

Understanding Interculturalism in an Immersion Room of a Public School: Students' and  
International Volunteers' Insights

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## Dedication

Thanks to God who enlightens every step of my life, my mother and wife, who always comfort my soul and heart in the stormy days.

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## Abstract

The new conditions of globalization allow the interaction among diverse cultures including the ones within educational contexts. The project “Linguaventuras” which was implemented through a specialized space named *immersion room* allowed the students to interact with International volunteers who came to teach English language within some public schools in Bogotá. The aim of this case study was to unveil some characteristics about intercultural phenomena in this special immersion program when analyzing the data emerged from a real cultural contact lived in the immersion room. This qualitative study also described the intercultural elements which are manifested in the participants of the immersion room. Through narrative frames and oral interviews, the study presented students' and cooperating teachers' insights regarding the intercultural phenomena and how they flowed when the participants had a real cultural encounter. With some contributions of narrative research and grounded theory approach, findings about views of culture, empathy and brotherhood among different cultures and cultural awareness were discussed.

Key words: culture and Interculturalism phenomena, immersion education in public schools and international volunteers.

## Table of contents

Chapter I: The Study.....	11
Statement of the Problem.....	11
Research Question .....	24
Research Objectives.....	25
Justification .....	25
Chapter II: Theoretical Framework .....	26
State of the Art.....	26
Literature Review .....	29
An approach to the dimensions of interculturalism .....	30
Immersion Education: the alternative approach .....	39
Chapter III: Research Design.....	42
Type of Study.....	42
Context .....	44
Instruments.....	45
Participants .....	50
Chapter IV: Data Analysis and findings.....	52
Framework of Analysis .....	53
Stages.....	54

Open Coding.....	54
Axial Coding.....	54
Selective Coding and Theorizing.....	55
Triangulation.....	55
Findings.....	56
Category 1: Essential View of Culture.....	57
Category 2: Shortening Distances.....	62
Category 3: Reaching Incipient awareness.....	67
Chapter V: Discussion and Conclusions.....	72
Questions for Further Research.....	75
References.....	76
Appendices.....	79
Appendix A: Sample of the Narrative frame for Students .....	79
Appendix B: Consent Form.....	82
Appendix C: Protocol for Interviews to International Volunteers.....	84
List of Figures .....	9
List of Tables.....	10



## List of figures

Figure 1: The Weaver's Cultural Iceberg.....	21
Figure 2: Flowing of categories within the immersion room.....	56
Figure 3: Category 1: Essential View of Culture.....	57
Figure 4: Category 2: Shortening Distances.....	62
Figure 5: Category 3: Reaching incipient awareness .....	67

## **List of Tables**

Table 1. Main objectives of the main curriculum.....	17
Table 2. Purposes of the Narrative Frames.....	46
Table 3. Protocol of Questions for Oral Interviews.....	47
Table 4. Research question and objectives. ....	52
Table 5. Research Objectives and Categories .....	56

## **Chapter I: The Study**

The new era of diversification of culture in educational context opens new spaces for intercultural contact in the world. As a teacher in the public sector, I have experienced the teaching-learning process in EFL in a particular way because of the new tools that government policies provide (Secretaría de Educación de Bogota, 2014). One example of it is the project “Linguaventuras” which was carried out in specialized rooms called immersion rooms created to strengthen EFL learning with the guidance of international volunteers from all over the world and a local supporting teacher. As a supporting teacher, I understand the opportunity of meeting people from foreign contexts and the importance for our students to pose questions on how interculturalism is evidenced in this space. Moreover, I have wondered about how the concept of culture and intercultural encounter is developed in face to-face situations within the immersion rooms.

### **Statement of the problem**

The following study attempts to unveil aspects related to interculturalism such as empathy, cultural awareness and cultural beliefs that emerge when students and volunteers interact in the immersion room located at a public school in Bosa. The project has been worked for three years. However, little or no information about the intercultural relationships within the immersion rooms has been found to support this study. Hereby, the importance and richness of exploring on a new scope of intercultural encounters which are already happening in our country as process of international openness. The cultural factor is highly considered in EFL classrooms due to circumstances of globalization and free market the world is currently living. A good example of intercultural encounters took place in the project of Immersion Rooms led by Secretaría de Educación de Bogotá named “Linguaventuras”. (Secretaría de Educación, 2014). This project seeks the collaboration of young people from other settings and countries with the

purpose of presenting their socio-cultural contexts as they teach English language in public schools of the city what can enrich cultural background mutually. Immersion Rooms are defined as specialized spaces for language learning-teaching for children who are part of all academic cycles in which the natural acquisition and development of the communicative competences are privileged through the constant exposition of cultural and ludic settings (Secretaría de Educación, 2014). The specific objectives established for the Immersion Rooms are stated as:

- To strengthen the learning in boys, girls and teenager from cycle 1 to 5
- To develop the four skills in L2 privileging the listening and speaking skills
- To contribute to the quality of education in boys, girls and teenagers through the learning of a foreign language
- To contribute to the social, cultural and academic transformation in boys, girls and teenagers of the capital city.

The international volunteers come from different parts of the world and they hold majors on different undergraduate studies, in most of the cases different from language teaching programs. They teach English language to students of public schools and are hired also to generate a cultural exchange with students and teachers in different schools. (Secretaría de Educación, 2014).

Additionally, in order to complement the teaching practice and pedagogical procedure in English Language teaching, Secretaría de Educación has enrolled a local teacher of English Language called "supporting teacher". My job in the immersion room is as a supporting teacher. Within my functions are to provide academic and pedagogical advice to these volunteers in academic aspects and collaborate with translation and interpretation between students and volunteers. Moreover, one of the main function lays on the need to contextualize students with

the curriculum and daily sessions designed and proposed to work in the room. In the same way, supporting teachers will make sure of the cultural interchange among students and international volunteers. (Secretaría de Educación, 2014).

Furthermore, the selected group to develop this research was composed by 9 students of cycle 3 and 4 between 12 and 15 years old who have been attending the sessions at the immersion room voluntarily for the last 2 years. Additionally, three international volunteers, or also known as cooperating teachers by students and internally in the project, took part in the research. One woman from Venezuela, one woman from Russia, who is the international volunteer in the actual research school, and a man also from Venezuela. These volunteers have been involved in the project for three semesters and the Venezuelan volunteers work in two different schools of the city.

The curriculum for Immersion Rooms (2014) is the main document that guide the objectives, methodology and pedagogical tools used session by session. The document contents different topics in each academic level. This official paper has been built with the cooperation of the British Council through the cooperation agreement 1913 of 2014 (Secretaría de Educación 2014).

The curriculum conducted at immersion rooms combines CLIL and Task-based approaches TBL promotes a natural context for language use. This approach offers several possibilities for interaction while learners carry out a task. Grammar and vocabulary are not presented directly. The aim is to provide authentic practice that helps students to develop all language skills. CLIL approach conceives that foreign language is the means to learn content and vice versa. The content matter determines what type of language must be learned. In addition, a positive feature of the curriculum is its action -oriented face which views language learners as members of a society and helps them on the construction of social values and self-identity.

The curriculum proposed for implementing at immersion room focus the development of the four pillars of education addressed by UNESCO's International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first century (UNESCO, 1996): 1. Learning to be, 2. Learning to know, 3. Learning to do, and 4. Learning to learn.

The broad competences of language learners included in the curriculum are: first, declarative knowledge that refers to the knowledge resulting from daily experience living plus the academic formal learning. Second, skills and procedural knowledge that depends on the ability to use language to communicate meaningful community knowledge. Third, existential competence is seen as the interaction of individual features, personality, and the willingness to engage socially with the others. Finally, learning to live together in which students are encouraged to accept and tolerate others' differences.

The objective of the overall curriculum is to support the "acquisition of both a foreign language and global citizenship skills simultaneously through different cycles that characterize the specific learning process of children and adolescents in an innovative environment" (Curriculum for immersion room "Linguaventuras", 2014, P.6). Additionally, the curriculum attempts to foster the development of day-by-day tools that can be applied in academic and school scenarios. It also aims at developing foreign language skills through specific social approaches that are set in each cycle. The students that attend the immersion rooms can develop cross-curricular competences in arts, social interaction, ICT's, sports, and professional awareness as well. In other words, "the overall syllabus aims to foster cognitive, social-affective, physical and creativity skills in order to stimulate students' interests, likes and values". (Curriculum for immersion room "Linguaventuras", 2014, p.6). The curriculum takes into consideration the natural learning process of learners in specific core areas of development: cycle 1 (PK, TR and 1st levels), stimulation and exploration; cycle 2 (2nd, 3rd, 4th levels), discovery and experience;

cycle 3 (5th, 6th, and 7th levels), inquiry and experimentation; cycle 4(8th and 9th levels), vacation and professional interest; cycle 5 (10th and 11th), research and development for the world of work.

The structure and organization of the curriculum covers one hundred and twenty (120) hours with an extension of forty weeks in each cycle. It is organized into four (4) learning modules of 30 hours self-contained independent learning process. Each module has been planned to cover ten (10) weeks. Modules are separately divided into five (5) didactic units composed of four (4) sessions of one and half (1:30) hours of instruction each.

The assessment of the objectives is taken from the formative assessment perspective where the goal is to determine the strengths and weaknesses of learners in matters of competences and skills they are expected to increase. The students evaluate (self- and co evaluation) the objectives during the learning process along with the teacher. The assessment of the curriculum proposal is taken using two strategies: learning portfolios and project work.

This research considers that sensitivity to other cultures strengthen the intercultural resources of both the students and volunteers to foster the linguistic ones, the international volunteers give a magnificent possibility to know the world and generate a sense of openness, tolerance and mainly brotherhood with our students. Colombians need to understand the importance of new social circumstances that globalization and migration may constitute for education. Hence, the necessity of studying the intercultural relationships and skills between Colombian students and overseas volunteers in order to expand the knowledge on interculturalism in contexts of immersion education and particularly in the project “Linguaventuras”

As mentioned above, the importance of approaching interculturalism into the teaching practice is a component that must be into researchable considerations in favor of the

dynamics of teaching a language (Moeller, 2014). This author also points out that the connection of culture and L2 learning has been the focus of plenty research. She also adds that language proficiency is no longer the only aim of language teaching; “it becomes clear that language and culture are inextricably linked. (Moeller, 2014, p. 2). Additionally, Tudor (2001) suggests that a complete competence in a language should entail an understanding of and ability to interact with the culture and the speakers of the language. The cultural and socio-cultural aspect of language cannot be ignored in program design and teaching at planning time (Moller, 2014). The author also agrees that the growing cultural knowledge of culture within the language requires instructional planning to provide space and time for cultural exploration and discovery. At the same time, interculturalism is reaching the practices of language and culture worldwide. As examples of these practices, globalization and free market have created an era of “super-diversity (Cantle, 2013) and multicultural societies (Pasquale, 2015) where contact among different and diverse cultures is uncomplicated as it never was. Some authors have also addressed culture from a critical perspective, for example, Roth (2001) points out that material culture should be integrated in fields of intercultural interaction to understand problems of social development; Piller (2007) uses the term intercultural communication as a vehicle to unveil cross-cultural issues as inequality and/or injustice.

As this research study has been under constant development, I have noticed that the literature that involves interculturalism and “Immersion Rooms” in Bogotá is few. To confirm these initial thoughts, I have conducted a revision of the official document that directs the procedures at the immersion room. Additionally, the document and curriculum that regulate the sessions and topics seem not to consider the cultural or intercultural aspects deeply because this document focuses on the language teaching process and social funds of knowledge. Moreover, the document is designed under the local policy of English as a foreign language.



The curriculum and plan of study have been designed under an agreement with the British Council and SED Bogotá (Cooperation agreement 1913, 2014). This curriculum holds guidelines and contents that volunteers and supporting teachers should follow. This document also introduces class by class lesson plan. However, the cultural or intercultural part is not found within the principal objectives established for every cycle of study or in some cases, it is established partially for one particular cycle. The cultural aspect is seen from one essentialist and single angle and not from an intercultural perspective that allows students and international volunteers to have a space of cultural contact and to share knowledge and attitudes such as acceptance, tolerance and diversity.

