

**Cultural identity and english learning experiences: A study with young students in a
public school**

Semillero de investigación

ENSEÑANZA Y APRENDIZAJE DE LENGUAS EXTRANJERAS, CULTURA Y
JUSTICIA SOCIAL

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Licenciatura en Educación Básica con Énfasis en Inglés

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Abstract

El semillero de investigación “Enseñanza y aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras, cultura y justicia social” assigned to the research group ESTUPOLI looks into the teaching and learning of English language related to social justice aiming to understand the social, politic, racial and cultural agendas which underlie the education as well as emphasize inclusive, binding, and critical perspectives. From the insights of the “semillero”, we carried out this research project about EFL young learners’ cultural identity and how it seems to be disregarded due to the context and the English learning experiences in which students are involved. To point this out, students’ understandings seem to be directed towards the usefulness of English, the connection between English and anglophone countries, specially U.S and U.K; since it seems that their culture appears to be superior to ours. Regarding this, those English learning experiences seem to be out of students’ realities where they conceive language as a tool to obtain “better” opportunities instead of being a space enriched by cultural elements of L1 and L2. This research was carried out as a qualitative ethnographic study owing to the need of understanding beliefs, experiences, and interactions within learning English in I.E.D Simón Bolívar - Bogotá. The instruments employed to collect data were semi-structured interviews and cultural logs. The preliminary findings depict how the learner’s perceptions demonstrate that students’ cultural identity is being shaped by two different aspects: **context** that includes aspects such as culture, globalization, etc., and **English learning experiences** reflected in Colombian language policies.

Inside the group, we are in charge of supporting and collaborating with the different projects that are being developed; in the case of our research project, we were in charge of the whole activities during the process such as the classes observation, collecting data, interviewing, analyzing data, and reporting back our findings to the “semillero”.

Introduction

The current research concerns the topic of cultural identity construction in young English as foreign language learners in the Colombian context. Cultural identity may be defined as the process of recognizing oneself based on socialization which is a never-ending process involved in a certain context (Jia, 2019). Learning a foreign language necessarily implies being involved in the global demands of the current Colombian context which means “having citizens able to communicate in English in such a way that they move the country into a cultural openness, global economy, universal communication processes, etc. ” (MEN, 2006, as cited in Guerrero 2008, p.32). This is why when talking about cultural identity construction it is a necessity to comprehend not only the students’ context but also their learning experiences. This research was carried out to analyze how the perceptions of students are reflecting the two aspects that might influence their cultural identity: context and learning experiences.

To answer the question established in this project, we followed a qualitative ethnography approach. We used semi-structured interviews for approaching our participants' words, thoughts, perceptions, feelings, and experiences since according with Taylor (2005) this let us explore “insider perspectives” of the participants; in the same way, cultural logs were an opportunity for the students to express their thoughts and make connections between their learning experiences and their culture (Lyutaya,2011). This study included 12 Colombian young English learners, boys and girls between the ages of 10 and 12 years old. We considered this was a good sample number to provide reliability and validity in our research.

Based on the information presented, this paper analyzes the aspects that influence students' cultural identity construction by identifying and exploring the students’ perceptions

of Colombian and U.S culture. This guided us in writing the theoretical foundations that helped us to achieve the goal described previously. Also, following that lead we chose and described the methodology that fits the proposal along with the preliminary findings and implications.

Chapter I. Problem statement

In recent years, cultural identity has become an increasingly important issue in language education. Several authors such as Yuzefova (2012), Gómez (2012), Tian & Dumlao (2020), Gao (2020), among others have discussed how the different language learning experiences and the context contribute to the learners' recognition of themselves. In the same line of thought, those English language learning experiences respond to certain global demands which are reflected in the English learning program that is presented to the students; indeed, the English curriculum lays its foundations on how competitive the people need to be to contribute to economic, social and cultural development. (MEN, 2014)

Keeping those bases in mind, English is presented as a necessity for contributing to the development of the country and, concurring with Guerrero (2008), studying English provides access to the modern world with widespread communication, economic power, and so on. Nevertheless, the Colombian bilingual policies are rooted in international standards such as the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) where there seems to be an instrumentalized promotion of language disconnected from the students' context. As a consequence, the learner's context and how the language is presented to them through the learning experiences seem to have a marked influence on students' cultural identity construction. (Jia, 2019)

In the context of our research, it is important to highlight that English language learning and the context in which students are involved should not be seen as separate elements since, concurring with Gomez (2012), “the context and language embodies acts of identity constructed where the learners define and redefine who they are and who they may be” (p. 63-64). Related to the previous, our research was carried out in a public co-educated school in the downtown of Bogotá - Colombia. Through the different classes and the observations, we noticed how some students’ perceptions and interventions were oriented towards the usefulness of English, the connection between English with the United States, and how English and U.S culture appears to be superior to ours. For instance, during some observations we heard students claimed that English is an important language because it allows them to visit the U.S providing them with better opportunities for getting a job responding to certain demands: “sería importante muy importante hablar inglés si queremos visitar algún día ese país... porque la mayoría de los trabajos siempre son inglés”.(051IN1).

The previous insight caught our attention because it appears that the cultural identity of our EFL young learners is being disregarded. From that, we started looking into the perceptions of young EFL students towards Colombia and the U.S culture and what they reveal about their cultural identity. Having in mind the situation explained above, we wondered about the way students’ cultural identities were being constructed. Thus, the following research question arose: What are the young learners’ perceptions of culture in Colombia and the U.S and what do these perceptions reveal about their cultural identity?

Justification

This project emerged as a result of the insights that we obtained during the learning process inside the semillero de investigación. As this semillero is related to identity, social justice, race, English language learning and teaching, among others, we took advantage from that to start wondering how our young learners construct their identities and which aspects

were involved in the process. Even though there are some studies about cultural identity and EFL, there are few that handle young learners in the Colombian context which provides us with an opportunity to fit an empty space in the field of English language teaching and learning.

In that way, this research is focused on the cultural identity of young EFL learners in I.E.D Simón Bolívar - Bogotá. The aim is to identify the students' perceptions of culture in Colombia and U.S because when we spoke with our students, they stated that Colombian culture was not as important as U.S one. Regarding that statement, Jindapitak & Teo (2011) stated that in some cases the students' ways of thinking reflect that their local culture was inferior and unworthy. The preceding assertion caught our attention since these perceptions seemed to promote a lack of sensitivity towards their culture and recognition of themselves as part of a society. (Mackenzie, 2019).

Thus, regarding our role as teachers we were aware of the possible consequences that not only English language learning but also the context in which students are involved might bring to their construction of identity since “the context and language embodies acts of identity constructed” (Gomez, 2012, p.64). Considering the previous affirmations, we might assert that our research project is valuable and innovative for our professional field as English language educators and researchers because it might contribute to understand how primary school students' cultural identity is constructed.

Research question(s)

What are the young learners' perceptions of culture in Colombia and the U.S and what do these perceptions reveal about their cultural identity?

