## APPENDIX B

Interview with Sabrina - 16/09/2013

1. Sabrina how long have you been teaching English?

I think 6 years maybe.

Six years?

Yeah, but during two years I didn't teach at all. So, I think totally maybe 3 years, four, okay?

2. Have you ever been abroad?

Yeah, I have been abroad once, and I stayed there for 2 years. In New York.

New York?

Uhum.

3. Do you think this experience has influenced the way you teach?

I guess so, yeah, probably yes.

How do you think that? Why?

Oh, well, I mean in terms probably vocabulary, in the... English itself the language. Also about the experience, sometimes the students ask me things about traveling abroad, or I don't know, sometimes they have this curiosity about native speakers and things like that. And then that probably influence in the classroom, probably yes.

4. What do you understand by culture?

Well, culture for me can have different, we have different views of that. So, for me it has to do with your own experience in your life, includes your tradition from your family, but also your world view, and based on that that is your culture, for me. But it is a very large concept it is hard to explain.

5. Do you see any relationship between language and culture?

Yeah, for sure. I think both of them you cannot uhum, you cannot detach them for each other. Like only language, or only culture, it is all the time language and culture together.

6. When planning your classes do you take cultural facts into consideration? Or like do you use them as you go? Like oh, here there is a cultural fact let's talk about it, or do you plan it ahead?

Well, usually I check before everything is the book, whatever, any idea that comes out and I think about that. And I think so, because sometimes complicated things appear in the book and then you plan ahead how you are going to deal with that. But sometimes no, sometimes that only happens in the classroom, so it is hard to control. But probably yes. I think about it before.

7. Does the book bring cultural facts often? How do you think they deal with it?

They bring more is facts, like for example: an information about a certain group of people, like they bring their food from a certain country. For them is more like that, food, ah, I don't know. But sometimes they bring other things that are not common, for example here in Brazil that the students don't know and they ask, I know they will ask me about it, or they want to understand so I have to explain for them. Or sometimes they know because, I don't know, from other places, other countries because they watch movies and TV series, so when they find things on google and they have friend who travel abroad, they already traveled abroad so... they have these ideas, or here inside Brazil also.

8. In your opinion, what is the objective of teaching culture?

Well, I think if you wanna learn a language and as I said it's all together with the language, so all the time you will have that included in your, in the language. And I think also students, they feel more comfortable if they understand more things about that, when they speak a language, they need to know, they need to feel comfortable speaking that language, that will include culture.

Okay, so you think knowing how to deal with cultural facts will make you feel comfortable in speaking the language?

Probably more confident I think. I think yes, so they won't be like in doubt about things if they have more information, that will make things easier for them, probably.

9. How do you deal with cultural facts during your classes?

Well, depends on very specific situations. For example, well, I notice some books they bring, they avoid some issues, they avoid talking about sex and drugs, IF they talk is only in general. And some cultural facts also they try to avoid to go into conflicts, but sometimes they appear in the classroom and you know that you have to talk with your students about it. So it will depends, but I try to find a balance because I don't wanna cause a fight in the classroom, about things so we also, I have to plan ahead I think.

So you think text books they try to be neutral when dealing with cultural facts? They try to deal with the more basic things, the things that won't lead to any conflicts or any...

I think so, I think they try to bring this perfect world, let's say. I think so, most of the time. If they bring something complex, like talking about a cultural fact that might be a conflict, they try to make it to the mediation terms, you know?! Not, not to cause conflict in the classroom.

You would say as of talking about religion or something? Those are things you normally don't see in textbooks?

Yeah, or if you see is just a matter of a fact there. But they don't go like...

It's just there?

Yes, it's just there. They don't bring it to the real life, or they avoid to make questions that students will discuss religion or their view. You see that sometimes they avoid those ones. Or criticize, or things like that, because they know that students might be, or one student might be hurt (laughs), so I think they try to avoid certain issues.