**Table 1. Main objectives for cycles 1 to 5 as presented in the main curriculum**

<b>Cycle</b>	<b>Cycle I Stimulation and exploration</b>	<b>Cycle II Discovery and experience</b>	<b>Cycle III Inquiry and experimentation</b>	<b>Cycle IV Vocation and professional interest</b>	<b>Cycle V Research and development of the world for work</b>
<b>Main aim</b>	To create a stimulating environment that leads children in the discovery of and familiarization with a foreign language through exploration, and understanding of their environment and the recognition of themselves and others.	To provide students with opportunities to experience the world around them through meaningful foreign language learning scenarios related to values, citizenship, culture, sports and art. To contribute to the construction of a broader perspective of the context that	To provide students, through foreign language learning, the opportunity to explore, experience and identify their roles in the community, and in areas of personal and academic interest.  To stimulate different social areas that will strengthen students' perception of life, place and identity	To promote interest in English-speaking cultures through an immersion environment. To integrate components of global citizenship, while allowing for the exploration of vocational and professional aptitudes.	To foster the exploration of students' interests and the development of the abilities needed to become agents of change who contribute to society.  To provide learners with opportunities to develop critical thinking and conflict resolution strategies.  To help learners identify further opportunities for academic improvement,

		surrounds learners through immersion in these scenarios			entrepreneurship, and to prepare themselves for the world of work.
<b>Language</b>	<p>To identify and use vocabulary related to themselves and their cultural surroundings .</p> <p>To follow simple commands.</p> <p>To use simple words to express feelings, needs, emotions and preferences.</p>	<p>To share different aspects of their lives.</p> <p>To develop speaking and communication skills.</p> <p>To practice and recycle language structures at different times and under different contexts.</p> <p>To produce different sets of ideas in order to make vocabulary, grammar, and phonetic learning sustainable and meaningful over time.</p>	<p>To be able to describe, list, discuss different objects, events, and notions.</p> <p>To form and express their own point of view and argue a position.</p>	<p>To express their personal point of view and provide arguments to support it, orally and in writing.</p> <p>To demonstrate comprehension of thought-provoking aural and written texts.</p>	<p>To recognize and talk about particularities related to their own culture and contrast them with aspects of a foreign culture.</p> <p>To reflect upon and be critical about their own habits regarding health, lifestyle, and the use of technology.</p> <p>To talk about the importance of education, work and social outreach.</p>

<b>Cycle</b>	<b>Cycle I Stimulation and exploration</b>	<b>Cycle II Discovery and experience</b>	<b>Cycle III Inquiry and experimentation</b>	<b>Cycle IV Vocation and professional interest</b>	<b>Cycle V Research and development of the world for work</b>
<b>Content</b>	To classify, list and use vocabulary	To identify and use language related to	To recognize their rights, responsibilities and role within	To identify issues related to citizenship and being part	To identify issues related to identity and cultural

	related to parts of the body, feelings, family members, toys, food, places in the school, celebration, jobs, and different countries and nationalities.	core values such as friendship, courage, persistence, and team work.  To identify and use vocabulary related to family, likes and dislikes and the world around them (school, neighborhood).	the community in personal and academic contexts.  To acknowledge the need to act as participatory agents of change, carrying out activities that contribute to their world such as environmental protection, interaction with other cultures, art, music, sports, etc.	of a community in the city, neighborhood, school and family	diversity, healthy lifestyles, use of information and communication technology, and academic and professional development needs
<b>Socio-affective competence</b>	To identify and acknowledge others in one's environment, as well as the importance of creating harmonious environments	To label and express personal feelings and beliefs while appreciating family and friends as vital pillars for their own development.	To relate the content learnt with their immediate context and the world in general. To access and generate feelings and emotions about their personality, beliefs, community and different cultures around the world. To perceive and appraise others' opinions and views by showing	To be aware of social responsibility in the community and shows respect and tolerance for cultural diversity in all communication and interaction with people from other cultures by exploring the local and national context.	To recognize and respect differences among cultures.  To be aware of the need to take care of their health and use technology safely

			respect and tolerance in different situations		
<b>Autonomy</b>	To recognize themselves as important individuals, while understanding the features which make them unique in the world	To work towards the development of a strong self-image and cooperate as a member of a healthy community, while recognizing friends' different worldviews and acknowledging them as worthy of respect.	To begin taking responsibility for and control of, their own learning by recognizing and following their responsibilities and assignments in different contexts like home, school and community.	To foster interest in building their own personal life project as significant members of a community. To be able to face different challenges and make responsible decisions.	To be able to make decisions, take responsibility and make changes in their lifestyles.

The chart above introduces the main objectives in each academic cycle. The curriculum was also constructed under the proposals of standards of education for second language. It means that the curriculum “Linguaventuras” is constructed as a document to be carried out by local teachers but does not involve any clear guidelines for international volunteers or intercultural education. For this reason, the main aim includes culture from a neutral and static perspective (Guerrero and Quintero, 2010) because the objectives seek identification and exploration of cultural issues but they do not seek a space for critical reflection on intercultural topics. The role of the international volunteers according to the objectives is one as a provider of a foreign language but not as a cultural rich resource of direct contact of cultural meaning.

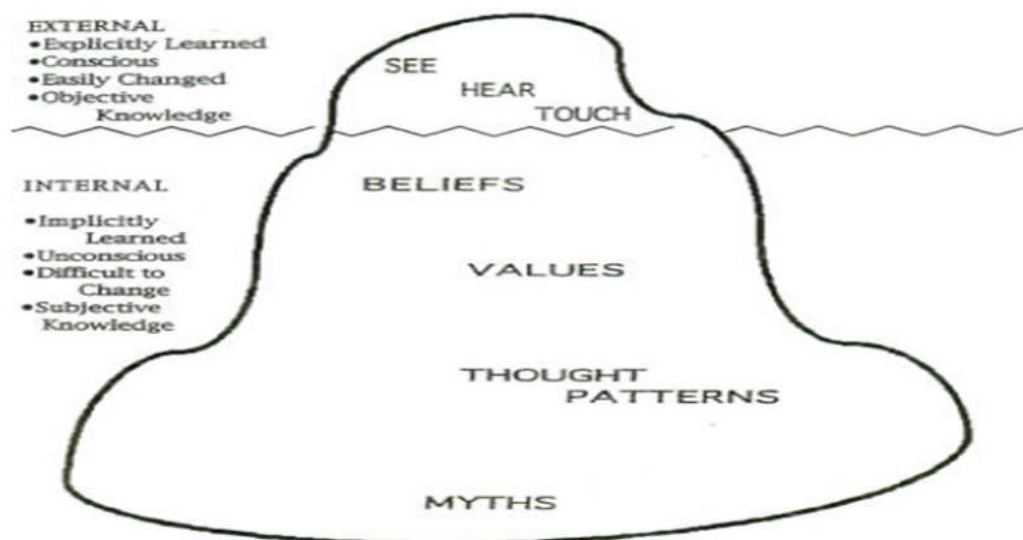
The document also places international instructors as more qualified in teaching English language without bearing in mind that most of them have no experience in education. This

colonial perspective attributes an identification of correctness of the practice and it triggers the language in the curriculum beyond the expertise of local teachers.

From the evidence collected during the revision of the official document and the objectives proposed on the curriculum of “Linguaventuras” a mismatch between the objectives of the project and the document was also found. As it will be evidenced later, one of the procedures and regulations of the project reinforces the concept of culture and learning at the immersion room.

Nevertheless, the official document does not respond to the demands and aims of the objectives of the project because of the blurred vision of culture in it. The objectives in general do not consider aspects of interculturalism from both angles of cultures or it is often mistreated as “superficial”. Ho (2009), for instance, stands that a static or external view of culture merely transmits information to students but ignores the continuing transformation of the nature of culture.

Figure 1: The Cultural Iceberg (Source: Weaver, 1993; <http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/iceberg.htm>)



From the evidence sampled before, it can be said that there is a lack of clarity in the view of culture and intercultural knowledge and also a mismatch between what is proposed on the curriculum and objectives of the project. One of the objectives claims to contribute to the social, cultural and academic transformation in boys, girls and teenagers of the capital city (Secretaría de Educación, 2014) but the official document or curriculum does not allow the analysis of cultural and intercultural aspects at immersion rooms because of its blurred definition and sessions proposals. Furthermore, as part of my empirical experience in the immersion room, I have noticed that my function of making “sure of the cultural interchange among students and international volunteers” is not totally fulfilled because the curriculum and session plans focus on the participation of the international volunteers on linguistic and communicative activities that must be accomplished. Culture and interculturalism are not taken into account as part of the sessions and practices.

I have also conducted a literature revision that will contribute in addressing the problem of leaving behind the issues of interculturalism in the “Immersion Rooms” as a response to promote reflections of brotherhood on other cultures principally in the new era of globalization.

Byram (2002) suggests that teaching practice should include the ability of using language socially and culturally appropriate, and set aside the common practice of the acquisition of grammatical skills of the language. In the same way, Gomez (2014) addresses that teaching a foreign language should not be solely the study of language characteristics but should include the encouragement of communicating and acting appropriately with people from diverse cultural contexts. In addition, the author problematizes that some elements of culture are taught superficially including basic facts, such as tourist places, food, holidays and famous characters (Gomez, 2014). Another recurrent assumption regarding the concept of “culture” is stated by Piller (2007) who argues that there is a common assumption to categorize culture as a national

and/or ethnic mirror. From a research perspective, such a definition of culture is complex, differently defined and tied to a group membership which is useless because it cannot be operationalized. That means that it cannot be studied empirically and culture becomes a priori assumption (Piller, 2007). Other authors, such as Castro (2007; p. 201) addresses the lack of studies on culture in educational contexts. She argues that “some of the most influential SLA theories still do not fully address culture as a key element in the process of learning”.

Alternatively, with the growth of the recognition of multiculturalism and globalization, the necessity for intercultural focus in the classroom has turned essential (Moeller, 2014). Other authors such as Kumaravadivelu (2008) suggests the importance of placing culture in language teaching within the context of globalization. Language teachers should move away from the simplistic view of nation-culture-language to an awareness of linguistic and cultural complexity in a globalized world where practice and perspectives often cross national borders. There is a focus on the complex cultural growth of individual within language education. Another example of this new tendency is provided by Cantle (2013) who considers that the process of globalization cannot be stopped, the world is more intertwined than before. He claims that such a process has impacted the notions of both personal and collective identities making the world more multicultural. According to Cantle (2013) this process of globalization may cause inevitable tensions and conflicts as many cultures, faiths and values systems come to terms each other. Voinea (2012) also considers the volatility of the new world and points out that the contemporary society is governed by change and diversity; the multitude of values give a new perspective of life, education and social relations. We are living between contradictions: standardization and personalization, local and global, and private and public (Voinea, 2012). This researcher also suggests that it is necessary to redefine notions and/or concepts of identity and system of personal values through intercultural education.

Intercultural education is another component that has been addressed in some pieces of research as knowledge, skills, and attitudes of empathy and tolerance among people of different backgrounds. For instance, Pasquale (2015) states that the promotion of intercultural principles should be one of the main tasks in schools in contemporary era as response of the needs of multicultural society. Since globalization is a quiet recent process, more research on interculturalism and intercultural competence is still needed.

On the field of narration of stories as a dialogue of experiences on education and intercultural awareness, some studies as the one proposed by Menard-Warwick (2008) situates the intercultural experiences or narratives as subjective explorations to facilitate awareness of cultural complexities. Menard - Warwick (2008) considers that there is a tendency in modern times to shift the normative of culture as heterogeneous. It means that, representations of culture in L2 learning need to be problematized as discursive construction. This author also points out that cultural content might also be problematized so that students can easily explore culture from their own individual context and life so they can define their own (inter) cultural identities. Finally, Castañeda-Peña (2016) suggests that immersion rooms and the international volunteers that compound the project of “Aulas de Inmersión” in Bogota give a wonderful opportunity to foster intercultural critical awareness in our local teachers and students.

Once the revision of the literature has been completed, I can say based on the theorists above that culture and interculturalism in the classroom are regularly set aside from English learning practices.

The international volunteers and the students, attending the sessions at immersion room possess intercultural capital that can help to explore and discover mutual intercultural relationships of the “other” through the dialogues and discourses emerged from their stories. The



Project “Linguaventuras” may be supported with literature and research that can transform, improve, and take priceless advantage of the multiculturalism and diversity of modern age.

That said, globalization and cultural openness are current issues in the dynamics of the world and also of education. Therefore, there is a necessity to contribute to the literature in aspects of interculturalism from the analysis of the stories narrated by the participants in the immersion room.

### **Research Question**

- How does interculturalism manifest among students and international volunteers when talking in the immersion room?

### **Research Objectives**

- To unveil characteristics related to interculturalism that emerge when students and volunteers refer to their face-to-face communication in the immersion room.
- To describe the way in which the participants embrace the characteristics of intercultural phenomena.

### **Justification**

This study aims at contributing to the literature in fields of interculturalism from the stories of students and international volunteers who interact in the sessions of the Immersion Room. In my opinion, the cultural wealth and richness of knowledge that overseas trainees bring to our context can facilitate the exploration and understating of the intercultural component in these spaces. Thus these factors may collaborate with the comprehension and development of the intercultural component in the other 100 schools that are currently conducting the project of

“Linguaventuras”. The main aim may be to primarily achieve the knowledge, tolerance, and understanding of peoples' beliefs, practices and commonalities without any concern of their origin.

This study is framed in the area of discourse studies within the master of applied linguistics because it attempts to explore how the participants give meaning to the world through their voices and thoughts.

## **Chapter II**

### **Theoretical Framework**

This literature review deals with research foundations and theoretical support pertinent to the development of this research study. Also, it encompasses the conceptualization of Interculturalism and immersion education. This chapter takes into account the main objective that is to unveil characteristics related to interculturalism that emerge when students and volunteers communicate each other in the immersion room.

#### **State of the Art**

A big deal of research has been done locally in terms of interculturalism. However, the studies carried out in Bogotá are led into dimensions of interculturalism in the fields of instrumental materials and/or unreal purposed-oriented situations. Some of the recent studies on intercultural education do not account for spaces and characteristics of face-to-face cultural contact in immersion education. It seems that this study introduces a new scope to approach in intercultural research.

One of the first studies on intercultural education in the local context was led by Cruz (2007). This author conducted a qualitative case study in which the main objective was to understand the ways in which 7 EFL adult learners of extension courses at Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, were able to develop intercultural understanding and how this understanding had an effect on their identities. In order to collect the data, Cruz (2007) applied instruments such as questionnaires, videotapes, reflective journals and interviews. This researcher used of a variety of activities in order to hold group discussions on cultural issues. The activities were: a movie, role-plays, and explicit discussions on cultural issues. The categories that emerged in this study are rather close to my study. Moreover, Cruz's study also spotted issues on

superficial or external view of culture, attitudes towards different cultures and (inter) cultural awareness. To sum up, Cruz (2007) suggests that the EFL adult learners might figure up an image of some person from a foreign milieu based on stereotypes when the individuals are not “exposed to cultural knowledge or contact with the target culture” (p. 165). Secondly, the researcher addresses that the narrow vision of culture can be expanded by having students to familiarize with knowledge on differences and similarities from other cultures. Thirdly, the adult learners may find a “value-balanced conception of the local culture and the target culture” (p.166) from the discovery of mutual cultural differences and similarities. Finally, Cruz (2007) states that during the process of mutual interaction with a foreign culture, the EFL learner can discover certain practices that might affect their own cultural identity.