Research Objective(s)

General objective

- To analyze the perceptions of EFL young learners towards culture in Colombia and U.S and what they reveal about their cultural identity construction

Specific objective

- To identify the students' perceptions about Colombian and U.S culture
- To explore what the students' perceptions tell us about their cultural identity

Chapter II. Theoretical discussion

This theoretical discussion presents the definition and dialogue of the primary constructs that underpin this research project. This discussion gives an account of some research reports and doctoral dissertations by scholars associated with EFL students' cultural identity construction; Li (2014), Alhawsawi (2015), Tian & Dumlao (2020), Florez (2018), Amiot et al. (2018), Jia (2019), Mehiami & Salite (2019). On the other hand, aspects of the learning experiences along with the students' context and how they influence the learners' cultural identity, Guerrero (2008), Pérez et. al (2019), Mackenzie (2019).

From this theoretical discussion, it is crucial to understand how identity is conceived and constructed and which aspects are affecting that process. We approach cultural identity which is, according to our perspective, a construction in which socialization is crucial and a never-ending process of developing oneself from the experiences one might live and the related context.

Thus, in the following titles, we will approach students' perceptions through understanding the context and learning experiences by defining the English curriculum, an explanation of the motivations behind learning English in our country, and the understanding

of students' cultural identity. From this discussion, we aim to understand the concepts of the issues presented as well as their connection to the young EFL learner's cultural identity.

Students' perceptions

Even though there are a lot of studies that are related to students' perceptions, there are few that theorize what they are, the vast majority of them establish a relationship between this factor and others of interest, for example, motivation, internationalization, etc. (See, e.g Mitchell & Vandegrift, 2014; Soltani, Bahador, Esmi, 2021). For our research, we will approach what learners perceive about the culture in Colombia and U.S and what these young learners' perceptions reveal about their cultural identity.

In that vein, Pickens (2005) claims that perception is a process of interpreting and organizing sensations that come from experiencing the world around us. In other words, "a person confronted with a situation or stimuli. The person interprets the stimuli into something meaningful to him or her based on prior experiences. However, what an individual interprets or perceives may be substantially different from reality" (Pickens, 2005, p. 52). Thus, learners' perceptions are strongly influenced by their context which encompasses aspects such as language, learning experiences, culture, globalization, etc. So that the stimuli students receive is shaping what they think and at the same time how they behave. According to Richardson (1996), the attitudes, beliefs, conceptions, perspectives, perceptions, etc. are connected to psychological constructs that name, define, describe, structure, and content a set of mental states that are thought to drive a person's action.

In this same vein, Avila (2016) states that it is not only the students' social context what plays an important role when learning but also the surroundings affect positively or negatively the learners' attitudes and perceptions towards learning. Indeed, she affirms that

the environment in which students are needs to be kept in mind when preparing the lessons since it is supposed to be a space where they could share beliefs, opinions, etc and not just as a mandatory subject. Bearing the previous affirmations in mind, we intend to figure out what the students' perceptions reveal about their context and how that context might bring the students' to relate to culture in Colombia and the U.S. Also, why these perceptions might reflect issues about their cultural identity. This is the reason why in the next section, we will approximate the students' context by describing the reality of learning English in Colombia and what it means to the EFL young learners at I.E.D Simón Bolívar.

Learning English in Colombia

In Colombia, learning English has become a necessity since the global demands portrayed in our context require a country that is able to face the development in economic, social, and cultural means. Considering this, improving the English language skills allows citizens in Colombia to move the country and themselves into the global economy, cultural openness, and communication processes with comparable standards. Thus, the choice of teaching and learning English has always stood for economic activity and perceived international opportunities (MEN, 2006, as cited in Guerrero, 2008).

Nevertheless, criticism has emerged across recent years due to the fact that the MEN framed in the Colombian government has not depicted the reasons to support learning English at the expense of the hundreds of varied languages that exist in the country (Zwisler, 2018, p. 257). Based on the previous assertions, the real question is what it means to be bilingual in Colombia. As Guerrero (2008) stated, being bilingual means merely speaking English which leaves aside the plurality inherent to the country.

In this vein, the MEN has implemented a variety of bilingual programs that have had different names such as “Colombia very well!”, “Plan nacional de bilingüismo”, “Programa para el fortalecimiento de lenguas extranjeras” etc. Currently, the teaching and learning of English in Colombia is enclosed in “Programa Nacional de inglés (PNI) 2015-2025”. All the previous programs are based on the same internationalization demands; as Guerrero(2008) asserted, English as a commodity valuing its benefits to provide access to the modern world characterized by technological tools, widespread communication, economic power, scientific knowledge, and so on . Bearing the previous in mind, it seems as if the creation of bilingual policies is perpetuating the instrumental value of the language related to the economy (Fandiño & Lugo, 2012). This idea is supported by Gao (2020) when he affirms that nowadays teachers are merely focusing on the improvement of different skills such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Conceptualizing English policies in Colombia

The current English curriculum in Colombia entails three different aspects to consider that are aimed to develop citizens in terms of personal, social and economic aspects (MEN, 2014). The development that, as Colombians, we might promote is, in short, a high status that provides social and cultural advantages primarily acquired by the families who can afford elite and private education (British Council 2015; De Mejía 2002; De Mejía 2011; Usma 2009, as cited in Escobar, 2021).

We consider the English curriculum to be the application of governmental expectations into frameworks, standards, and guidelines about the students’ learning process. A perspective that is sustained by Pérez et al. (2019) when he claims that the English

curriculum can be taken as the countries' life because it responds to society's internal demands and the internationalization pressures and globalization. On the other hand, what the review of the literature made us reflect is that to be bilingual in our context means and, concurring with Mackenzie (2019), to be immersed into the global cultural dynamic and the knowledge economy. By insisting on what happens in the context of our country and the view of the English curriculum, one can conclude that in the Colombian context, the language policies are shaping the learning process from foreign contexts which leads the learners to be alien to them.

Some authors such as Guerrero (2008), Perez et al. (2019), Mackenzie (2019) have discussed what it means to learn English under the implemented language policies in our country from the perspective of a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). These reviews have all concluded how Colombian government programs of bilingualism seem to present decontextualization. This is due to two main reasons: firstly, policies are rooted in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and are applied in a context where unfavorable conditions existing in the institutions might withhold the learning process and achievements. Secondly, those policies do not take into account the Colombian background by allowing institutions such as the British Council and Cambridge University Press to take the lead on bilingualism. The above-mentioned moves the country and its citizens towards a lack of sensitivity of local culture, beliefs, thoughts, experiences, and even the recognition of what it involves to be a Colombian (Mackenzie, 2019).

That phenomenon is something that seems to occur in varied countries around the world. As stated by Li (1998) English learning is permeated by the curriculum, English textbooks, and teaching material that most of the time are based on western cultures referring

specifically to a boundary with the U.K and the U.S.A creating in students decontextualization from their own country as well as lack of sensitivity with their language and culture. Supporting the previous declarations, Gao (2020) exemplified that students in China learn and can speak English fluently about cultural western issues such as Christmas or Saint Valentine's day, but they cannot speak in the same way about their Chinese culture, for example, about Chinese Spring Festival, Mid Autumn Festival and so on.

Being aware of the stated, the learners are not only being affected by a lack of sensitivity but they are also shaping attitudes and perceptions towards the English language. Concurring with Gao (2020) "If we only lead the students to learn the contents of the teaching materials, students will inevitably be affected by the English culture ideology in the teaching materials, while ignoring the core cultural values of their own country" (p. 310). This statement is based on the idea that learning a foreign language involves a wide range of factors including the social, economic, and educational context: the students' aptitudes as well as some extrinsic regulations such as the curriculum, resources, teacher, cultural capital, and socioeconomic status.