And the textbooks you work with, it is worth mentioning, they are designed for all over the world right? It is not designed for one population specifically?

The one that I am working now yes, it is for, it's like they sell it for the whole world, and you can see that mostly they sell it to Asian countries, probably, because you see that they try to relate that more. So they have this commercial part, so they know they have a certain public to sell the books, and probably they also try to focus, or I don't know the content in the book is for that people, certain places probably!

So you think they end up focusing on one population more than the other, or do you think they do talk about everywhere or they try to talk?

No, they try to bring it to any place, any country that teach English in any context, I think they try to be very general and broad, but I also think they have in mind that they have a certain type of people will buy the book, or certain kind of people will buy the book, or certain schools will buy that book.

They wanna sell it!

They wanna sell it, and so they probably think about that people, because they also wanna make money.

10. We did talk about this a little bit but, do you think textbooks are designed to deal with cultural differences?

To a certain extent yes, some book are, but I think it is still in a very superficial way. Not to bring very deep discussion, I think also most of the time they forget a little about students' own culture. I think they should ask more about the students, their daily life, their places, their families, you know to include their own information, I think it is still lacking that.

You mean on the instructions? Like, oh this class is based on this, so the teacher should be encouraged to talk to students...

They try to bring facts from other places and I think sometimes they talk about five or six countries that the students don't even know about it, and then they have only one or two questions about the students own country. Maybe that would be more interesting to them to talk about their daily lives, and then bring one place different or a person from a different community talking about. Maybe that would be more meaningful, I don't know. Because sometimes they bring, I don't know, in the book\_ let's talk about food, and sometimes they bring a place very, that they never heard about it and then they have nothing to base, you know? Or to think about it, and we don't have time to go and search about information from those places. And then they say:\_ okay!! They do it. But it is kind of...

You just take it for granted?

It is like curiosity, but oh, okay, so? This country exist, this food exist, and there are people living there but nothing else, that is it.

11. You were working, you are also taking your masters, so you are going through you research as well, and you just applied you research on a classroom you were working, right? So what was your impression about using the intercultural approach during your classes?

I liked it a lot for now, I think it was very nice. We tried to do different activities and plan ahead some new things with the students, and I think they were, they were very enthusiastic about it. But at the same time I think it can be kind of complicated, working with the kind of system we have in classes, and also the book and with the time.

What do you mean by systems?

Like, we have to teach in a certain format still, like the school asks you to teach in a certain format, so you wanna do something different with the intercultural approach but sometimes things don't match, so you have to go around and try to adapt what you wanna do and the possibilities that you have.

But that is possible, you managed to do that?

I think so, and that is why I wanna verify that in the research, if that really worked. But most of the time I think yes, but some of the students complain about the time we have.

It's too short?

Too short to work with certain things, and then we use, we talked about culture or we did some activities the ones that are planned for a long time and then we have short time to do the other ones, so it is kind of you have a lot of content to , I don't know, just 30 hours in the semester , so it is short time to work with them.

So you think you think working with culture in the class would require more time than the regular classes you deal with?

I think because we have, in the intercultural approach they ask us to do some different things that we are used to do in the classroom like encourage students to do research to find more information, maybe to reflect about things, and that might take time, and they have to make, they have to do more homework as well. So it depends on the context where you are, students are more focused on only the linguistic terms and, or they don't have time, or they are not very interested in thinking



about it, stopping to reflect about things. So that's what I mean, maybe we have less time, in this sense.

12. Did you find it difficult to work with that approach? You've mentioned the time, that you thought it was short, but other than time...

Not difficult, no it wasn't difficult I think. But you have to reflect more I guess about your actions in the classroom.

So it requires more from the teacher?