The next study introduces a theoretical reflection about the concept of culture and its relevance in the EFL classroom. Castro, (2007) also highlights the opportunity to examine the curriculum as inquiry. The objective of the researcher is to propose a way to incorporate culture into L2 classroom with the purpose of creating awareness of the meaning of words in a cultural setting. Castro (2007) also states that by means of implementing a curriculum of inquiry with meaningful cultural content, teachers may foster the curiosity among students in order to explore new cultural knowledge. The author argues that the curriculum inquiry culture is not treated as an isolated subject but is attached throughout the curriculum content. Thus, it allows the inquiry due to the numerous possibilities of the subjects. Finally, Castro concludes that through the curriculum inquiry students are allowed to look for those cultural aspects that might be interesting and relevant for them. Also, inquiry stimulates the creation of settings for collaborative and long-lasting learning environments.

Real's (2009) action research study has the objective of developing intercultural competence in a school in Bogotá through the implementation of literature circles. The researcher

concludes that her students reflected upon a variety of feelings and values toward target culture during the oral discussions on foreign literature conducted in the classroom.

Espitia (2015) carried out a qualitative research at a bilingual EFL center in Bogotá with a group of young-adult learners. The author explains how Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is developed when learners address readings of indigenous groups in Colombia. By means of the inclusion of reading circles methodology as pedagogical intervention, the researcher concludes some similar characteristics to this actual study and the previous studies regarding to the construction of cultural meaning based on personal experiences of life.

Additionally, the participants showed values of respect, tolerance, openness, and understanding among others while they read, learned, and discussed about indigenous cultures. The relevant aspect of these findings is the similarity in the connection and reciprocity of positive feelings towards other cultures. The face-to-face or pretended contact among students and volunteers generates a natural curiosity in inquiring that is familiar or new from experiences with different cultures. This natural curiosity seems to be inherent in people who are willing to discover values in a smooth attitude of the being in order to connect and fit in the unknown attitudes of the other.

Another important study held in Bogotá was conducted by Gómez (2014) also at Universidad Pedagógica Nacional. The author proposes on his qualitative action research study an exploration on the development of critical Intercultural Communicative Competence through the study of multicultural literary short stories. This study was carried out in an advanced English class of a modern language teaching program. The participants of the study were a group of 23 advanced EFL learners aged between 18 and 22. Gómez (2014) suggests that the application of relational teaching through authentic critical material showed a big potential to foster critical ICC. Additionally, one of the main findings was that the learners were aware of the intercultural links that they were referring to (Gender, discrimination, prejudice, among others). A final

finding refers to the voice given to the students who centered their speech on the need for social change in order to construct a better world. They also became deep critical and announced the unfair conflicts of the world. These voices may also help teachers to improve their teaching practices in creating social awareness.

Interculturalism has become an increasing field in the education arena. However, there are not enough research studies in our local context that allow me to catch a glimpse of the benefits, it could bring about in our Colombian educational settings but specially within the “Linguaventuras” project. Therefore, I selected a few relevant studies to enlighten this study regarding the phenomena of immigration and new cultures that may enhance EFL teaching and learning processes. In this way, I may evidence that intercultural interchange allows students to share feelings, respect, and tolerance towards diversity, in spite of the origin and context of people and cultures that cross our country. The studies above show me that there are many significant and supporting results that nurture this research because they feed back some of the findings regarding positive attitudes such as tolerance, openness, respect and empathy mentioned above.

## **Literature Review**

The main objective of this study is to explore characteristics related to interculturalism that emerge when students and volunteers interact in the immersion room. The project “Linguaventuras” started three years ago. Therefore, the innovation of the project appears to be a worthy opportunity to conduct a study which is new in the field of L2 research at least in Bogotá. I have found some obstacles in finding literature and research which involve immersion and interculturalism in education in Bogotá. Most of the studies have been conducted on locations of North America, Europe and Asia. In spite of this, I have had the possibility of finding some literature and studies that involve Intercultural Education carried out in fields different from

immersion rooms but quite valuable as source of information and knowledge. The fact that this actual study might be one of the first on the scholarship field and might constitute an attempt to approach in the field of intercultural education and immersion rooms is motivating. The insights of this study may open doors to other fields of intercultural education.

In the last chapter I introduced an overall of the academic and pedagogical components of the project "Linguaventuras". Therefore, I focus on two main constructs that content the title of my study: "Understanding interculturalism in an immersion room of a public school: Students' and international volunteers' insights". The constructs addressed in depth are: interculturalism and immersion education.

### **An approach to the dimensions of interculturalism**

The importance of interculturalism in foreign language teaching has achieved a numerous level of references in the last three decades since the first implementation in Canadian schools to cope with the flow of foreign immigrants. The other problem to deal with was the duality of languages in the country during the sixties (Cummins, 2009). The term interculturalism has derived in other sub-disciplines or dimensions such as intercultural competence, intercultural education, intercultural awareness, and intercultural communication. Interculturalism has also had a big number of definitions. Among the most general definitions, Levey (2012) asserts that interculturalism has an outstanding role upon autonomy, human rights, and stronger sense of national identity. Human values are directly acknowledged with the concept of interculturalism because of the sense of brotherhood and tolerance with the individuals from different milieu or culture. The principle of respect for other different cultures is addressed, for instance, by Bouchard (2011) who points out that interculturalism helps to foster the respect of other cultures and also gives recognition to minorities. This author also argues that intercultural encounters collaborate to consolidate identity, collective memory and belonging by respecting equality and

differences acceptance. In the same way, Meer & Modood (2013) highlights that a sense of openness may emerge through an intercultural dialogue. This feeling of openness may lead persons to find commonalities, mutuality and sharing in an exchange of reciprocal understanding.

The high sense of importance on the “cultural other” is also a new tendency of the actual world due to the wide immigration of people throughout the planet. Every day thousands of people cross borders due to reasons of war, study economy, etc. In times of globalization, respect and tolerance are as issues of intercultural education in order to avoid discrimination and segregation. For instance, Cante, (2013) expresses that interculturalism must also embrace and give effect to the idea of identity as a dynamic process which can accommodate the international and transnational impacts of globalization. In the same way, Moeller & Nugent (2014) states that the intercultural competence in the field of education underscores the necessity of preparing students to collaborate in a global society. In the same way, authors such as Byram and Gribkova (2002) and Moeller & Nugent (2014) agree with the idea of intercultural competence as a dimension which help to build relationships through the negotiation of effective communication. The role of communication to bridge cultural acceptance and brotherhood in education is stated by authors as Byram and Gribkova (2002) who state that intercultural dimensions gives students' intercultural competence as well as communicative competence. The objective should be to prepare students for interaction with people of other culture. The final outcome of such a dimension is to enable students to comprehend and accept people from other cultures as individuals with other distinctive perspectives, values and behaviors. This interaction aims at being an enriching experience for students and his/her cultural interlocutor.

Moeller and Nugent (2014, p.2) write “defining intercultural competence is a complex task”. Nevertheless, the authors attempt to define intercultural competence as the preparation of individuals to interact appropriately and effectively with people from different backgrounds in



order to achieve a mutual understanding. Furthermore, Byram and Gribkova (2002), contribute with the idea of intercultural mediators which goes against the idea of imitating foreign cultures in aspects of language and knowledge of a country and its culture. These authors propose that the intercultural competence in language teaching should “aim at developing students as intercultural speakers or mediators who are able to engage with complexity and multiple identities and to avoid stereotyping which accompanies perceiving someone through a single identity” (p.9).

In addition to the domain of the intercultural competence, Byram (1997) introduces his model of Intercultural Communicative Competence as a tool to distinguish and identify traces of intercultural competence in learners with a foreign culture encounter. This model introduces five (5) principal competences which are possibly presented in an ideal intercultural speaker: 1. Knowledge of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and one's interlocutor's country, and the general process of societal and individual interaction; 2. skills of interpreting and relating, which are the abilities to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one's own; 3. skills of discovery and interaction, which are the abilities to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practice and the abilities to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction; 4. attitudes, which is the curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own ; and 5. critical cultural awareness/political education which is an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries.

As it was stated in the previous chapter, the new era of globalization comes with complexities and conflicts in students and young volunteers during intercultural interactions. The intercultural dimensions allow the comprehension of the other and their hidden identities beyond of a representation of a country or a specific culture. Additionally, intercultural education helps

students to distinguish distinctiveness in foreigners which help students to get new knowledge as singular intercultural richness. Intercultural dimension in education fosters the recognition of both, the singularity of the person, and the recognition of multifaceted identities inherited in it. In addition, intercultural dimensions can be vehicles of self-awareness and identity transformation that open the curiosity of our students. The personal inner investment may lead learners to be critical inquirers of new cultural situations. Piller, (2007) for instance, invites to a transformation from the actual narrow scope of the whole intercultural dimensions which compares linguistic issues from cultural ones, to a broad scope of intercultural competence where cultural issues serve to observe inequality between cultural groups. Intercultural competence facilitates bridging cultural conflicts of injustice and difference.

Wesely et al (2012) also state that intercultural competence brings about intercultural encounters which are favorable opportunities to establish intercultural relationships. These relationships allow to gain an internal sight of the other person's culture while also contributes to the other person to understand his or her own culture from an inside point of view. Likewise, Ho (2009) describes this internal sight as cultural awareness, that is, the inner sense of equality of one's and other people's culture. This internal sight is described as an internal awareness of brotherhood and empathy for people of different origins. Some studies have attempted to measure the internal distinction toward a certain culture. For example, Göbel and Helmke (2010) introduce a model of intercultural sensitivity to determine the level of consciousness of a person's cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses to other cultures. As one of the results, the authors found that from discussions based on contrasts and conflicts on differences, cultural meaning emerged. Some of the categories were related to the promotion and reflection of the cultural perspectives as well as critical reflections on intercultural topics.

The internal and cultural insights or cultural awareness (Göbel and Helmke, 2010; Moeller and Nugent, 2014; Byram and Gribkova, 2012; Ho, 2009) rise a more advanced level of intercultural consciousness which is constructed from intercultural interchanges and situates the students as constructors of cultural meaning. Ho (2009) defines this state as one's own "third cultural place". This "third place" between cultures occurs when students infer, compare, interpret, discuss, and negotiate meaning. Then, students may move from their first culture, observe the other culture and as a result they occupy a "third place" where they can observe and reflect on both, their own and the other culture. Similarly, Göbel and Helmke (2010) adopt the term third culture to describe the readiness to put one's convictions into perspective when students interact with someone from a different origin. The researchers also address that this third culture is commonly constructed in sense of openness and empathy when students deal and share with people from different cultures.

The discussions on the vulnerability of being in contact with other different cultures have a worth consideration for this study. The notions or inferences of what culture is or means regard in the participants of the following research.

First of all, Piller (2007) accounts that culture is discursively constructed, therefore, all communication is intercultural. She also addresses that intercultural communication helps on discourse analysis, difference and similarity because they are regarded as discursive constructions. However, this author discusses the problematic of distinguishing culture to a notion of ethnicity or group membership, that is, culture signifies belonging to a "cultural group" and/or people have a culture. In the same way, Kramersch (2006) agrees that culture has become a portable and variable concept, linked to historical stereotypes, personal memories and socialization patterns and habits that are always changing.

However, Göbel and Helmke (2010) in opposition, point out that direct contact with other cultures facilitates a critical reflection on intercultural topics which allow people to address common stereotypes toward students' own culture (external view). This reflection facilitates the detection of cultural heterogeneity within that culture enhancing empathy toward persons from other cultures. Ho (2009, p. 65) also highlights the "dynamic view of culture" which contrasts with the static view. This last view does not recognize the link between language and culture. The dynamic view of culture engages students to learn actively to view culture facts as situated in time and space and variable across time, regions, classes and regions. Weaver (1993) introduces the cultural iceberg which samples that a large portion of our shaped culture is invisible and mostly unconscious applied in our cultural interactions. The first visible or superficial layer of the iceberg illustrates the external view of culture. This view is explicitly learned, conscious, easily changed, and has an objective knowledge. Within the first layer, we note culture through the senses of sight, hearing, and touch. The second invisible or depth layer shows the internal view of culture. This view is implicitly learned, unconscious, difficult to change and the knowledge is subjective. Beliefs, values, and thought patterns are dimensions mostly hidden in cultural interactions.

On the other hand, intercultural education benefits the exploration and comparison of one's own and other's culture. Ho (2009) invites to include culture as a practice in the classroom. This author addresses that intercultural encounters help as well as in exploring the self by an own process of discovery of an invisible cultural dimension and cultural otherness. As a result, the learners should interpret and construct their own model of cultural learning. In agreement with Ho, Piller (2007) and Scollon and Scollon (2001) point that such a model is a construction of relevant categories which were built through an interpersonal ideological negotiation dealt during an intercultural interaction. The importance of studying this model or personal negotiation lays

on the relevance of researching on how and under what circumstances these cultural concepts are produced further than categorize cultural product in priori notions of group membership and/or national identity (Piller, 2007).

The following section goes across deeper in the relevance of interculturalism within the educational dimensions of language learning. Language and communication are strongly deemed in intercultural education. For example, as stated previously, Göbel and Helmke (2010) regard that intercultural content must consider the impact of culture on human communication, behavior and identity. Additionally, they argue that there has been a growing recognition for the need of an intercultural focus on language education due to the increase of the phenomena of globalization, migration, and immigration all around the world. These authors also highlight the well-known natural link between culture and language as essential component of language teaching.