Therefore, the curriculum seems to be focused on a perspective of language where there is no comprehension of contextual factors of our country (social, economic, and cultural) that are not detachable from the learning process as some authors stated previously. Concurring with Manjarres et. al. (2019) the reality of each context as well as the particular characteristics of each school in Colombia demand a wider thought about education. This is why optimizing the English curriculum has become a core factor when talking about English learning since, as claimed by Gao (2020), it allows the promotion of acceptance of ideological and political education in different language environments and improves their

cultural confidence. Here, we might assert that the English curriculum could comprehend all the contextual aspects of the country in which it is implemented, so as to diminish the impact of the decontextualization phenomenon. In this sense, the “English curriculum should reflect the cultural contents so that students can establish a systematic cultural cognition in English learning” (Gao, 2020, p.310). Supported as well by Glesoon(2020) “The curriculum must reflect new cultural diversity and values the histories and traditions of all its people” (p.9).

Hence, we disagree with the idea of what is happening in the English learning process since it should not be the learner and his/her culture, the ones adapting to the target language, but the "learners' culture" shall define the aims and paths to approach the language objective (Tudor, 2001). These language objectives should demonstrate learning experiences where students find themselves culturally located where language could be that component to strengthen their culture and identity (Gleeson, 2020). Consequently, the second or foreign language has to accommodate the learners' perspective, culture, identity, and background which is why we aim to deepen the relationship between culture and identity within the contextual factors of our students and the learning experiences framed in PNI.

Identity, cultural identity, and learning a foreign language

Identity has been an issue under study in language education. Several authors such as Yuzefova (2012), Gómez (2012), Tian & Dumlao (2020), among others, have discussed the influence of learning another language is one's identity considering the investment, motivation, and some others. Through this study, we learned that learning a language could bring implications to a language learner. In this sense, our view broadens to understand that identity is involved in the EFL learning experiences as it is changeable and also shaped by the

experiences that one may live. In this vein, Alhawsawi (2015) asserts that the way students identify themselves may affect their learning experience. Likewise, language learners negotiate their identity and sense of self while they are learning because it is a process that contributes to their construction of meaning-making in L2 (Li, 2014). When understanding this connection between the language learning experiences and identity construction, we acknowledge the impact that curriculum and our classes with young learners had on perceiving themselves and how that relates to the world surrounding them.

As exposed above, the conceptualization of identity takes a crucial role when talking about language education since the comprehension of what identity means allows us to establish and understand the existent relationship between the learning process in young learners and the construction of self. Thus, from the perspective of Tian & Dumlao (2020), identity is how human beings experience themselves as learners and how they position themselves in the world. Hence, it seems that identity is not static. Indeed, it is strongly related to our background and context; as stated by Yuzefova (2012); life experiences, environment, people, and language are vital features that shape identity. From this discussion, it is clear that the EFL learning and, specifically the learning process we developed with our young learners, impact their identity. Supporting that idea, Li (2014), for example, affirmed that the learning experiences are at the core of identity construction and reconstruction.

Keeping those concepts in mind, we acknowledge that when we learn another language, we are not just learning the language itself but also opening the door to a different way of thinking and another culture. In the words of Gómez (2012), the language embodies acts of identity constructed concerning more significant social processes. It is, indeed, “through language that people define and redefine who they are and who they may be” (p.

63-64). This perspective is, as explained before, backed by Tudor (2001) when he claims that language involves culture and the perspectives of a spoken world. The previous statements suggest that language, culture, and identity are connected within human beings and the experiences they might live. In this line of thought, the learners of a language (whichever it is) recognize their identities, the social relationships, and the interactions that underlie the speakers understanding what learning another language means in young learners regarding identity, culture, and other aspects of being is crucial for the development of this research project and the further analysis of data results.

From our view, culture and identity can be linked to tackling “cultural identity”. This type of identity underlines aspects such as beliefs, religion, art, moral dilemmas, customs, greetings, language, and other features or habits that are learned as members of a society involved (Jia, 2019). Concerning this, we recognize that cultural identity is the process of recognizing oneself based on all the human wealth developed by the participants of a society. In this perspective, cultural identity can be understood as a construction in which socialization is crucial and a never-ending process of developing the being from the experiences and the related context (Jia, 2019). Hence, this perspective supports the vision exposed by Jia about how “cultural identity is a construct that assesses various identity groups that include nationality, race, ethnicity, age, gender, socioeconomic status, regional identity, ethnolinguistic identity, political affiliation, and (dis)ability” (Chen & Lin, 2016, as cited in Meihami and Salite. 2019, p. 115).

Thereupon, according to Yuzefova (2012), life experiences, environment, people, and language are vital features that shape identity and cultural identity. Therefore, language should be carefully analyzed as a link between government policies, learning atmosphere,

methodology, material, curriculum, context, and so forth, and how in all of these dimensions, it may influence the way students understand reality. Florez (2018), for example, asserts that the school plays a role in students' identity construction since it is part of the world surrounding them. According to the previous discussion, we understand that the learning process is not isolated from the students' context but it is more an integral undertaking where we should consider the atmosphere in which the students are immersed and follow that lead when teaching them another language.

Since the learners' context is influenced by the government policies, learning atmosphere, methodology, material, curriculum, etc. framed in the global demands, it is valid to think why students' perceptions reflect the relation between English learning and the U.S. due to the fact that this is the closest English-speaking country to Colombia and indeed, the language policies promote aspects of the U.S. culture and ways of thinking. (Li, 1998). Indeed, this same author affirms that a wide range of researchers agree on the fact that EFL teaching and learning needs to be reexamined since the actual needs of the country differ from those of North America, United Kingdom, and Australia; establishing in fact that there is a strong relationship between English and U.S.

Based on these conceptualizations and ideas, we wanted to analyze, identify and explore the pupils' perceptions of culture in Colombia and the U.S. and what these perceptions reveal about their construction of cultural identity. In doing so, the following section will approach the methodology that lets us accomplish this intention. The explanation of the section will also include the description and criteria for data collection instruments and procedures.

Chapter III. Research Methodology

This chapter presents and provides a description of the type of study, context, participants, data collection instruments, and techniques which are involved in the

undertaking of this research and address the research question about the perceptions of EFL young learners of culture in Colombia and U.S and what these reveal about their cultural identity. Thus, our methodology that is qualitative ethnography approach fits with the aim of analyzing, identifying, exploring, and approaching the students' perceptions which seem to reveal that the cultural identity is affected by learning experiences and the students' context. Our instruments to collect data were semi-structured interviews and cultural logs which allowed us to get the whole picture about students' perception. All the previous tools will be explained in the next section along with their usefulness.