From the teacher, yes. And then as we work with the book, and the book is not (inaudible), maybe if we have an intercultural approach and the book was also in the same philosophy, let's say, it would be easier. The material that we work with, because then I have to bring other materials, okay I would bring anyways. But I think that would be easier for the students to understand, because when they have the book they look at the book, and they expect you to do that. So, if maybe we had different kinds of materials in the class, that we can use that would be a little bit easier. But it wasn't difficult.

13. How would you describe the benefits of working with an intercultural approach?

Well, I think it is more for the students because I think they have a lot of prejudice about many things, and they don't have many, I think they don't have much information about, even from the culture the new language they are learning, and sometime from other places as well, they have these ideas, but that might not be true and they just accept that. And then when we start discussing in the classroom they start noticing that just like in Brazil not everybody is the same, in other places people have different views of lives in the same place sometimes, and the culture can be the culture of a group, but can be the culture of a country, can be a culture in terms of family and a way of live, and then we start discussing this issues and we think they open their minds for those things and they learn more about the language, they get more interested in the language they are learning, in the videos, the movie that they are gonna watch, to see that. So I think that is the benefit.

14. Did you see any difference in your students' performance from previous classes when you didn't focus on the intercultural approach? I know

that is the topic of your research, but have you come to any sort of conclusion?

If you think in terms of language they might, they might, let's see, speak better English let's say because they study in the intercultural approach or any other approach, just because they have more classes. But I guess it made them more willing to discuss things, because then you bring something maybe more polemic and they got more interested in that, not only the superficial, okay people in India eat this kind of food, that's it. But if we start discussing other things about the place, and the way people view life, and how is it here in their daily life, so they start discussing about that. And probably that will make a big difference in their speech, probably things they are learning, vocabulary, things like that.

## APPENDIX C

Interview with Alison, 11/09/2012

1. Alison, how long have you been teaching English?

I've been teaching English for six years now.

Six years?

Yes!

2. Have you ever been abroad?

Yes, once. I lived in Massachusetts for 4 months and I worked at burger king, I was on an exchange program, work and travel program.

3. Do you think this experience has influenced the way you teach? And how?

I have never given any thought to that, but I can't really tell because I don't remember anything related to teaching while I was there, I only worked. Of course it influenced the way I use the language, and that maybe has influenced the way I teach, but the experience itself I don't think has influenced the way I teach.

4. What do you understand by culture?

It's a very complex issue. It is a very complex construct, and a very important one for language acquisition, for language learning. I think it encompasses many things, like habits, traditions, identity, and maybe many other things that I cannot recall, that I cannot think of, and they all are intertwined, and they are all playing a role in the way that you are, in the way that you do things, in the way that you act, in your beliefs.

5. Do you see any relationship between language and culture?

Yes, I do. And I try to make students relate to culture, to their culture through the target language, the L2 English in our case, right?! I think there is a very strong relationship between both. Can you repeat the question?

If you see a relationship between language and culture!?

So, there is a relationship and I told you I believe in that because I try to make students act upon their culture through language, the language I teach them. And that's it.

6. When you plan your classes, when planning your classes, do you take cultural facts into consideration?

Aham, I do. Can I give you an example?

Perfect! Yes, please!

Okay, so for example last semester I had two groups and they were supposed to prepare seminars in English, and for the seminars they, ã, I encouraged them to choose cultural events or, events or holidays that we have here in Brazil and asked them to prepare the seminars based on those, because I noticed that if they have lived, if they have experienced that they would relate better to the content I was trying to teach them.

7. What do you think is the objective of teaching culture? I know you just sort of answered with your last talk, but...

I think culture it's different to teach. I think it's easier to make students relate on experience, and through experience you can tackle culture. And the objective of teaching culture is make the students relate more to the language, make students construct more meaning to what you teach them through culture.