Consequently, Popescu & Iordachescu (2015) acknowledge that the globalization and the volatility market in the world- labor processes, attain the need for adapting new teachers to the demanding and expectations of new generations. Likewise, Moeller and Nugent (2014) address the role of students in the classroom as social actors because they can experience the mutual discovery of another language and culture. Therefore, language helps to discover “the cultural other”. Piller (2007, p.214) on the other hand, argues that “all communication is intercultural”. Because of this, intercultural communication may be linked with cultural misunderstanding and miscommunication due to linguistic proficiency or lack of communicative competence. As a result, cultural conflicts and tensions may emerge because of the low language proficiency of one or more cultural members with different levels of communication. Piller (2007) suggests that intercultural communication should focus on and understand the natural language process and mainly focus on discourses where culture is actually significant and is used as communicative resource.

Holding on the field of education, Wesely et al (2012) state that learners may have different reasons to learn a language. The author mentions on his study in intercultural competence immersion program's graduates that his students show an integrative side towards the openness of globalization. The researcher states, for instance, that his students are interested in the world of language and business and also in other cultural communities. Additionally, his learners describe interests in having culture lessons from travel experiences as a likely level or status of cultural authenticity and sophistication. In addition, Piller (2007) points out that intercultural communication surrounds the need of intercultural encounters in the context of the globalization, tourism, and economy.

Harbon (2010) notes that within the context of language classrooms, intercultural practice "asks students to think and act appropriately within a growing knowledge of the culture within language (p. 281)". Consequently, the role of teachers as it was stated previously, looks for successful achievement of intercultural aims. For instance, Byram (1997) states that intercultural learning is uneasy to put into practice. However, he praises the advantage of having a space for the systematic and structured acquisition of knowledge and skills under the guidance of a teacher. The role of educators encourages a preparation for experience on intercultural encounters and the facilitation of classrooms as a safe place where linguistic mistakes are not relevant for the process. In the same way, Popescu and Iordachescu (2015) agree that due to diverse constraints in university policy makers regarding time and space, teachers need to discover new methods and practices to conduct their courses with specific skills and knowledge in order to draw upon their intercultural competence. The intercultural learner will ultimately act as mediator between different social and common groups that use different languages and variation in languages.

Some authors as Roth (2001) points the problematic of cultural representations or manifestations. This author argues that ethnographic and intercultural studies are vast and

numerous but most of them have failed in dealing with the personal intercultural communication. He proposes the material artifact study. Roth (2001) points that material artifact is left behind in a big deal in the classrooms. Through these artifacts, values, attitudes and norms are “visible” through their manifestation and usage. The visible and invisible manifestations of such attitudes, values, thoughts and feelings demonstrate a final representation of the owner's and user's products because they play an important role in the macro context of people and micro-contexts of intercultural interactions. By the integration of material culture, artifacts may obtain the outcomes of complex relationships and communication events with a wide cultural feedback. Such as products may get start and stimulate more communicative processes

The curriculum is also a matter of interest in intercultural education due to features of cultural diversity and inclusion of “small” cultures. In the context of education in Europe, Bunaiasu (2015) argues that the intercultural curriculum field privilege the exploration of values and cultural diversity and the practice of intercultural competences. The main purpose of this document would be to make minorities and social relations as part of a multicultural community. As example, the issues in the Romanian literature in education need to take action in education practice. This author suggests that the intercultural approach in the Romanian curriculum needs to aim at a vision to encourage intercultural and methodological framework in capital letter in the document from different perspectives to a socio-human, integrative one.

Upon the field of college education, Popescu and Iordachescu (2015) go into the necessity of considering the market world in intercultural college curriculum. They state that university education needs to insert an understanding of different cultures which might be contacted in working life in the future. Additionally, awareness on diversity, and other cultures tolerance, antiracism and social inclusion are components of a successful international career. All these elements should be included within a college curriculum.

### **Immersion Education: The alternative approach**

Immersion education becomes the second construct of the title of this study and it is also chained to intercultural education. Some experiences on immersion education in language are found in the academic literature. As one example, Er and Hakki (2015) introduce a research held in immersion programs conducted on private schools' students in Turkey. The authors write that "In immersions programs, learners are expected to develop functional proficiency in English to become effective users of the language for their personal communication needs in real life situations inside and outside of the school settings" (Er & Hakki, 2015, p. 364). As a positive outcome, the authors argue that in the global world, the development of the ability to get across and interact in two languages with a large population is a possible advantage for students who attend immersion programs. Furthermore, the authors point out that immersion programs allow students to acquire both the knowledge of the language and the appropriateness of language use.

Immersion programs can facilitate the use of language to communicate effectively to foreign individuals from different milieu when L2 has been long acquired. Through immersion programs, learners may obtain attainable linguistic competences as well as real cultural contact. Other definition of immersion program is provided by Barimani (2013) who defines immersion program "as a method of foreign or second language instruction in which the regular school curriculum is taught through the medium of the target language" (p.1361).

Language immersion in education uses target language as a tool. It is the vehicle for content teaching as well as the object of teaching along with the cultural content. However, Barimani (2013) problematizes that some methods and approaches have failed in placing the acquisition of L2 language in real communicative situations. One of the reasons is that language is presented through the content; the selected content to frame language may be contrived and unreal. In the case of "Linguaventuras", the content presents features of citizenship and human



values; however, some sessions demand vocabulary and structures which are unfamiliar for students. As a consequence, they can fall in boringness or lack of interest. Barimani, (2013) additionally, states that the goal of the language acquired in an immersion program lays on the learners' future needs in their second language's life. This author explains that the learner's use of the acquired language in an immersion program is significant and can be used in their real life as well. The students gain mastery in contents taught in immersion program. For this reason, the immersion program can be entitled as a second language acquisition approach or method because students can gain competences in second language, which encourage them to use it for communicating properly. This program may also help students to empower his second language. Cummins (2009) also agrees with Barimani (2013) upon the idea of immersion education content as a vehicle of English teaching along with specific subjects. Besides, Cummins (2009) introduces a pair of definitions of immersion programs: first, "immersion programs are organized and planned forms of bilingual education in which students are `immersed` in a second- language instructional environment with the goal of developing proficiency in two languages" (Cummins, 2009; p. 161). In a second definition "immersion" refers to the immigrants who learn a second or third language through immersion in classroom settings and regularly the dominant language of the society.

Immersion programs explicitly aim at promoting fluency and literacy in students' second language as a means to encourage fluency and literacy in students' first and second language (L1 and L2). However, Cummins (2009) also refers to the goals of bilingual education because they can vary according to the diverse contexts they are used at. Some programs aim at developing proficiency in two languages; others do not. It seems that the immersion room of this study is situated in Cummins's first definition of immersion programs due to the use of both Spanish and

English languages to clarify concepts and vocabulary given. Furthermore, the lesson plans of each class are already organized and provided to international volunteers and supporting teachers.

Johnson and Swain (1997, as cited in Cummins, 2009) introduce eight basic characteristics of immersion programs: 1. The L2 is a medium of instruction; 2. The immersion curriculum parallels the local L1 curriculum; 3. Overt supports exist for the L1; 4. The program aims for additive bilingualism (De Mejia, 2002; p.40); 5. Exposure to the L2 is confined to the classroom; 6. Students start with similar and limited levels of L2 proficiency; 7. The teachers are bilingual; 8. The classroom culture is that of the local L1 community. Causally, all the previous features are partially or totally fulfilled in the characteristics of the immersion room.

Finally, Cummins (2009) addresses that Immersion programs have appeared in modern years as a feasible option for governments and communities interested in developing an effective learning of socially valued languages or maintaining languages that are endangered.

Nevertheless, this author recognizes the aura of sophistication that bilingual education and immersion programs shine on when addressing that “Bilingual education is a socio-political phenomenon that is implicated in the ongoing competition between social groups for material and symbolic resources” (Cummins, 2009; p. 164); i.e. recognition, status and economic benefits. The modern age has established the advantages, the economical, and personal skills of bilingual and multilingual communities as obvious, and as a consequence, the interest and awareness on bilingual and immersion education has also increased.

In my local context, interculturalism might be defined as educational and innovative encounters which allow local and foreigners to discover unknown features of a group of people or hidden community due to distance factors. The project “linguaventuras” provides a space for mutual discoveries of thoughts and notions of the world that students of public schools hardly find in other spaces.

## **Chapter III**

### **Research Design**

This chapter presents a research framework with the objective of addressing the subsequent research question: How does interculturalism manifest among students and international volunteers when talking in the immersion room? It deals with the type of the study, the context and participants, and finally, the instruments.

#### **Type of study**

The research study was framed within the constructivist paradigm as it explores individual perspectives and constructions of realities based on students' experiences of the world (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). This construction of the knowledge is originated from the interpretation of the world. Therefore, it is symbolically constructed and does not have an exact objective. Additionally, the data collected in a constructivist study is naturally gathered in its original setting in an effort to rebuild and understand how individuals' constructions are used to make sense of their world (Hatch, 2002).

The type of research that leads this study of interculturalism manifestations on the phenomena occurred within an immersion room is a qualitative descriptive and interpretative research. This type of research focuses on understanding the reality at a particular time and context as well as on discovering how individuals experience and interact in their social world (Merriam, 2002). The central features of an interpretative qualitative research, according to Merriam (2002) is the understanding of the meaning that people have constructed about the world and their experiences, and principally how they make sense of them. Another key characteristic of descriptive qualitative research is that the researcher is the main instrument for data collection and analysis process. The human being can provide immediate and adaptive responses because

the interpretation and understanding are to provide the objectives in this type of research. Another vital characteristic of a qualitative study is that it helps to construct knowledge in an inductive way by gathering data to construct hypothesis or theories from observations and intuitive analysis directly from the setting.

This study attempts to unveil characteristics of interculturalism the participants shared during the sessions in the immersion room. Concerning a qualitative research, Hatch (2002) points that it produces descriptive data from people's oral or written thoughts in which individuals and their settings are not considered isolated variables but they are part of a whole. In the following study, the intercultural insights emerged from the stories of students and volunteers. The narrations contributed to understand the social phenomena and interactions of participants within immersion programs as well as their intercultural dimensions. The contributions of the qualitative descriptive and interpretative paradigm lay on the idea that meaning is socially constructed by individuals in interaction with the world. The world is not fixed or single and the stories that emerged from the students and international volunteers help to understand the intercultural phenomena in the immersion room.

The type of qualitative research that frames this study is case study. Merriam (2002) states that a case is "a bounded system or a defined individual or entity like a student, school or institution" (p, 9). The key aspect of this type of research is that it intertwines other qualitative research approaches as narrative surrounded theory (Hood, as cited in Hei and Croker 2009). In addition, Hood states that "Case studies are empirical investigations of contemporary phenomena within real life contexts. They comprised a bounded system, including an individual or entity and the settings in which they act" (2009, p, 89).

The research was framed under the case study principles in order to unveil and describe the phenomena of Interculturalism in an immersion room of a public school. In this way, I

attempt to expose features of a case that takes place in a particular educational setting within a specific population.

According to the definitions above and the objectives of this study, the process of data collection and analysis was encompassed by three different stages that were involved in the design and application of narrative frames and oral interviews.

## **Context**

As I mentioned in chapter 1, the school setting is located in Bosa. The institution has an immersion room of English language which belongs to the project “Linguaventuras” as part of the sectorial plan of education 2012- 2016 (Secretaría de Educación, 2012). The persons in charge of the sessions are two co- teaching participants: an international volunteer whose second language is English and leads the sessions, and a local EFL teacher from SED Bogotá who provides pedagogical advice and serves as a link between school and SED Bogotá. This space has technological and pedagogical resources that facilitate the L2 educational interactions. Furthermore, the sessions followed a curriculum primarily designed to be solely implemented inside the rooms. This curriculum was planned and written by the SED and the British Council (cooperation agreement 1851, 2015.). The objective of the curriculum is to foster the development of the communicative skills of EFL in the immersion rooms.

This curriculum mixes CLIL, task-based learning (TBL), and project based learning (PBL) approaches and emphasizes on the improvement of the four pillars of education stated by UNESCO's International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first century (1996): learning to be, learning to know, learning to do, and learning to learn. The assessment follows the nature and characteristics of formative assessment only to determine strengths and weaknesses of students in terms of competences and skills since students attend voluntarily the sessions at the immersion room. There is a symbolic numeric score because student's self and co- evaluate their

learning. It is worth mentioning that the students who take part in the project “Linguaventuras” attend the sessions voluntarily. They come willingly in the opposite shift of their regular classes.

As it is addressed in chapter one, the intercultural component was not completely considered in the practices and sessions of the immersion room. The project's curriculum and guidelines showed culture as superficial and instrumental and did not allow intercultural sharing. The intercultural phenomena that were manifested from the stories of the participants could enhance the cultural richness experienced in these spaces.

Additionally, the intercultural encounters could contribute to the improvement of the curriculum by placing cultural background as a primary characteristic of English teaching and learning in the immersion rooms' project.

### **Instruments**

The instruments implemented to unveil the characteristics of intercultural phenomena among the participants of the immersion room were narrative frames as a point of departure and oral interviews. Narrative frames are defined by Barkhuizen (2014) as “a written story template consisting of a series of incomplete sentences and blank spaces of varying lengths. It is structured as a story in skeletal form. The aim is for participants to produce a coherent story by filling in the spaces according to their own experiences and their reflections on these” (p. 13). Narrative frames help to encourage students to express their insights and experiences of their intercultural encounters. Then, individual oral interviews were carried out as a second instrument. The oral interviews were applied to both students and international volunteers. An interview could be defined as an oral exchange of ideas, situations and experiences between two or more individuals through a communicative act of sharing messages.