Type of study

This project was developed under the qualitative ethnography approach since our goals and objectives are based on analyzing our participants' perceptions, towards the culture in Colombia and the U.S and what they reveal of their cultural identity. As we discussed in the previous chapter, cultural identity has been a point of concern in language learning because it is an aspect of the students' construction of self. Hence, conceiving cultural identity as the process of recognizing oneself based on all the human wealth, we understood the need to apply an approach that leads us to a deep exploration of the phenomena. Concurring with Pathak et. al. (2013) this method represents an appeal to the real interaction with stakeholders as a way of "understand people's beliefs, experiences, attitudes, behaviors, and interactions" (p.192). Besides, as stated by Creswell (2012), the ethnographic approach stands for interpreting, analyzing, and describing the culture that is shared by a group of people along with their behavior, beliefs, and language. From this approach, we were able to get a deeper understanding of the students' perceptions about the culture in Colombia and U.S and also, how this reflected that their cultural identity was disregarded by the context that

surrounds them and the learning experiences as EFL young learners in Colombia, specifically in I.E.D. Simón Bolívar - Bogotá D.C.

Context and participants

Context

The I.E.D Simón Bolívar is a public school in downtown Bogotá - Colombia. The institution offers elementary education in a full school day, intermediate and high school strengthened with SENA courses, and adult education in the evening shift, focusing on work and professional projection of life. The classrooms are equipped with an acrylic board, students' desks, and a tape recorder. In addition, the institution has about fifteen classrooms, a multimedia room, and a library where students can interact with different materials and resources provided by the school in order to give them space where they can change the usual lessons inside the classroom and do different activities. Finally, they are middle-class students living in Bogotá able to receive a more direct impact from international policies and media since the city is the capital of the country. Regarding the English language learning experiences, learners received classes from their headteacher that were focused on merely improving their vocabulary, listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. As an additional fact, some students have relatives that have lived or live in U.S who have also told them about their experience. This is an important element since their previous experiences could shape their perceptions of U.S life, culture, and so on.

Participants

The group of participants that were part of this study was 12 young English learners, equally men, and women between the ages of 10 and 12 years old. We selected this population for our research project since they had the characteristics of a representative group in regards to their cultural identity, context, and learning experience. For instance, they said

their names in English, or they were interested in knowing if we, as teachers, had traveled to countries such as the USA. Besides, the students did not have a head English teacher since the person who was in charge of teaching EFL was the same teacher that imparted maths, science, and all the other subjects.

Moreover, some students manifested their previous contact with the English language and its culture because some relatives live or have lived in English-speaking countries, especially the U.S. Thus, their English learning experiences and context relied on not only the teaching exposition within the EFL classroom at the school but also the atmosphere where they develop.

Data collection instruments

Related to qualitative research methods, it was important to select data collection instruments that would help us to have a detailed insight into the learners' perceptions. According to Barrett & Twycross (2018), developing these insights is important for data that are holistic, rich, and nuanced to set up the themes or the possible categories in the findings after a detailed analysis. In our research, we aimed to provide reliability to the data by choosing some data collection techniques such as observing and interviewing which allowed us to analyze and explore how those learners' perceptions about Colombian and U.S culture were reflecting their cultural identity and the affectation it is having through the learning experiences inside the EFL classroom and the context.

Observation in the first case was important because we realized some of our students were interested in saying their names in English, or in knowing if we, as teachers, had traveled to countries such as the USA. Following Kawulich (2012), observation, in this case, is used as a method for collecting data about people, processes, and cultures. Observation,

particularly participant observation, in our case, was the hallmark, as it has been for much of the research conducted in socio-educational studies. This technique fitted our proposal because it was the first insight that we obtained about our students' perceptions and understandings of their English learning experiences and context.

On the other hand, we decided to use interviewing since we needed to go beyond our observations and deepen the phenomenon we were perceiving. Thus, interviewing allowed us to depict the learners' processes inside the EFL classroom and their attitudes towards it. According to Taylor (2005), interviewing is understood as the way to explore "insider perspective", in other words, it is to capture, in the participant's own words, their thoughts, perceptions, feelings, and experiences (p. 39).

According to the techniques described above, we decided to select cultural logs and semi-structured interviews as the proper data collection instruments for our research. Cultural Logs fit our proposal because we were able to explore and evidence the learners' perceptions authentically and naturally about the Colombian and U.S culture. Thus, according to Lyutaya (2011), "the logs are an opportunity for students to express their attitudes towards a text, reflect on their discoveries, and make connections between what they know and what they are learning" (p. 4). From this statement, the author was a guide for us to comprehend that writing could be a tool to make students comprehend varied kinds of information and organize their thoughts.

In relation to the semi-structured interviews, we used them to explore the responses of the stakeholders regarding their English language learning and culture; as Barrett & Twycross (2018) affirmed, "interviews give us the most direct and straightforward approach to gathering detailed and rich data regarding a particular phenomenon" (p.63). This instrument fits our proposal because it helps us guide conversations freely and flexibly with stakeholders

to bring their personalities and perspectives about students' context and English learning experiences to the discussion.

Chapter IV. Data Analysis and Findings

Data analysis

For starting with the analysis, we organized the data collected in different matrix formats. Thus, cultural logs were organized in a matrix format specifying line numbers in excel (1,2,3, etc), grade (5A,5B), if readable, total pages, and the code assigned to each one.

We applied a specific pattern to rename the cultural logs. This was done as follows:

“052CL1”; (05) stands for the grade. Then, for the next number 5A will be 1 and 5B will be 2. CL is the initials of the word “CulturalLog” and (1) is the line's number, as it is depicted by the following figure.

Número de línea	Nombre del estudiante	Grado	Código
1	Luis	5B	052CL1
2	Damian	5B	052CL2
3	Miguel	5B	052CL3
4	Isabella	5B	052CL3
5	Leidy	5A	051CL5
6	Karen	5A	051CL6
7	Juan	5A	051CL7
8	Ángel	5A	051CL8
9	Luisa	5A	051CL9

Figure 1. Organization of cultural logs data

On the other hand, we organized the interviews in a matrix format that accounts for aspects such as line number, grade, informed consent (See appendix 2), and a code assigned for each one. In the process of codification, we started by transcribing the audios so that it was easier for us to analyze the pieces of data. Then, we followed the same pattern as the

cultural logs codification as follows: As an example, an interview has the following code “051IN4”, where (05) is the grade, (1) corresponds to one of the grades, in this case, 5A, (IN) are the first two letters of the word “interview” and finally, (4) is the line’s number. This organization helped us out to identify the voices of each participant as significant due to the fact that it not only allowed us to name each intervention but also helped us to keep track of what the learners’ said and thought. Besides, by making the distinction between IN and CL we approached the data by recognizing that they came from different kinds of communication, spoken and written.