8. How do you deal with cultural facts during your classes?

Usually the book presents cultural facts from different countries, and I try to relate those cultural facts that the textbook presents to the cultural facts that the students experience here in Brazil, that they are famous here in Brazil. And not like the biggest ones like carnival, I even try to make them relate to the smaller ones, the less none ones, for example festa da laranja, it's easier for them to have participated in festa da laranja than to the carnival, because sometimes they have a very general idea of what carnival is, and maybe about the more, I don't know how to say that, the more interior, the less none events, they might know more about that because it is more accessible to them.

9. Do you think textbooks are designed to deal with cultural differences? Cultural facts?

I am not so sure about cultural differences. Usually the textbooks presents a unit on different, for example different festivals, different holidays, and that is supposed to make the teacher deal with this different cultural facts that we can experience in the classroom. But for example, if the teacher just chooses to ignore those then it is very easy not to deal with culture in the classroom. So, in general yes, in general lights textbooks are designed to deal with culture but it is easier to manipulate them not to.

Okay, so you think it is more a fact of the teachers' option, or the teachers' decision then a matter of the book itself?

Yes, aham! The resources available there then it is your opinion how to use it.

Why do you think a teacher would choose not to deal with it?

Oh, maybe... I have always dealt with it, so it is difficult for me to think of a reason not to deal with culture, but sometimes you wanna protect the students. I don't know, you don't want students to argue over differences, maybe they might feel uncomfortable or they might feel excluded. That's a reason, but I have never experienced it.

10. I've noticed during your classes that you give special attention to pronunciation. Why is that?

Okay, because pronunciation is very affected by individual differences, and I think that pronunciation can help you communicate. You don't have to go for native like pronunciation, but I think you should go for intelligible pronunciation. That's why I teach them many phonological aspects of the target language.

Do you think dealing with your own dissertation also makes you more comfortable to deal with it during classes?

I think it is the other way around. As I like pronunciation than it lead me to deal with it in my dissertation, and then it will make me continue working with it.

11. We have talked about this a little bit before, but what made you choose culture as the central theme for your students' final projects?

I would say that was a convenient option for me, because the last units on the book in the book they focused more on culture, and as I needed to have a final assessment, a final speaking assessment then I chose to bring the two things together, then I would not disregard one or the other.

12. Were you satisfied with your accomplishments?

Oh, yes! I was very happy with their seminars, most of them were very, very good. And I see that they improved their speaking skills, the use of grammar, and they related to that. They spoke much more because they were talking about what they experienced in their lives, and relating to cultural facts, cultural events. I was very happy with it, I think that worked and I intend to continue to work in that way, evaluating them through this seminar on culture. I think it is easier for them, I have more satisfac... I don't wanna be satisfied, I want them to improve and I see that they improved so that's why I wanna continue working with that.

What I've seen is that culture gives them what to talk about.  
Yes, confidence as well.

It goes apart from only grammar, grammar, grammar. And give them topics they can relate through grammar to real life, to experiencing things they go through.

Yes, culture... I wouldn't say that when you are dealing with culture you are playing on safe grounds, but culture gives you something to work with, something more reliable to work with. Teaching becomes less abstract when you have experience to relate to, and then you give them the chance to speak, and then the chance to practice what you are teaching them as regards to grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation.

In terms of let's say maybe behaviour do you think teaching them, or working with culture in the classroom can actually help them in real life? Like if they go somewhere or even here in Brazil, we don't have to go abroad. We've seen them doing that a lot during your classes, relating things here in Brazil. Do you think that helps them in real life?

Yes, I think it helps them in real life because when you teach something like that, relating to previous experience, relating to culture, this content will be... I don't think it will be more acquired, but eventually it will become more frequent to them, to talk about, to be able to talk about, because they have lived that. So it goes from an abstract nature of knowledge, from an abstract knowledge to something that they have lived, and then it will be maybe acquired, they will remember that, they will be able to talk about that again someday.

13. Do you think such activities are enriching to the students' learning process?

Uhum, totally. I think they are responsible for the students' learning process, they just don't... I think that the textbook or the teacher, asking them questions is not enough, those activities are the main point to teach them something.