A more academic definition of interviews is stated by Burns (2010) who defines them as “a classic way in research to conduct a conversation that explores your focus area” (p.74). The

type of interview for the participants is guided, or semi-structured interviews. Burn (2010) points that this type of interview is structured and organized but also more flexible in order to explore on specific details to obtain unexpected responses and thus new discoveries. The author also suggests that the researcher is likely to find out some information in depth and, so he/she may gather richer data.

Both interviews were designed and accomplished individually according to the narrative frames' analysis of the students' responses. The purpose of this second instrument was to examine in depth their narrations from the first instrument. To do so, the narrative frames and the questions of the interviews were built on the intercultural communicative competences (ICC) model proposed by Byram (1997). The objective of the implementations of ICC model within the questions was to distinguish intercultural traces in components such as knowledge, skills, and attitudes of speakers with some inter or multicultural experience. Intercultural competences encourage individual and social practices in a community. This allows participants to talk about marked social distinctions perceived inside the immersion room. That is, on the one hand, visible phenomena such as clothing or food, and on the other hand, invisible phenomena such as language variations, gestures, or modes of socialization (Byram, 1997).

The following chart shows the contents of the first instrument. The frames aimed at discovering traces of intercultural dimensions with the help of ICC and providing rich information for the following interviews (appendix A), I introduced a sample of the narrative frame which was implemented on the students' stories.

**Table 2. Purposes of the narrative frames**

<b>BARKHUIZEN'S FEATURES</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
Purpose	Insights of first intercultural encounters with the international volunteer
Topic	The international volunteers remembrances in students
Experience	From the students' first impressions that will provide data to go deeper based on the literature of interculturalism.
Reflection	Helpful to design and plan the oral interviews with the international volunteers.

Three students were selected to carry out the piloting process of the instruments. These students attended the sessions of the immersion room in the morning shift. As a result of this piloting process, the necessity of working on the second instrument was vital. Some of the frames did not allow students to go deeper their experiences and reflections. Many of the responses were shallow and difficult to analyze from an intercultural perspective. Therefore, the second instrument of oral interviews took into consideration the research reflection on students' responses to build up a set of questions that intended to achieve their deeper insights. Additionally, a part of the interview attempted to extend the students' reflections in their narrative frames. A sample of the interview's model for one of the participants is as follows:

**Table 3. Protocol of questions for oral interviews**

<b>Byram's Competence of ICC (1997)</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Questions for students</b>	<b>Questions for international</b>



			<b>volunteers.</b>
Knowledge and Attitudes (curiosity and openness)	(f) The national definitions of geographical space in one's own country and how these are perceived from the perspective of other countries.	¿Cuéntame en tu interacción con el cooperante lo que sabes de su país?	How long have you been working in the project? What did you think you taught your students in terms of culture?
	(i) social distinctions and their main indicators, in one's own country and in the interlocutor's	¿A qué llamas tú "distinto"? ¿Te enseñó algo esta diferencia? ¿Por qué?	Can you define with your own words what is <i>different</i> ?
Skills of discovering and interaction	(b) Interest in discovering other perspectives or interpretation of familiar and unfamiliar phenomena in one's own and other cultures and cultural practices	¿Qué percepción tuviste de tu cooperante? ¿Qué has descubierto de su cultura y país?	What can you say about Colombian students? Can you recall an interesting or impacting anecdote with the students?
		¿Qué has descubierto de la tuya? ¿Qué de la interacción con él/ella te aportó a tu	Did you gain anything on your

<p>Skills of interpreting and relating</p>	<p>(e) Identify contemporary and past relationships between one's own and the other culture and society.</p> <p>(a) Identify ethnocentric perspectives in a document or event and explain their origins.</p>	<p>cultura?</p> <p>¿Tú qué crees que le enseñaste al cooperante?</p>	<p>personal and individual aspect with the interaction with students?</p> <p>What did you discover about Colombian people and their culture?</p> <p>Did you discover anything new from your own culture?</p> <p>What did you think before coming to Colombia and how close or distant were your ideas of your actual experience?</p> <p>What do you remember the most of your interaction with</p>
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			the students?
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As a means to validate my interpretation of the data I use cross-check triangulation (Burns, 2010) with the participants in order to back up my data through the comparison and contrast of other evidences. This validation technique allows the students and the researcher to maintain a constant dialogue about their data and the analysis of the narrations in order to go in-depth on details that are worth exploring and contrasting. Additionally, this stage was remarkable because it allowed me to trace and describe the intercultural phenomena emerged through the participants' stories inside the immersion room.

### **Participants**

The Participants in the immersion room were students who voluntarily go to the sessions during the opposite shift of their regular classes. Moreover, the assessment of the curriculum qualifying concepts instead of scoring numbers. Thus, seven students: five boys and two girls aged between 12 and 15 years and three international cooperating volunteers: a man and a woman from Venezuela, and another woman from Russia, were the participants of the research. These three international volunteers or cooperating teachers were working with the "Linguaventuras" project for a year and a half but in different institutions.

The method and strategy for selecting the responders was focused on the purposeful criterion sampling. Patton (1990) states that the logic of this strategy is to "review and study all cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance" (p. 176). This strategy also gives enriching information that can lead to open up new targets of improvement. The main criterion to select the seven students is the length of attendance in the project. The learners were attending the sessions at the immersion room during the last two years. Those participants had the chance to meet at least 4 international volunteers, and consequently their experiences and encounters might

be more numerous. This strategy was quite useful because the data disclosed characteristics for in-depth qualitative analysis.

The following ethical statement was applied to ensure the transparency and participants' rights. The subjects and participants were informed about the purpose, methods and possible purposes of the research. I introduced the informative paper used to obtain authorization from the participants' parents (see annex 2). The confidentiality of the information provided by the participants and their anonymity was respected. The participation of the responders was voluntary and free of coercion. The participants were safe from any kind of harm when they took part of this research.

## Chapter IV

### Data Analysis and Findings

The following chapter presents the findings of the data collection from 9 participants of the study: 6 Colombian students and 3 international volunteers. Also, it encompasses the description of the stages and processes carried out in the organization and analysis of the data collected. The corpus of data for analysis includes students and cooperating teachers' oral interviews and narrative frames. The purpose of this chapter is to present results that answer the following research question: How does interculturalism manifest among students and oversea volunteers when talking in the immersion room?

The chapter also aims at explaining the framework of analysis and the data analysis process. To do so, firstly, I describe the way data were collected. After that, I mention the way I managed the data. Thirdly, I present the categories that emerged as a result of the analysis.

**Table 4. Research question and objectives**

RESEARCH QUESTION	RESEARCH OBJECTIVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does interculturalism manifest among students and international volunteers when talking in the immersion room?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To unveil characteristics related to interculturalism that emerge when students and volunteers refer to their face-to-face communication in the immersion room..</li> <li>• To describe the way in which the participants embrace the characteristics of intercultural phenomena.</li> </ul>

## **Framework of Analysis**

Qualitative studies take into consideration the human being's sense making of the world and the interpretations of people's living their reality. The way people make sense of their circumstances in life contribute to conduct a researchable study. The applications of this type of study can be explored through analytical and direct writing of the emerging statements. Charmaz (2010), for instance, considers that Grounded theory methods allow researchers to construct an original analysis of research data. She defines grounded theory as "systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories 'grounded' in the data themselves." (p.2), this means that the data allow researchers to generate concepts from the statements. As the researcher observes, interacts, and uses resources attained to his/her field of study, he/she is able to construct the concepts from the setting of the research. Finally, grounded theory possesses an explicit guideline that helps us to proceed in order to obtain theory from the data collected.

The researcher who adopts grounded theory as analysis framework needs to study the early data collected. Then the researcher requires to start separating, categorizing, and analyzing the segments of information with qualitative coding or labels to segments of meaningful data. These labels picture what each of the fragments is about, and thus, they allow to compare to other fragments of data (Charmaz, 2010). The early data begins to shape and take form as coding and comparisons occur. Also, Memos are preliminary analytic notes of the codes and comparisons from emerging ideas. These ideas are constantly redefined through the study and the comparison between data and memos. Then, the researcher defines and interpret accurately the data in order to propose suitable categories. As long as the researcher proceeds in the design and construction of analytical categories, these ones become more theoretical since the researcher engages up in

continuous levels of analysis. The grounded theorist builds levels of abstraction directly from the data and inevitably new additional data emerge. The new data serve to check and refine the emerging analytical categories. The final product is an abstract theoretical understanding of the phenomena experienced.

### **Stages**

The following contains the definitions of the stages and the way they were carried out along the process

### **Open coding**

Open coding is defined as a process in which data is separated, contrasted, and compared into small set of meaningful parts. These excerpts can be named with words or short sentences (conceptual codes). Next, the researcher has to assign a name by bearing in mind key aspects of the data or concepts from the literature review, or “in vivo” codes that refer to names given by the data directly (Charmaz, 2010)

In this study, the names of the open coding were assigned from the literature theory based on interculturalism. The conceptual codes refer to theories, ideas, or concepts that researchers of the cultural authority have proposed to understand the phenomena of different cultural encounters and intercultural relationships. These codes were eventually expanded to bigger categories.

### **Axial Coding**

It is the process in which codes are grouped within bigger concepts or conceptual categories that show the relationships and commonalities among the codes. Charmaz (2010) suggests that “axial coding relates categories to subcategories, specifies the properties and dimensions of a category, and resembles the data that have fragmented during initial coding to give coherence to emerging analysis” (p. 60). Additionally, axial coding provides a frame that

can broaden the vision of the researcher, depending on the matter and the ability of the person to cope with ambiguity.

During this study, the axial coding emerged from the open coding connected with some relationship in terms of reciprocal intercultural meetings, language and travel, stereotypes and concepts of culture, matters on acceptance and difference, socio-cultural attitudes, and national or ethnicity issues, cultural adjustments and so. The outcomes of this stage are presented in the section of findings.

### **Selective Coding and Theorizing**

According to Charmaz (2010, p. 63) selective coding is a “sophisticated level of coding” that supports the previous codes designed during focused coding. Selective categories allow to specify possible relationships between emerging categories in axial and open coding.

Additionally, the linked codes move the analytical story into a theoretical direction with proper coherence and cohesion.

### **Triangulation**

During the elaboration of the preliminary data analysis two ways of triangulation helped me to provide trustworthiness to the data. They were conducted gradually to gather the data aimed at expanding and acknowledging the student's insights. Methodological triangulation allowed me to explore the data gathered from the two instruments. In the first stage, narrative frames were utilized in Spanish language as an opening instrument to help students to reveal their insights on interculturalism. Next, oral interviews were conducted to have the students expand and clarify the meaning of what they wrote in the first instrument. By this, the researcher obtains an extended idea of what the participants certainly mean. The protocol of interviews for the international volunteers was also designed based upon the students' frames.

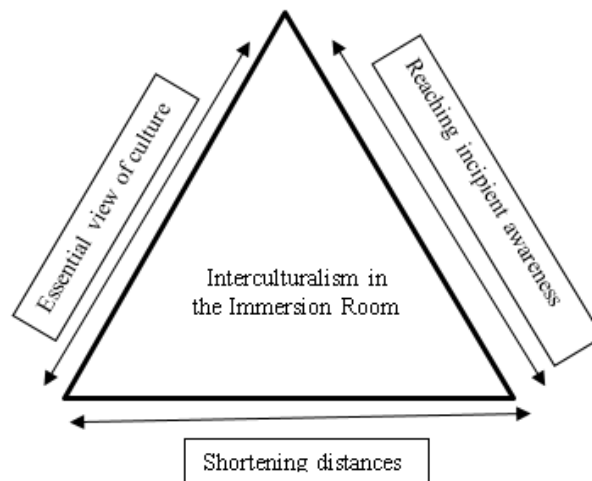


The following table presents in detail table the research question and the categories that emerged during the analysis.

## Findings

This section enlightens the categories that emerged from the data analysis. The analysis exposed three categories which were fluxing along the stories, they are *essential view of culture*, *shortening distances and reaching incipient awareness*. These three categories were introduced in a triangular direction because they moved forward and backward in the written stories and students and international volunteers' interviews. The next figure explains the manifestations of the phenomena of interculturalism throughout the narrative frames and oral interviews conducted to the participants of the study.

**Figure 2. Flowing of categories within the immersion room**

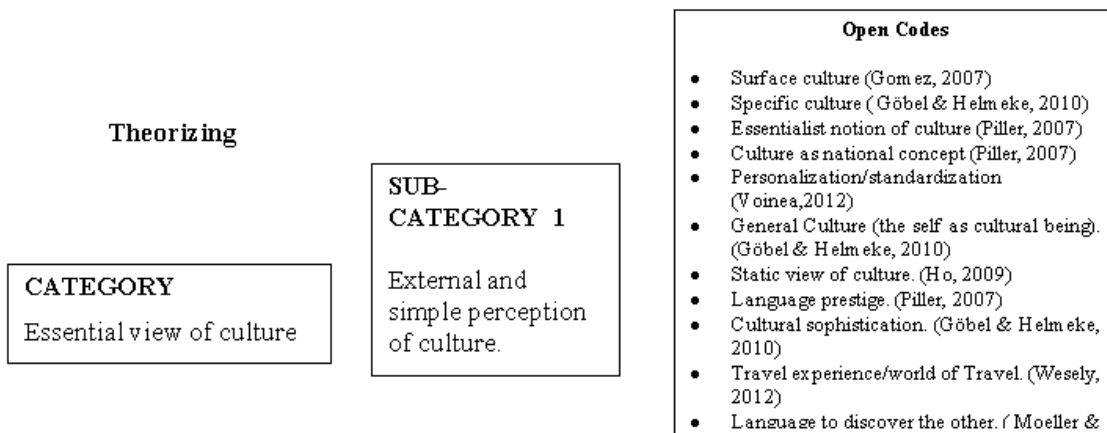


**Table 5. Research Objectives and Categories**

RESEARCH QUESTION	CATEGORIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does interculturalism manifest in students and international volunteers when talking in the immersion room?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essential view of culture.</li> <li>• Shortening distances.</li> <li>• Reaching incipient awareness.</li> </ul>

**Category 1 Essential view of culture**

Figure 3. Category 1 Essential view of culture



First of all, the concept of culture is still linked to the notions of geographical features, folklore, physical characteristic and stereotypes of the international volunteers. It means that the participants perceive culture as people having certain characteristics of ethnicity and nation or people having a culture or belonging to a group (Piller, 2007). The participants at the immersion room portrayed the dimensions of culture represented in food, costumes holidays and celebrations or national cultural knowledge. Additionally, foreign language is addressed as a vehicle to know the global society. The level of recognition of the cultural dimension remains yet in the “visible” level of the cultural iceberg (Weaver, 1993)

### Example 1

1Randy: ¿Qué aprendiste de los países de estos cooperantes?