Número de línea	Nombre del estudiante	Grado	Código
1	Ángel	5A	051IN1
2	Juan	5A	051IN2
3	Miguel	5B	052IN3
4	Samai	5A	052IN4
5	Samantha	5B	052IN5
6	Yurleidys	5B	052IN6
7	Valeria	5B	052IN7
8	Milena	5B	052IN8
9	Jeferson	5B	052IN9

Figure 2. Organization of interviews data

For analyzing the data, we used the grounded theory as a path to the step-by-step procedure where there was an opportunity to analyze the students’ perceptions towards culture in Colombia and U.S and what those perspectives revealed about their cultural identity. (Creswell, 2012). Thus, for applying grounded theory we developed three levels of coding concurring with Strauss and Corbin (cited in Collazos and Gómez, 2016) The first level was called *open-coding* in which we read through the data collected with the aim of identifying relevant text and repeated patterns that indicated what participants thought. Then, by using colors we highlighted the patterns that corresponded to what students perceive about

both countries' cultures. From this, we named the patterns by joining similar key points and crucial information that were extracted from the text (See appendix 3 and 4). From this practice, we extracted seven different patterns that were named as follows:

Patterns' name
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Disregarded identity- Identity changes2. Recognizing U.S culture's features3. Recognizing Colombian culture4. A joint between cultures5. English as superior6. Language goes beyond7. Promoted stereotypes

After that, we carried out an analysis using the second level called *axial coding* which allowed us to find connections between cultural identity, learners' context, and EFL learning experiences. This process was done by grouping and relating similar patterns to one of the previous aspects mentioned. Firstly, we mixed the pattern "Recognizing U.S culture features", "Recognizing Colombian culture" and "promoted stereotypes" owing to the fact that the multiple findings of the cultural logs and the interviews moved us towards thinking about how students conceive the US as a superior country, not only because of its language but also because of the culture that according to them is elegant, literate and educated. This sub-category was denominated *Cultural imperialism shaping cultural identity*. Secondly, we grouped the patterns "Disregarded identity" and "English as superior" taking into account the students' answers English is a tool for achieving opportunities, a quality in lifestyle, and leaving the country. We called this sub-category *Linguistic imperialism on cultural identity*. Finally, we matched up the patterns of "Language goes beyond" and "A joint between cultures" since stakeholders showed an interest in using English not only with an instrumental perspective but also as a bond to share their thoughts, experiences, and culture

itself. This sub-category was called *Horizontal constructions of cultural identity*. (See Appendix 5).

Lastly in the data analysis, we used *selective coding* which was a tool to re-organize and integrate the pre-categories to settle the final categories that reunite and restate the possible relationships between the aspects mentioned. For carrying this out and after reading the theories regarding imperialism, we decided to state **Cultural imperialism shaping cultural identity** as the first category which will include **linguistic imperialism on cultural identity** as a sub-category to complement it owing to the fact that we consider linguistic imperialism is a branch of the cultural one which goes side by side with educational imperialism (Azhar et. al, 2019). The second category was finally stated as **Horizontal constructions of cultural identity** (See Appendix 6). The following diagram depicts how these findings matched the research questions and objectives:

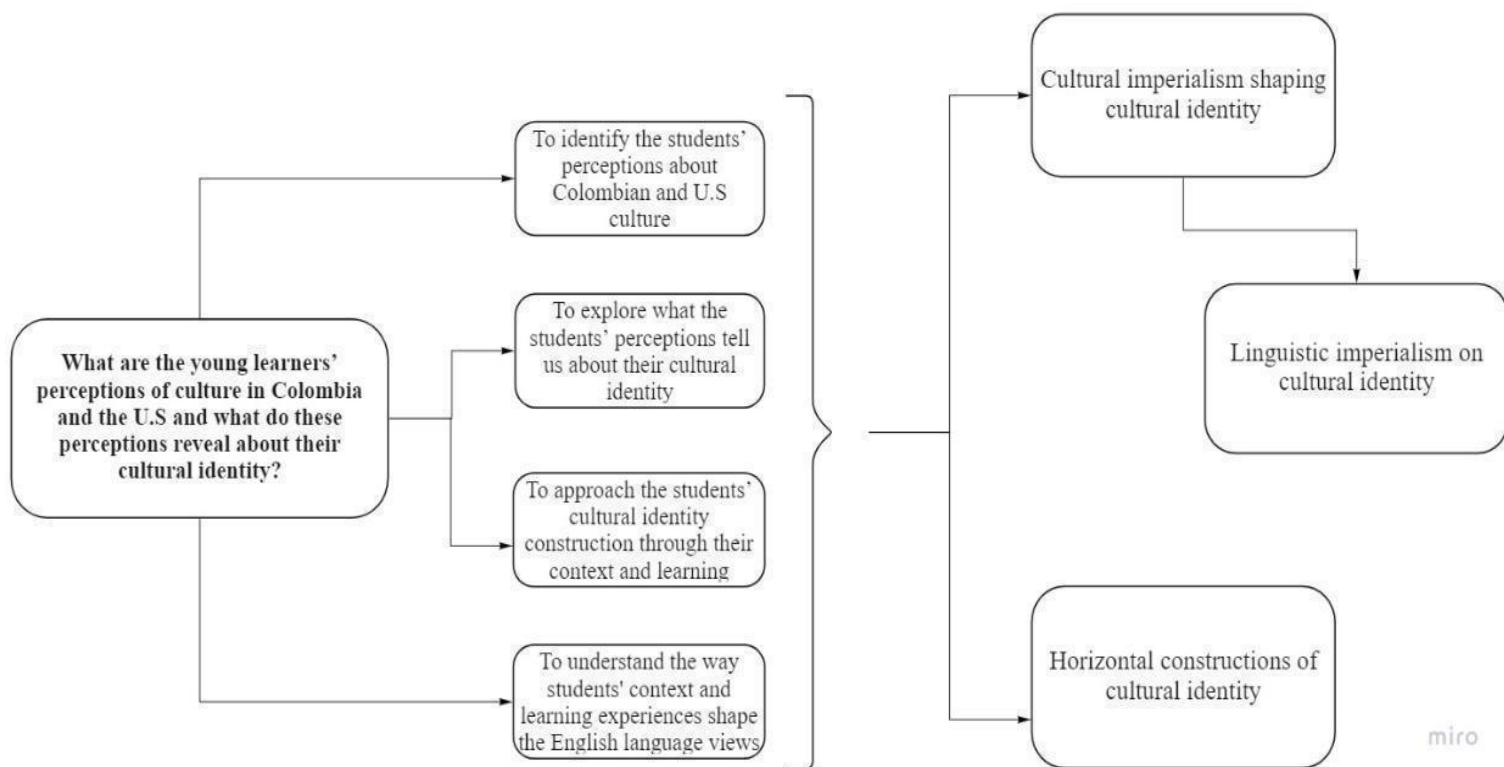


Figure 3 connection between question, objectives and categories

Findings

In the following chapter, we will approach what was found about the students' perceptions and what they reflected of their cultural identity bearing in mind the context and learning experiences by triangulating the data and the theory. To achieve the goal of describing the findings, we claimed two different categories: “**cultural imperialism shaping cultural identity**” with the subcategory, “**linguistic imperialism on cultural identity**”. The second category is called “**Horizontal constructions of cultural identity**”. The categories responded to the research question about what the young learners' perceptions of culture in Colombia and the U.S reveal about their cultural identity. With the aim of analyzing the phenomenon, we started by identifying the students' perspectives about both cultures, then exploring what these perceptions tell us about learners' cultural identity. Also, approaching their identity construction, we unveiled the learning experiences and context that surrounded the process and how these two aspects influenced their English language views.

I. Cultural imperialism shaping cultural identity

In this category, we will approach the students' perceptions and how they show a phenomenon of cultural imperialism that might affect their cultural identity construction. This category emerged as a result of the young learners interventions which showed that they considered the U.S. a superior country with lots of opportunities to achieve a better lifestyle. This triangulated with the theories described in the theoretical framework allowed us to understand what we aimed with our research question.