*(What did you learn from the countries of these cooperating teachers?)*

1 Ranky: ehh las costumbres de ellos, la comida y varias historias clásicas que se cuentan allá.

*(ehh, their customs, the food and different classical stories that they narrate over there.)*

2Randy: ¿historias clásicas de qué tipo?

*(What sort of classical stories?)*

2 Ranky: digamos, como mitos y leyendas.

*(Let's say, for example myths and legends.)*

*(Ranky's semi-structured interview, September 2016)*

### Example 2

4. Mitch: ... de los otros países eh... pues nos han mostrado en algunas ocasiones cuando tienen el tiempo la cultura porque pues en el aula normalmente nos dedicamos es a paisajes... aprendí de las comidas, de los países, de la cultura.

*4. Mitch... (from the other countries ehh..... they have shown us in some occasions and when they have the time the culture, because at the immersion room we normally take time to landscapes... I learned about the food, about the countries, about the culture.)*

*(Mitch's semi-structured interview, September, 2016)*

### Example 3

1. Alex: con el cooperante aprendí que Holanda tiene muchos lugares bonitos y el idioma de ellos.  
*(with the cooperating teacher I learned that Holland has several beautiful places and also their language.)*

3. Randy: ok, ¿qué aprendiste de Holanda?

*(ok, what did you learn about Holland)*

3 Alex: umm que es un país bonito, grande, frio, ehh, los habitantes son altos.

*(umm that it is a beautiful country, large, cold, ehh and the inhabitants are tall.)*

22. Randy: ¿qué crees que le enseñaste a la cooperante holandesa?

*(What do you think you taught the Dutch volunteer?)*

23. Alex: eh, como somos los de acá de Colombia

*(The way we are here in Colombia.)*

24. Randy: y ¿cómo somos los de Colombia?

*(And how are we, Colombians like?)*

24. Alex: ¡Alegres!

*(Cheerful!)*

*(Alex's semi-structured interview, September 2016)*

The examples above introduce perspectives of the Colombian participants about foreign culture, based on the presentations of pictures and slides which allows a superficial presentation of a country. In the case of Mitch, his words demonstrated a complaint for displaying solely

landscapes and popular places from the countries of the international volunteers. Ranky, for instance, has a general idea of “classical stories” as documents that characterizes a country’s folklore. Finally, Alex distinguishes physical characteristics and general geographical mentions of Holland. She generalizes specific traits of a community from someone’s as an ethnic representation. The following excerpts offers some examples of comparisons of students’ standards of life seen as normal or uncommon.

20. Mitch: ... en esa cultura eran como eh más o menos así comidas insípidas más o menos con gusanos y cosas así y pues eso aquí eso no es normal pues desde mi punto de vista.

*(... in that culture there were pretty much like plain food, ehh with worms and stuffs like that and that is not normal here, from my point of view.)*

*(Mitch’s semi-structured interview, September, 2016)*

In the case of Alex, I posed the question before because I wanted her to expand a piece of information that she wrote in her narrative. She wrote about her curiosity for a piece of cloth of an international volunteer. Alex infers that it is a norm culturally accepted in the volunteer’s country.

52. Randy: ¿Hubo algo en la vestimenta, en su vestuario de esta cooperante que te haya llamado la atención?

*(Was there anything peculiar in the cooperating’s outfit that caught your attention?)*

52. Alex: los zapatos (risas)

*(her shoes (laughs))*

53. Randy: ¿por qué?

*(Why?)*

53. Alex: porque los mantenía como sucios.

*(because she wore them dirty.)*

54. Randy: ¿y eso te parecía bueno, malo o te daba igual?

*(and did you find that good, bad or were you indifferent?)*

55 Alex: no pues normal porque si eso viene de la cultura de ellos

*(no, I think it’s normal because it might come from their culture.)*

*(Alex’s semi-structured interview, September 2016)*

This last participant also recognized the importance of the language as a vehicle to know the world, and the international volunteers as facilitators to make her wish come true. Moreover,

Alex acknowledges a certain level of sophistication (Wesely, 2012) when learning English with foreigners because it gives her a sense of correctness and a model to follow to improve language proficiency. It can be observed in the following excerpt.

Example 1

20 Randy: ¿qué de la interacción con la holandesa te aportó en aspectos personales?

*(what things from your interaction with the Dutch girl contributed you in personal aspects?)*

21 Alex: saber hablar inglés, y así poder ir a conocer otros países, pues hablando inglés.)

*(To know how to speak English and so being able to know other countries, you know speaking English.)*

*(Alex's semi-structured interview, September 2016)*

Example 2

50. Randy: ¿tú consideras que el idioma español es importante para ellos?

*(Do you consider that Spanish language is important for them? (The cooperating teachers))*

51. Alex: púes si, para que ellos también puedan visitar otros lugares.

*(yes, so they can also visit other places.)*

*(Alex's semi-structured interview, September 2016)*

Example 3

20. Randy: ok, ahora, dices que tú tienes un sueño de hablar inglés y que la experiencia con los cooperantes has desarrollado ese sueño, cuéntame un poco de eso.

*(ok, now it says that you have the dream of speaking English and the experience with the cooperating teachers has developed such as dream, tell me a little bit of it.)*

20. Alex: pues a mí desde muy pequeña me gustaría viajar por todo el mundo y pues para eso tengo que tener el inglés perfeccionado, entonces me gustaría que con ayuda de ellos poder salir un poco adelante.

*(I have the dream of travelling around the world since I was a child, to achieve this, I have to perfect my English, then I would like to get ahead with their help.)*

*(Morgan's semi-structured interview, September 2016)*

In the following excerpt, Mitch refers to his own vision of country as culturally ordinary in spite of the problematic situations of his country. His vision imagines a perception of low “quality” of his own culture in other countries.

14. Mitch: ... en Rusia o en Holanda anteriormente y pues se referían acá que Colombia tenía puras guerras, pero no, pues si uno la mira bien y todo no la cultura no es tan mala después de todo.

*(...in Russia or in Holland referred that Colombia had just wars but if one looks at our culture it is not so bad after all.)*

*(Mitch's semi-structured interview, September, 2016)*

Regarding the international volunteers, the interviews manifested that they also presented traits related to culture from external views. In the case of Anna, a volunteer from Russia, she generalized culture teaching to the ones explained as external characteristics of culture. Moreover, she characterized simple traits of Colombia and Russia from an external side and compared moods from a visible cultural layer.

#### Example 1

*10. Randy: what did you think you taught your students in terms of culture?*

*10. Anna: well, I tried to show them some Russian culture as for example, I showed them some presentations about Russia, with some pictures, with some pictures of music like arts, about arts, about weather, about people, about Russian costumes, about the geography because some of them did not have idea of where Russia was.*

*(Anna's semi-structured interview, November, 2016)*

#### Example 2

*2. Randy: ok, what did you discover about Colombian people and their culture?*

*2. Anna: well, a lot, honestly, I didn't know much before my visit so just the Colombians are very friendly and open and the food is very delicious and the weather is just beautiful and exciting.*

*3. Randy: How about the people that you have met?*

*3. Anna: they are very friendly and open minded, open ready to help but probably some of them like. they love enjoying the life too much like from my point of view because all we are, Russians are like quiet serious and the Colombians are just the opposite. Russians love thinking over and over their problems, they love being stuck in their problems, they don't allow any problem to go away, so this is our problem I know, we are too aware and worried about the future, they couldn't enjoy the now.*

*(Anna's semi-structured interview, November, 2016)*

In the same way, Andrea from Venezuela considers that we as Colombians and Venezuelans, have the same heritage and founder fathers and therefore we are brothers. However, she believes that her local culture knowledge could be more extended if she researches more on her local traditional music folk.

*Randy ok. Did you discover anything new from your own culture?*

*Andrea: I need to know more things about my culture in terms of music, traditions, dances and popular artists not the traditional ones but all of them in all music genre. When I was teaching to the students sometimes they asked me questions about what kind of music go or what kind of*

*Venezuelans singers are very popular in the world and I need it to know, music genre to give like a more general answer*

*(Andrea's semi-structured interview, December, 2016)*

Furthermore, she also regards culture with food and local habits that can be malleable according to the sessions' demands. Additionally, she also takes for granted that Colombians and Venezuelans share a cultural dimension which is similar and static, so she attempted to let her cultural teaching practice a side and focused her lessons on educational aims and on student's construction of the self.

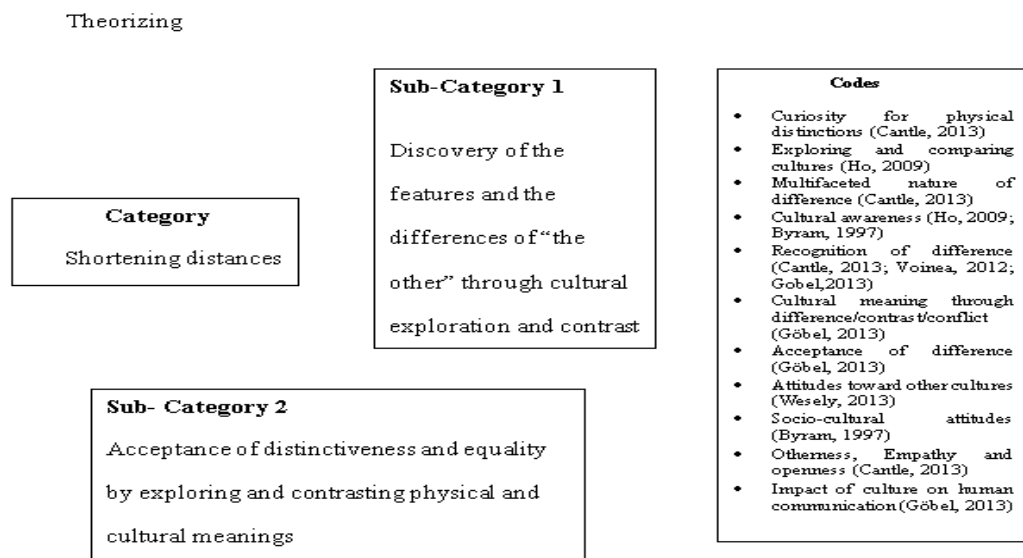
*7. Randy: what did you think you taught your students in terms of culture?*

*7. Andrea: In terms of culture... (Thoughtful) I think they learned the different kinds of fillings in arepas (laughing) because here I was really shocked of knowing, ok, we can eat arepas with avocado? Yes, yes? Sure ok teacher but it is not common, ok you can try and even I cooked for them and it was really nice. So in terms, I gave something different, because as I told you, like Venezuela and Colombia is not that different, I mean, we are like, come from the same father even though we are not that different so, I don't know, I teach them more about values and how to be solution-oriented and not to be like: oh teacher please eh can you fix this problem for me, no I teach them something different in the classroom, not about my culture but how to be a leader, how to be, how to empower others.*

*(Andrea's semi-structured interview, December, 2016)*

## Category 2 Shortening distances

Figure 4. Category 2 Shortening distances



The voices of the participants of the immersion share feelings of acceptance and openness which help to coexist in spite of the differences of origin and language. The “other” is close in terms of the coexistence in the world. The dynamical relationships between students and volunteers in an educational context positioned the participants in manners of reciprocal understanding and acceptance. The students thank the role of the international volunteers as teachers who, at the same time, acknowledged the time they shared with the kids in the project “Linguaventuras”. As an example, Ranky finds the contact as an opportunity of reciprocity learning.

13. Randy: ok, ¿De esta interacción qué te aportó a tu cultura?

*(ok, what of this interaction contributed to your own culture?)*

13 Ranky: Lo que me aportó sería la forma distinta de ver el mundo y de ver las personas ehh, o sea, ella veía a las personas como una nueva forma de aprender y una nueva persona que podría conocer y aprender de ella.

*(ehh what it contributed to me would be the different way to see the world and the people, ehh I mean she (the cooperating teacher) considered the persons as a new form of learning and as a new person who could know and learn from her.)*

*(Ranky's semi-structured interview, September, 2016)*

Cultural meaning from a personal point of view generates acceptance and openness in sensitive experiences that may differ from culture to culture. For example, Poker acknowledged the contribution of all the volunteers in spite of the origin, but he recognized their individual influence in his life.

4. Randy: ok póker, ¿esta diferencia con los cooperantes te enseñó algo a ti? ¿Y por qué?

*(ok Poker, did this difference teach you anything? Why?)*

4. Poker: si, porque muchos de ellos pues eran diferentes y me enseñaron un poquito cada uno de lo que ellos tenían.

*(yes. Because many of them were different and they taught me a little of what they have.)*

6. Randy: ok. Ehh de esta cooperante, de la cual estás hablando, ¿qué percepción tuviste de ella?

6. Randy: *(ok, what perception did you have of the cooperating teacher you are talking about?)*

6. Poker: que ella era muy amable con todos, y siempre trataba de motivarlos a todos trataba de motivarlos para que siguieran adelante y aprender inglés

6. Poker: *(because she was very kind to all of us, she always attempted to motivate us all to keep on learning English.)*

*(Poker's semi-structured interview, September, 2016)*



Language to discover the other is something recognized in the participants' voices as a bridge to interact with the students as social actors in the immersion room. Understanding through the communication in pupils' language is considered in order to shorten cultural barriers. Another aspect is the perception of the students concerning their contribution to the volunteers' new knowledge by placing themselves as facilitators of the local language.

#### Example 1

21. Randy: ¿O sea que tú consideras que los cooperantes tienen que aprender a hablar español?  
(*So, do you consider that the cooperating teachers have to learn to speak Spanish?*)

21: Slash: Pues sería lo más conveniente pues se podrían comunicar de una mejor manera con sus estudiantes.

(*It would be the most convenient because they could get across in a better way with their students.*)

(*Slash's semi-structured interview, September, 2016*)

#### Example 2

14: Randy: Ok, muy bien. Poker, ¿qué crees tú que le enseñaste a la cooperante?  
(*Ok, Poker, what do you think you taught the cooperating teacher?*)

14. Poker: La cooperante siempre nos pedía ayuda para que le enseñáramos español a ella, porque ella no sabía, y le enseñamos mucho de la cultura colombiana porque al final de todas las clases siempre nos decía que le dijéramos unas cuantas palabras en español.

(*The cooperating teacher always asked us for help to teach her Spanish, because she didn't know it, we taught her a lot about the Colombian culture because at the end of the lessons she always asked us to teach her some words in Spanish.*)

(*Poker's semi-structured interview, September, 2016*)

Another interesting finding has to do with the acceptance of individual's costumes or social norms based on the students' imaginary of cultural issues. For instance, Ranky justified the previously mentioned event about the dirty trainers of an international volunteer in class. The event did not ignore students because during some sessions this particular feature in the volunteers' outfit was addressed. The participant justified the event based on his own image of culture but accepted and tolerated a norm that appears weird in the local context.

26 Randy: ¿Y por qué crees que no lavaba los zapatos, por qué crees que llevaba los zapatos sucios?

*And why did you think she didn't wash her trainers, why you think she wore dirty trainers?*

26 Ranky: Yo pienso que de pronto es parte de la cultura de ella, no sabría la verdad que sería, pero yo pensaría que es por parte de la cultura de ella.

*(I perhaps think that it is part of her culture, I wouldn't know it indeed but I'd think that it is because it is a part of her culture.)*

*(Ranky's semi-structured interview, September, 2016)*

A similar excerpt presented the ideological negotiation (Piller, 2007) in the process of understanding a norm out of the local ones. Morgan demonstrated comprehension with regard to the possible reasons of the international volunteer's dirty trainers. Although the following excerpt is bias, it exemplifies the student's understanding when giving reasons of the event. In the process she exposed her own ideological perspective to speculate and draw upon cultural possibilities.

33 Randy: ¿Hubo algo en la vestimenta de los cooperantes que te haya llamado la atención?

*(Was there anything in the cooperating teachers' outfit that called your attention?)*

33 Morgan. Ehh me llamó la atención de la cooperante XXX de Holanda, porque lo que ella traía los zapatos sucios entonces desde un principio yo pensé que ella era así pero cuando ya me enteré que allá en Holanda se trasportaba por medio de barcos entendí que de pronto puede ser por lo que caminaban y los ensuciaban.

*(Ehh the cooperating XXX caught my attention because she wore dirty trainers, then I thought from the beginning that she was that way, but when I realized that in Holland people used ships to transport, I understood that it possibly happened because they walked and got the shoes dirty.)*

*(Morgan's semi-structured interview, September, 2016)*

Also, attitudes of openness and thankfulness toward the cooperating teachers were manifested in the interviews. For example, Alex wrote in her narrative frame that she was impressed by one of the international volunteers at her first meeting. I extended this frame in the oral interview.

27. Randy: En el primer párrafo de tu historia dice: "lo que más recuerdo del cooperante internacional es que se presentó muy alegre y ella era muy bonita nos ayudaba a lo que necesitáramos y que nos explicaba con delicadeza y mucha paciencia" ¿por qué te impactó esto?  
*(In the first paragraph of your story you wrote: what I remember the most of the international volunteer is that: "she showed herself as a happy and beautiful one, she helped us with our needs and she taught us smoothly and with a lot of patience." Why did this impact you?)*

27. Alex: Pues porque la cooperante era así, ella siempre nos comprendía en todo lo que necesitáramos, así fuera las cosas difíciles.

*(Because the cooperating teacher was that way, she always comprehended us in our needs, even in the most difficult ones.)*

*(Alex's semi-structured interview, September, 2016)*

Concerning the international volunteers, their voices also manifested a thankful feeling towards the pupils they taught. New experiences and close distance with the Colombian students were recurrent features in their interviews. For instance, Anna acknowledged the experience and the new knowledge she gained during her labor in the project.

16. Anna: *um, first of all, it's my experience here, that's why I came here in February, every day I learned something new from the kids, from different sources umm (thinking for a while), I can't name every particular thing because every day you lived. May be to be more patient or not to get frustrated at any obstacle.*

*(Anna's semi-structured interview, December, 2016)*

In the same way, the other 2 international volunteers also referred to characteristics evidenced through the feelings and personality traits related to patience and communication skills. In the case of Osman from Venezuela, he thought his experience with the kids in the project was flexible because the students were righteous to him.

4. Osman: *... I think Colombian kids are very respectful. I felt really comfortable working with them, I was like pretty relaxed, I felt like I could do different things.*

*(Osman's semi-structured interview, December, 2016)*

However, as I mentioned before, Andrea from Venezuela realized that Colombians and Venezuelans are in the equal cultural level. She considered we are brothers.

11. Andrea: *...In my experience I can say that we are not different in terms of culture. Ok I cannot see a difference, you respect more traffic rules, here for me it was so different but culturally speaking no, we are not different.*

*(Andrea's semi-structured interview, December, 2016)*

At the same time, Andrea critiqued the social injustices she experienced working for the project. The inequality of the conditions of her pupils placed her in a sense of openness and sensitivity against the unfair conditions suffered by the others. In other words, her voice as a

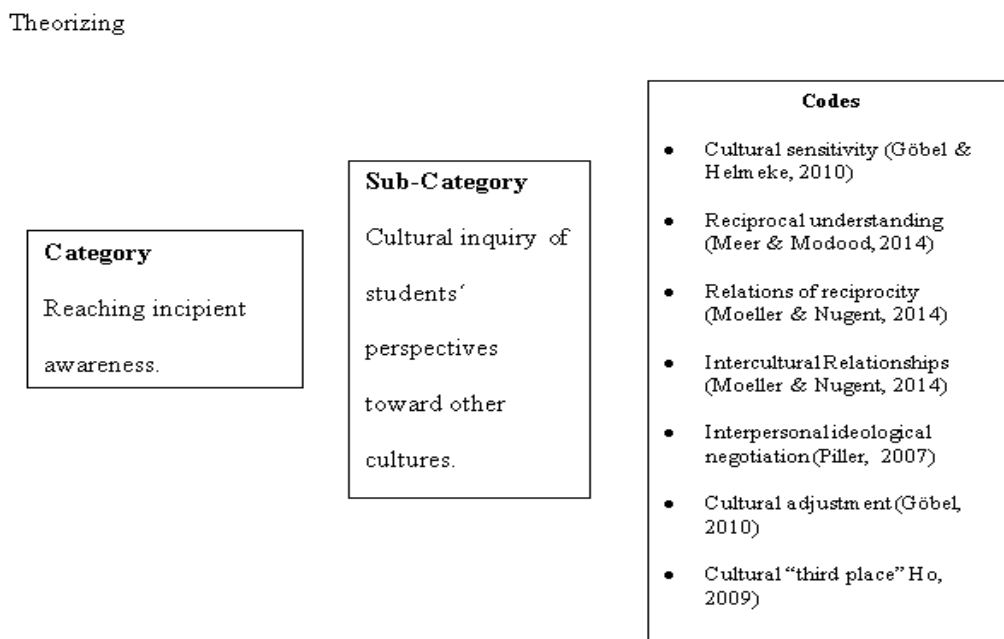
teacher denounces the necessities of public school students regarding social and educational opportunities which are limited by the reality of their conditions. Andrea's position as an international volunteer reveals a complex role as a passive observer who is unable to act upon her students' situation.

*9. Andrea: ... but I felt really sad because their environment and their situation is like, not so good for them, and they don't see like a solution for it.*

*(Andrea's semi-structured interview, December, 2016)*

### Category 3 *Reaching incipient awareness*

Figure 5. Category 3 Reaching incipient awareness



The students displayed a series of thoughts in which they evaluated and questioned issues of their own ideological perspective with the other cultures within an analytical and critical level of their reality. It means that they began to confront what they experienced and the way they made sense of culture with the experience gained in the immersion room. The students mainly

evaluated their convictions about the cultural imaginary into perspective, in an analysis of sensitivity of equality and coexistence with “the cultural other”. Moreover, students changed their opinions of socio-cultural values with their own criteria due to a process of self-cultural inquiry.

For example, the notion of ethnocentricity took a different level when students acknowledged that their local culture and national sense were also relevant cultural issues to be considered. The students felt that Colombians have valuable distinctions to share and be recognized for. In the following excerpt, Ranky considered typical and ethnocentric representations of Colombians' conceptions of being and behaving that allowed the foreigners to understand how Colombians were like:

15 Randy: Ok, ¿tú qué crees que le enseñaste a la cooperante?

*(ok, what do you think you taught to the cooperating teacher?)*

15 Ranky: Ehh la forma del colombiano, digamos como la alegría, o sea lo típico de los colombianos que sería digamos, la comida y todo lo típico entonces yo pienso que ella ya con eso podría basarse para decir algo sobre Colombia.

*(Ehh, the way of the Colombian, let's say the happiness, I mean the typical of Colombians which would be, the Colombian food and all the typical things then I think that with such information she could have a base to say something about Colombia.).*

*(Ranky's semi-structured interview, September, 2016)*

The cultural contact in the immersion room allowed me to unveil a notion of uniqueness between the international volunteers seen by students through an interpersonal negotiation. In this negotiation, the students seemed to accept distinctiveness in the “other cultural being” as an opportunity of investment in their social practices. For example, Poker defined himself different as the cooperating teachers. His internal negotiation of difference reached an initial stage by accepting the “cultural others” as distinct and unique among the cultural possibilities that the world offers.

3. Randy: Ok. Si yo te preguntara, póker, qué llamas distinto ¿cómo me definirías distinto?

*(ok, if I asked you to define the word distinct, how would you define it?)*

3. Poker: Ehh, como único, por ejemplo, con los cooperantes, cada cooperante es único, cada uno tiene su personalidad, su paciencia y todo, entonces así lo definiría.

*(Ehh as unique, for example, the cooperating teachers, each cooperating teacher is unique, each one has their personality, their patience and all. I would define it so.)*

*(Poker's semi-structured interview, September, 2016)*

Despite his perception of difference among the volunteers, Poker showed his special preference for a particular volunteer whose practices supposed an opportunity of investment in him. His internal conviction of difference was modified because of a volunteer who encouraged him by saying that he had a good pronunciation. He managed to evaluate and negotiate acceptance of differences in his own perspective of uniqueness.

21. Randy: Ok muy bien, después dices: “de ahí en adelante me súper motivó y pensé que esa profesora era súper paciente y súper buena con los niños yo creo que el propósito de ella era motivarme”. ¿Qué pasó con los otros cooperantes, no te motivaban?

*(Ok, after that you say: “from then on, she motivated me a lot and I thought that teacher was very patient with the children, I think her purpose was to motivate me”. What about the other cooperating teachers, didn't they motivate you?)*

21. Poker: Ehh sí, pero de la manera que lo hizo ella..., además que era la primera que me lo dijo, pues me impactó mucho.

*(Ehh yes but the way she did it..., besides, she was the first who told me that, and it really impacted me a lot.)*

22. Randy: ¿O sea que prefieres a esta cooperante (señala la historia) antes que los demás? So, do you prefer this cooperating teacher more than the others?

22. Poker: ehh pues no porque como dije antes cada cooperante es único pero esa cooperante me gustó mucho

*(Ehh no because as I said before each cooperating teacher is unique but I liked that cooperating teacher a lot.)*

*(Poker's semi-structured interview, September, 2016)*

Furthermore, Morgan also manifested her gratitude and impact in her investment to learn English by identifying and interpreting the values of thankfulness during the contact with the cooperating teacher in the immersion room.

18. Randy: Ahora dices en el segundo párrafo: “esto me causó curiosidad pues no sabía que se sentía hablar con personas extranjeras, conocer las costumbres...” Dices que fue muy significativo. ¿Por qué fue significativo para ti? ¿Antes hablabas con extranjeros?

*(Now on the second paragraph you say “this caused on me curiosity because I didn't know how was talking with foreigners like, knowing their costumes.” You say that it was very meaningful, why was this meaningful to you? Had you ever talked to foreigners?)*

18: Morgan: Ehh no, para mí fue significativo porque nunca había compartido con una persona de otro país y pues eso me llenó así de seguir luchando porque me gustaría conocer otros países y tener el inglés a perfección.

*Ehh no, it was meaningful to me because I had never met a person from another country and it fulfilled my desire of keeping on fighting because I would like to know other countries and have a perfect English.*

*(Morgan's semi-structured interview, September, 2016)*

In the next excerpt, Slash manifested awareness of his own ideological perspective in considering language as a value of solidarity and union among people on earth. During the interview, slash continuously argued the importance of Spanish language in the society. He repeatedly considered that the cooperating teachers should study and learn it. Slash made an initial aware evaluative analysis of the socio-cultural moment of the world.