In this way, after taking a close look at the students' perspectives, we found out that some of them venerate the U.S as a powerful country due to the fact that it seems to have the

economic, educational, social, and cultural privilege which could lead them into obtaining a better lifestyle. As some of them stated “Nuestro país no es desarrollado en dinero mientras que USA ya es desarrollado en plata” (051CL6). In here, it is possible to appraise how the learner is making a comparison between the two countries and affirming that U.S is benefited because of the amount of money it has. This perspective is also reproduced by other participant in the following excerpt: “He aprendido que USA es y seguirá siendo un país beneficiado por su alto presupuesto” (051CL7). The previous two interventions are reinforcing our insights of the learners’ perceptions about how U.S is a powerful country because of its economic privilege and some other advantages it may have.

These affirmations along with some others that we were able to identify gave us a starting point to wonder why exactly students consider U.S a superior country. Then, when reading some theoretical foundations about the topic, we found out that the Colombian *context*, specifically the culture, is constantly changing due to the exposition of the country to globalization since as it was stated by Bolton (as cited in Razaiefard and Chalak, 2017), “in the last twenty years or so, the world has become aware of globalization as a cultural, economic, and political force. Most obviously, in many parts of the world, this has been evidenced by an increasing ‘Americanization’ of popular culture, consumer goods, and preferred lifestyles” (p. 30).

Indeed, it seems that people are establishing a relationship between globalization and U.S culture and language. This idea is reflected in the students’ voices as follows: “allá es muy bonito, son estrictos, no hay casi corrupción y también casi no hay ladrones. También sé que lo que los identifica a los estadounidenses es el inglés, lo limpios, lo millonarios. (052CL4). In this excerpt, we can notice that there exists an association between the U.S and

the idea of a dreamt country that represents admiration not only due to the economic factor but also because of the culture, behaviours, language, etc. In the same vein of thinking, this stakeholder mentions that “Si yo tuviera la posibilidad de ser de otro país sería de E.E.U.U porque allá es muy bonito, son muy estrictos y porque allá viven mis tíos” (052CL4). From these two perceptions, we might declare that the context is involved when students construct their cultural identity since they highlight how American culture, ways of living, etc are remarkable in contrast to Colombian one.

Bearing in mind the idea of the americanization of popular culture, the students might appraise their local culture as inferior and not worth holding or practicing. Hence, this phenomenon is currently called by some authors such as Jindapitak & Teo (2011), Razaiefard and Chalak (2017), Azhar, et. al. (2019) “cultural imperialism” which can be understood as a one-way transfer of culture instead of a sharing between the local and western culture that are supposed to shape one another. It seems that due to this phenomenon the perceptions of EFL young learners towards their cultural identity reflect alien ways of thinking that are learned and reproduced on their daily basis benefiting the mainstream English-speaking countries and their culture (U.S). Consequently, stakeholders may give up exploring their own culture, advantages, and further possibilities since it is supposed to be far from bringing them the prospect of a better life (Methitham, 2009).

This issue about disregarding Colombia and its culture can be seen in the following students’ interventions: “nosotros éramos un país con nada que hacer, porque éramos un país de indígenas” (051IN2). In the student’s words, we can observe that he diminishes the value of our roots and as a consequence what we are since he appears to consider it is not essential in today’s context and world. Complementing the current assertion, another participant

mentioned that “Lo que identifica a los estadounidenses es que ellos al saber inglés pueden sacar beneficios de otros países.” (052CL2) which clarifies the fact that the learners may discredit their cultural heritage and consider that U.S is a favourable country. Razaiefard and Chalak (2017) support and theorize what the students acknowledged when they said that the change in the perception of their values and home culture may be a consequence of the globalized context in which students are immersed. A context that according to Jiang (2000, cited in Razaiefard and Chalak, 2017) includes aspects such as beliefs, religion, art, moral dilemmas, customs, greetings, culture, and mainly language. On the other hand, in Hamm & Smandych’s (2005) words, students’ perceptions reflect ideas and speeches spread by the internet use, television (Hamm & Smandych, 2005) and even the relatives’ experiences, which are included in the context as well. The following data piece points out how the relatives experiences, might have an impact on students’ conceptions which show the admiration given to U.S and its language:

“por lo menos mi papá trabaja en una compañía y siempre que lo llama el jefe, que eso es muy normal diariamente, siempre el jefe le pregunta cosas en inglés y tiene que contestar en inglés por lo que también tiene que mandar respuestas en inglés y todo lo que él hace en su trabajo es en inglés, por eso él me dice que es muy importante que yo aprenda ese idioma” (052CL4)

Delving into the above, another aspect that belongs to the context is the language which was highlighted by the previous participant and supported by the following student’s written piece: “Me gustaría ser americano porque he visto los monumentos de allá y quisiera hablar 100 por ciento inglés” (051CL7) From this, we could claim that for the learner being and identifying as an American would result more beneficial because they have more

attractive places than Colombia and also, because they speak English which might entail, in his words, an important aspect to achieve a better lifestyle. Continuing with the idea given, another participant not only emphasizes the deification of U.S but also affirms that Colombia is not an interesting country in relation to North America: “porque a ellos (Americans) que les importaría si no viven en Colombia, si nos dicen ay no, a mi no me gusta Colombia entonces para qué voy a saber entonces se van.” (051IN2). From this intervention, we understand that the learner considers that our country and culture would not be interesting for Americans.

In the previous asseverations, it is possible to see how the phenomenon of “cultural imperialism” is reflected in the young EFL learners’ perceptions. Hence, we must comprehend what cultural imperialism is; according to Hamm & Smandych (2005) “it is the domination of other cultures by products of the US culture industry” (p. 1). In a more abstract sense, it is the sum of processes from which a society is brought into the modern world being forced and pressured. Besides, we could see that there exist a connection between the U.S culture and the English language which they are aiming to learn constantly. In that sense, learning English has become an essential factor when talking about “achieving better opportunities”. As stated by Azhar et.al (2019) language can be considered as a part of cultural imperialism which goes side by side with educational imperialism. In the next section, we will approach the role of the English language in the construction of cultural identity and how this role is reflected in their thoughts.

I.I Linguistic imperialism on cultural identity

The present sub-category entails the topic of linguistic imperialism and how it may have an influence on the students’ cultural identity. Thus, we aim to unveil the perceptions of

young EFL learners and how they conceive themselves and the world around them. This category emerged as a way to understand why students think that English is not only superior than other languages but also how from an instrumental perspective it can help them to achieve better opportunities in and outside the country. Then, by triangulating the data and the theory we will approach reliability in the following findings.

When taking a look at the students' voices, we figured out that some of them conceived English to be an instrument or tool to achieve opportunities outside the country. As one of the participants mentioned: "porque inglés es el idioma más importante que conozco porque ese idioma no se olvida porque la mayoría de los trabajos siempre son en inglés. Por eso la mayoría de personas deberían aprender ese idioma". (051IN1). From the learner's intervention, we could notice that English is and continues being a valuable element for getting a better job without neglecting the marked importance and the need to learn it. That idea is reinforced by the Colombian government; for instance, in some documents it is stated that learning English has become a necessity since the global demands portrayed in our context require the ability to face the development in economic, social, and cultural means. Thus, the choice of teaching and learning English has always stood for economic activity and perceived international opportunities (MEN, 2006, as cited in Guerrero, 2008).