26. Randy: ¿Tú consideras el español como un idioma muy importante en el mundo?  
*(do you consider Spanish as an important language in the world?)*

26 Slash: Pues si porque pues aparte que yo lo comprendo muy bien pues quiero que todos lo demás lo comprendan para poder comunicarnos y digamos que tener una buena relación entre todos los países.

*(yes, because besides I understand it very well, I want the others to learn it to get across each other and let's say to have good relationships among all the countries.)*

*(Slash's semi-structured interview, September, 2016)*

Finally, Participants at immersion room manifested emerging awareness in recognizing and accepting the negotiation of their ideological criteria (Piller, 2007). The cultural adjustment in the following excerpt displayed the potential in agreement with one's own and other's ideologies. For example, Mitch accomplished to switch the ideological conflict he had in the past and his new perspective established a common criteria of evaluation to accept differences.

50. Mitch: ...Desde ese momento pues pensaba que algo así parecido, como que todos tenían el mismo punto de vista de todo algo, pero no, todos son distintos, cada persona de cualquier país es distinta.

*(... Since that moment I thought something similar, as if all they had the same point of view of all, but no, everyone is different, every single person of any country is distinct.)*

*(Mitch's semi-structured interview, September, 2016)*

On the side of the international volunteers, the voices of evaluation and criticality explicated mainly the negative attitudes and behaviors they noted on their students. For example, Anna interpreted some negative values of her students during her experience. She made use of her analytical ideological perspective of their behaviors and moods apparently based on the fact that they came from poor districts.

*14. Randy: Ok, finally, what can you say about Colombian students?*

*14. Anna: Well, we have seen on need students from poor districts from public schools, so this is the different, their needs are different but I would say that there are less hard working and they are not determined, most of them don't know what they want to be or what they want to do in the future and they are not aware of not thinking about it.*

*(Anna's semi-structured interview, December, 2016)*

In the same way, Andrea also identified and denounced the lack of opportunities that some of her students visualized in their future due to personal investment or/and socio-economic conditions which enabled them to take a university career.

*9. Randy: Ok, can you recall or remember any interesting or impacting anecdote with your students?*

*9. Andrea: Well, I remember once when a kid was like doing something about his future and he wrote that he wanted like to go to ... he wanted to study but his family didn't have enough money and he said: "no teacher I'm going to study in SENA, for us is the common thing because we don't have money to pay", and I think that maybe for them is like they don't see like a much... they don't see a bright future for them, no ok I'm going to work here because my family doesn't have like the money to pay for that, I'm going to do this because my family is not common, so they don't see their potential, so I think it was really sad for me like ok come on, I mean .. Why don't you ask for a scholarship, why don't you apply for the United States? "Oh no teacher that does not happen to us." So it is very sad even my kids*

*(Andrea's semi-structured interview, December, 2016)*



## Chapter V

### Discussion and Conclusions

As it was stated in the previous chapters, the research question of this study is: How is interculturalism manifested among students and international volunteers when talking in the immersion room? Also, the research objectives of the research are: first, to unveil characteristics related to interculturalism that emerge when students and volunteers interact in the immersion room. Second, to describe the way in which the participants embrace the characteristics of intercultural phenomena. The chapter describes some pedagogical aspects related to the necessity of transforming the view of culture, taking into consideration what Ho (2009) suggests in a dynamic one that explores the invisible layer of culture instead of focusing on merely basic information of a person belonging to a certain country.

The first category *Essential view of culture* responds to the individual denotation of culture at the immersion room. Regarding the category, Cruz's (2007) research share some conclusions in common with this this study. Firstly, the students created an image of the other culture according to their own interpersonal negotiation. In this particular case, the students apparently made it with the purpose of approaching distance of solidarity and openness. However, the real contact with other cultures does not guarantee the intercultural success within immersion education, if the foreign culture perpetuates and mistreats the use of the visible features of the target culture. Consequently, the concept of the dynamic view of culture should involve both the local and target culture. The field of education, are to adopt a new angle to expose non-observable views of cultures in curriculum plans or general guidelines, especially in EFL programs.

In addition, values, beliefs and thoughts are singular characteristics of all human beings. Those manifestations have been hardly explored and considered from an intercultural point of view in the immersion room. Some of these manifestations are fragile and do not transcend the observable side of the cultural other. As a consequence, they can lead to stereotypes. For example, the subjectivity of students by attempting to disclose what is unknown for them, leads to stablish models of people around the world. Gomez (2014) considers this “surface” view of culture and addresses the need for EFL teachers “to embrace a transformative and changing view of culture in which learners are encouraged to deal with contentious concepts of identity, power relations, social differences, injustice, exclusion, and resistance, instead of hackneyed topics of surface culture” (p.136).

On the other hand, as Cruz (2007) also suggests in his study that learners can be helped to describe unknown attitudes for them rather than judging with supposed visions of their reality. In fact, the participants of the present study not only described but also evaluated and judged the international volunteers features based on their pre-conceptions of their origin, culture and purposes of taking part in the project. However, these thoughts emerged as consideration of openness and intercultural awareness from their own point of view. The students manifested their similarities and differences based on information given by the international volunteers. Therefore, the information affected the image of similarity and difference but not from an invisible side.

Globalization and internationalization of the modern world also implies a transformative view of culture due to the constant transit of people who are from different settings across all over the world. Students and international volunteers at cultural experiences such as an immersion room, ought to have the opportunity to explore and understand the singularity of “beliefs and values” of people from different settings. These particularities and social construction of people from distinct settings must be considered in the sessions of the immersion

room as a valuable resource. Thus, it may permit both a transition of external and visual information of a member of a group to a deeper understanding of the human being and the recognition of one self as an individual in the world. To achieve this, the curriculum “Linguaventuras”, which is the official document with objectives, guidelines, sessions and contents that frame the methodology at the immersion room, should adopt an explicit vision of culture. This vision of culture must embrace the communicative competence and include intercultural dimensions for both students and international volunteers in order to contribute to adopt and consider culture from a dynamic perspective beyond the visible angle presented nowadays. As an example, Ho (2009, p.65) recognizes that students are encouraged to “view cultural facts as situated in time and space and variable across time, regions, classes and generations. The Linguaventuras curriculum should include cultural artifacts or, as proposed by Castro (2007) and Cruz (2007), cultural material in class sessions in order to broaden the cultural knowledge of learners.

In the case of the immersion room, the cultural background represented in the knowledge, attitudes and skills of the international volunteers is a rich resource of real foreign culture that must be strongly acknowledged in the sessions of the project. By this, the discussion on the need to bring foreigners with no pedagogical experience to transmit contents of English language as a learning process would turn in a weakness.

Investment in the acquisition of EFL is higher when students meet and interact with other cultures. The other two categories sample manifestations of interculturalism phenomena which engage feelings of reciprocity and openness. The curiosity for other cultures rise in student's affection and thankfulness and in international volunteers' feelings of mutuality. Thus, they feel free to critique social conditions found in the Colombian educational system.

In addition, students feel close to experiences, knowledge and investment given by the volunteers. They perceive them as crucial suggestions to be considered. The fact that these regards come from an international person is highly valuable for students who seem to be more motivated to follow volunteers' recommendations than those ones provided by local teachers.

Moreover, it is worth considering the role of EFL language in the era of globalization. English language is the language of the world and the participants of the immersion room implicitly know it. The EFL is seen as a sophisticated vehicle which helps to discover and change the world. Additionally, for the participants English means prestige. The students invest time at the immersion room interested in learning English for travelling experiences, in communicating to discover the other, in economy, or in standing out the others. Sadly, the colonial perspective of language still perpetuates the idea of English correctness of non-native English speakers. However, the findings indicated the importance of Spanish language at the level of English to create opportunities of successful communication and mutual understanding.

My participation along the research process was neutral and impartial. My role as supporting teacher included pedagogical assistant, translator when necessary and informant of students' environment. My observing role kept me distant of interfering with any data or thought emerged among the participants. The main procedures within the immersion room involved the participation of both students and volunteers and my contribution was as a teacher researcher who intended to unveil the manifestations within an immersion educational setting.

As a main conclusion, an immersion environment is characterized by positive feelings and attitudes among diverse cultures. However, this type of setting possesses the barriers of language which makes difficult to stablish an impact in terms of language learning. As said before, the feelings of empathy and mutual understanding are based on conceptions of reciprocity but this low comprehension of language does not guarantee a factual intercultural interaction.

### **Questions for Further Research**

The generalized conceptions of culture interpreted through stereotypes and/ or external-essential views seem to be implicit in the education field. Therefore, a general switch in how we interpret culture in immersion education or real cultural contact settings should be addressed. Future research should focus on finding pedagogical strategies which help to develop culture dynamically in immersion settings with real cultural contact. Therefore, the general misconceptions of cultural dimension in both local and foreign culture can be transformed into definitions and practices that embraces interculturalism phenomena from the deepest side of the human being. Likewise, the research question that I suggest for further studies is: What pedagogical strategies can be implemented in the immersion room in order to transform dynamically the vision of culture within its participants?

An action research study would be suitable for this sort of study because of its transformative and impacting objectives which help to create and impulse suggestions of new theories in an educational context. The methodology and characteristics of the immersion room as well as the technological and pedagogical resources become ideal for this type of educational setting. As Burns (2010) states "Action research is related to the ideas of 'reflective practice' and "the teacher as researcher". Action research involves taking a self-reflective, critical, and systematic approach to exploring your own teaching context" (p.2)

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Sample of the Narrative Frame for Students

Mi nombre es \_\_\_\_\_ y he asistido durante \_\_\_\_\_ años al aula de inmersión del Colegio Carlos Albán Holguín. He conocido a \_\_\_\_\_ cooperantes internacionales

(SPATIO TEMPORAL DATA)

Lo que más recuerdo del cooperante internacional en mis primeras sesiones fue que él (ella)

(TOPIC AND EXPERIENCE)

---

Esto me causó curiosidad porque

(REFLECTION)

---

De ahí en adelante... (Cuenta qué pasó o como reaccionaste ante ese evento posteriormente)

(EXPERIENCE/REFLECTION)

---

Por lo general recuerdo que los cooperantes internacionales que he conocido (desarrolla la idea con relación a lo que mencionaste arriba)

(REFLECTION/EXPERIENCE)

---

De esas primeras impresiones con los cooperantes, lo que más me impactó fue

(REFLECTION/EXPERIENCE)

Y eso me hace pensar que las personas de otros países

(REFLECTION)

---

## Appendix B: Consent Form



I.E.D Colegio Carlos Albán Holguín

Proyecto "Aulas de Inmersión"

Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas



### Señores Padres de familia y/o acudientes.

En la presente quiero darle a conocer el proyecto de investigación que se está llevando a cabo al interior del aula de inmersión y del cual su hijo es participante ya que ha atendido las sesiones durante los últimos dos años. Este proyecto tiene como finalidad conocer aspectos de cultura que se presentan durante la interacción en las clases del aula entre los cooperantes internacionales y los estudiantes.

Para ello, y con su valiosa ayuda se buscará:

- Comprender los diferentes aspectos de interculturalidad que se encuentran en narraciones orales y escritas de los participantes del aula de inmersión.
- Contribuir a la difusión del ámbito cultural como componente esencia de la enseñanza del inglés como segunda lengua y en especial en el aula de inmersión.
- Aportar a la literatura y a la consolidación del proyecto "aulas de inmersión" ya que debido a su novedad e innovación se ha efectuado poca investigación de procesos y logros.
- Descubrir si existe o no algún nivel de conciencia intercultural en los actores involucrados en el aula de inmersión

Para cumplir con este objetivo, aprecio su consentimiento informado a fin de recolectar datos pertinentes a través de narraciones escritas, entrevistas, grabaciones en audio, encuestas y anotaciones de su hijo(a). La participación de su hijo(a) es voluntaria. Los nombres permanecerán en anonimato y su hijo(a) escogerá un seudónimo para ser identificado(a). La información recolectada es confidencial y sólo será conocida por el investigador y su tutora.

Finalmente, esta investigación dará cuenta de procesos y avances pedagógicos y lingüísticos de los cooperantes internacionales y estudiantes que asisten y moldean el proyecto "aulas de inmersión". Los datos recolectados contribuirán con aportes a la institución para mejorar la calidad educativa de sus hijos.

Gracias por su colaboración

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**CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO PARA LA PARTICIPACION EN LA INVESTIGACION**

Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. Yo, \_\_\_\_\_ padre, madre o acudiente de el/la estudiante, \_\_\_\_\_. Una vez informado sobre los propósitos que se llevarán a cabo en esta investigación, autorizo a Randy H. Cuéllar a que realice entrevistas, encuestas, grabaciones de audio y narraciones escritas pertinentes a mi hijo(a) acerca del proyecto al interior del aula de inmersión

Hago constar que el presente documento ha sido leído y entendido por mí en su integridad de manera libre y espontánea.

Nombre: \_\_\_\_\_ Firma: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix C: Protocol for Interviews to International Volunteers**

### **1 part**

1. Tell me what you learned about Colombia during the interaction with the students
2. What do you understand by “distinct/different”?
3. Did you learn anything from this difference/distinctiveness?
4. What are your general perceptions of your Colombian students?
5. What have you discovered of Colombian culture and its people?
6. Did you discover anything new from your own culture?
7. What did you gain to your culture from the interaction with the students?
8. What do you think you taught to your students?

### **2 part**

1. What do you remember the most of your interaction with the students?
2. Do you recall any impacting or interesting anecdote with students?
3. What can you say about Colombian students?