Deepening on the instrumental value of English, it is supposed to portray benefits to access to a modern world characterized by technological tools, widespread communication, economic power, scientific knowledge, and so on (Guerrero, 2008). This interpretation of instrumentalization is reproduced by the following stakeholder's voice: "Me gusta Estados Unidos porque el aprender inglés en un futuro me ayudará a viajar a otros países y aprender el idioma para conseguir mejores oportunidades" (052CL2). From the students' perceptions,

we understand that English could allow our learners to obtain better opportunities in and outside the country. Concurring with Rezaeifard and Chalak (2017), English seems to be at the core of some students' perceptions since the global role and the importance of the English language in today's world is well established. This vision is also shared by Mackenzie (2021) when she talks about how the promotion of English in Colombia is supposed to enhance the development of people, society, education, etc.

Continuing with the idea given before, it is important to mention that nowadays the spread of English as a global and powerful language is what motivates the Colombian citizens to learn it since it is assumed to get the country to "have citizens able to communicate in English in such a way that they move the country into universal communication processes, into the global economy, and into a cultural openness with internationally comparable standards." (MEN, 2006, as cited in Guerrero, 2008 p.6). The previous idea of the promotion of English is shown in the stakeholders' perspectives as follows: "Todo lo que él (papá) hace en su trabajo es en inglés, por eso él me dice que es muy importante que yo aprenda ese idioma" (052CL4). This perception is also reproduced by the following intervention: "sí me gustaría hablar inglés porque podría hablar con miles de personas (...) Estados Unidos es un país extranjero, yo realmente quiero ser de allá por los extranjeros y porque podría hablar inglés" (052CL1). Contemplating the students' statement and the idea of having citizens able to communicate in English, we can observe that there is a direct prevailing necessity to learn English which is learnt by all citizens including, in this case, our young pupils.

All the previous affirmations are based on how the global demands not only have an impact on the students' perceptions but also on the English language education in the country. Thus, the Colombian government has decided to introduce English as a mandatory subject in

all schools across the country throughout the use of language policies. However, the government has left the direction of teaching and learning to institutions such as the British Council; which is why there seems to be a balance tipped towards prioritizing the English language and its learning. This inclination can be seen in the data piece: “porque inglés es el idioma más importante que conozco porque ese idioma no se olvida, porque la mayoría de los trabajos siempre son en inglés. Por eso la mayoría de personas deberían aprender ese idioma.” (051IN1). The learner’s interpretation lets us take a look into how the language policies of the country that establish English as a preference might spread the global demands and what they entail. In other words, some authors such as Mackenzie (2021), Razaiefard and Chalak (2017), Jindapitak et. al. (2011), etc. called this phenomenon “linguistic imperialism”.

For comprehending the phenomenon mentioned, Hejazi & Fatemi (cited in Razaiefard and Chalak, 2017) stated that linguistic imperialism entails the global dominance of the English language in non-native speakers countries such as ours where educational policies and governmental institutions and systems are at the core of this process; ignoring other languages and imposing the ideologies, beliefs, and subsequently the Western culture (U.S.). To point this out, Jindapitak and Teo (2011) discuss how in a context where English is taught as a foreign language students will learn English better if they were related to the native-speaker country and its culture. Another example is discussed by Gao (2020) when he claims that today’s students talk about British and American culture but they know little about their own culture.

This is why the learners’ perceptions are being influenced and shaped towards prioritizing and venerating not only English but also its culture, which affects their cultural identity. When we asked our young learners if they could have the opportunity to be from

other country, vast majority of them answered similar things: “Me gustaría ser americano porque he visto los monumentos de allá y quisiera hablar 100 por ciento inglés” (051CL7), “si me gustaría ser estadounidense porque sería más fácil aprender otros idiomas y por la comida y cultura.” (052RL2). Based on the learners’ words, we could observe that a significant amount of pupils would like to be American owing to varied reasons, firstly because of the pros it could bring them in terms of opportunities and secondly because of the English language.

In the same line of thinking, it is important to highlight that meanwhile some learners just affirmed their admiration for U.S language and culture; others discredited Colombia by making a comparison between it and U.S. In the learner’s voice, this can be shown: “No, no me gusta ser colombiana, realmente preferiría ser de Estados Unidos porque allá es muy bonito y son estrictos, mientras que aquí en Colombia hay mucha corrupción y demás cosas que no me gustan. También hay algunas cosas que no me gustan de ser colombiana, por ejemplo: hay mucha violencia, hay muchos ladrones y pues a mi no me gusta eso como a cualquier otro niño.” (052RL4). The previous participant’s affirmation matches with what was mentioned in the category of cultural imperialism since learners might consider their culture, language, and country itself not worth holding or appropriating. (Jindapitak & Teo, 2011).

Following these ways of thinking, we might also confess that English teachers somehow may contribute intentionally or not to the domination of the U.S language and culture by imposing ideologies and beliefs of the western world. These affirmations are discussed by Li (1998) when he affirms that English learning is permeated by the curriculum, English textbooks, and teaching material that most of the time are based on western cultures referring specifically to a boundary with the U.K and the U.S.A creating in students

decontextualization from their own country as well as lack of sensitivity with their language and culture. Being aware of the stated, the learners are not only being affected by a lack of sensitivity but they are also shaping attitudes and perceptions towards the English language.

According to Hejazi & Fatemi (cited in Razaiefard and Chalak,2017) with globalization and the importance of English, the phenomenon of linguistic imperialism is having a consequence on students' cultural identity and their learning experiences. Also, when considering that linguistic imperialism is a sub-category of cultural one, we might affirm that there is not a possibility to isolate one from the other since language items are culturally loaded. Even though there is a huge influence of the context and learning experiences on cultural identity; not all of them attributed English the instrumental value. In the following category, we will approach the learners' perceptions from a different perspective where English can be a bond between cultures and an opportunity to join people.

II. Horizontal constructions of cultural identity

The current category gathers information about a different perspective that students have about the culture in Colombia, U.S and also the English language. This category shows how even if there might be an influence of imperialism on cultural identity, some learners conceive English as a tool to communicate their feelings, emotions, thoughts and even culture. Also, they highlight some aspects of Colombian culture that consider important; for example, the fauna, flora, food, etc. In this vein, we used the data and the theory to converge that some of our young learners had horizontal constructions of cultural identity where they do not prioritize either U.S. and English language or Colombia.

Considering that and after reading carefully through the data, we discovered that there exist a contrast between the students' perceptions since some of our participants conceived English as an important language to get better opportunities; however, it is not the only characteristic that makes it crucial but also the possibility of using it to communicate their culture and perspectives of the world. In our data, one learner confirms the previous thought "que yo aprenda el inglés y piense cosas bonitas de Colombia pues ahora me gustaría conocer más de Estados Unidos, para que cuando yo vaya a Estados Unidos de nuevo, pueda saber y pueda decirle a las demás personas cómo es la cultura de Bogotá o así." (051IN4). In the shared above, we can notice how even when there is an interest in learning more about U.S culture and its language, it does not lead the student to disregard his country and its culture; in contrast to that, the learner perceives the English as an opportunity to share the culture of his city.

In that way, we might affirm that the influence of imperialism in the students' path to construct cultural identity is presented; nevertheless, it does not diminish the importance of their country and its culture. This specific point is evidenced in the following data piece: "pero si pudiéramos hablar todos inglés sería genial, porque podríamos dar a conocer que nuestro país también sabe hablar otro idioma." (051IN1). From this information, we may say that there continues existing an increased weight towards the importance of learning English; although, as the student states, it could be a great way to broaden our borders to let other people from around the world know that we can speak English. The students' perceptions are supported by Tudor (2001) when he claims that it should not be the learner and his/her culture, the ones adapting to the target language, but the "learner's culture" shall define the aims and paths to approach the language objective. These language objectives should "demonstrate learning experiences where students find themselves culturally located where

language could be that component to strengthen their culture and identity” (Gleeson, 2020, p.9). Consequently, as teachers we get the insight that our ways of teaching the second or foreign language have to accommodate to the learners’ perspectives, culture, identity, and background which moves away from the instrumental perspective of language that was discussed in the previous categories.

Also, we must bear in mind that language should not only be presenting a set of instrumental aspects such as vocabulary, reading, writing, etc. but also introducing a way of communication (Hawkins and Norton, cited in Razaiefard and Chalak, 2017) and a new door to a different path of perceiving another culture. (Gomez, 2012). There are some students’ perceptions that show in the cultural logs that they could use English language with other purposes: “Sí me gustaría conocer otras culturas porque sería muy divertido saber las costumbres de otros países, qué es importante para ellos, cuál es su religión, si hay algún monumento muy especial, su comida, etc. conocer su tierra y su biodiversidad y esto lo puedo hacer usando el inglés” (051CL9). The insight provided by the learner made us realize that we need to stand in a critical position about how we perform our teaching since English should not only be seen as biased to the instrumental value but also, as the student mentions, as an opportunity to learn about other cultures and ways of living.

These affirmations about broadening the English language views can be evidenced in the next piece: “Si porque sabiendo inglés ya me pueden explicar más de otros países, más de Colombia como la cultura, la comida, el idioma y las ventajas de otros países, ejemplo, estados unidos, francia, etc, y con eso se pueden lograr metas en otros países y fin” (052CL2). In here, we comprehend that the pupil believes how learning English is a bridge between varied countries, their culture and communication. So, English language learning

and the context in which students are involved should not be seen as separate elements since, concurring with Gomez (2012), the context and language embodies acts of identity constructed where “the learners define and redefine who they are and who they may be” (p. 63-64). The previous idea is supported by Li (2014) when he affirmed that the learning experiences are at the core of identity construction and reconstruction. This is why the students’ cultural identity can be affected one way or another given the results that were showed previously where some students supported the instrumental value of language while others broaden the English language views.

Conclusion

To conclude, it is possible to see how the perceptions of the young learners’ about culture in Colombia and the U.S reflect how their cultural identity is being influenced by the context and the learning experiences in which students are immersed. As an example, some students’ perceptions are linked to the idea of the superiority of the American culture and the job opportunities that speaking English might offer nationally and internationally. These aspects demonstrate that the phenomena of cultural and linguistic imperialism might be caused by some global demands that are portrayed in the English language policies. Therefore, the phenomena are directly shaping the way students perceive themselves as participants of the world and also, how they configure their cultural identity and English language views. However, students’ perceptions not always demonstrated the imperialism influence but also how language could be an enriched space to share their thoughts, culture, ways of living, etc. Indeed, Glesson (2020) supports this statement when she claims that teachers should design learning experiences where students can be culturally located. In the same vein, Gao (2020) expresses that as teachers we should give importance to our students’ roots and culture so as to promote their cultural confidence.

Finally, it is important to highlight that the context and those English language experiences in which students are involved should not be seen as separate elements since these two aspects contribute to the identity construction where learners define and redefine who they are and who they may be (Gomez, 2012).

Implications of the research

Some of the implications of our research project in the field of English language education are connected to promoting teachers' reactions when evidencing that young learners' perceptions show cultural and linguistic imperialism, as teachers we must be aware of the consequences of this to try to provide our students with a safe space to speak about their thoughts and ways of conceiving the world. So, even if there are actually some global demands that affect our teaching, we need to understand how this impacts our young learners' cultural identity and based on that wider the educational practicum. From these thoughts, we should comprehend not only the context in which students are immersed but also their learning experiences inside our classrooms, so as to consider that language is not taught isolated but it entails culture, identity, etc. and that when we are teaching it, we might be promoting the instrumentalization of it disregarding the possibility of using English as a tool to connect with the world.

By bearing these conceptions in mind, we could widen the students' knowledge by including their backgrounds in a flexible curriculum so as to doubt and rethink the lack of sensitivity that may emerge towards their own country and culture when learning English. On the other hand, even though there is research about this topic, there are few that handle young learners in the Colombian context, a plural atmosphere that includes hundreds of different languages, cultures, etc., which allows us to fit an empty space in the field by

providing reliability in the findings. Also, it is important to consider that this research is providing English education with a critic towards our way of doing things, giving importance to our students, their thoughts, perceptions and context.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1 - Research chronogram

2020

Actividad Mes	Nov 2019	Feb 2020	Mar 2020	Abr 2020	May 2020	Jun 2020	Jul 2020	Ago 2020	Sep 2020	Oct 2020	Nov 2020
Observaciones											
Revisión teórica											
Planteamiento del problema											
Recolección de datos-Fase 1 – teoría											
Recolección de datos-Fase 2- (Cultural logs)											
Recolección datos- Fase 3 (Interviews)											

2021

Actividad	Feb	Mar	Abr	May	Jun	Jul	Agost	Sep	Oct	Nov
Mes	2021	2021	2021	2021	2021	2021	2021	2021	2021	2021
Codificación /organización datos										
Escritura-Discusión teórica										
Análisis de datos- (Grounded theory)										
Estructuración de resultados										

2022

Actividad	Ene	Feb	Mar	Abr
Mes	2022	2022	2022	2022
Redacción del documento				
Revisión del documento				

Appendix 2 - Example of an informed consent

Bogotá, 17 de Octubre de 2019

Señores Padres de Familia

Cordial saludo,

Dentro de la formación de pregrado de los futuros docentes de Inglés de la Universidad distrital Francisco José de Caldas, se considera muy importante la realización de actividades de investigación es por tanto que esta carta tiene la finalidad de pedir su consentimiento y autorización para llevar a cabo un proyecto de investigación relacionado con la cultura alrededor del mundo. Es de nuestro interés que esta investigación se pueda desarrollar con los niños que asisten a grado quinto en el colegio Simón Bolívar, las actividades serán talleres sobre lugares alrededor del mundo y en Colombia, comida, bailes, etc. todo esto estará en inglés así que los niños tendrán la posibilidad de aprender inglés mientras exploran el mundo.

Es importante señalar que esta actividad no conlleva ningún gasto para la institución y que se tomarán los resguardos necesarios para no interferir con el normal funcionamiento de las actividades propias del centro.

Yo, Luz Dany Auendaño identificado con cédula de ciudadanía No. 52424.356 Padre o madre de familia del estudiante Luisa María Contreras A. autorizo que mi hijo se haga participe en el proyecto de investigación propuesto por las docentes de inglés de grado quinto Angie Molina y Laura García.

Sin otro particular y esperando una buena acogida, se despiden

Laura García Albarracín
Laura Camila García Albarracín
Docentes de Inglés

Angie Paola Molina R.
Angie Paola Molina Realpe

Universidad distrital Francisco José de Caldas

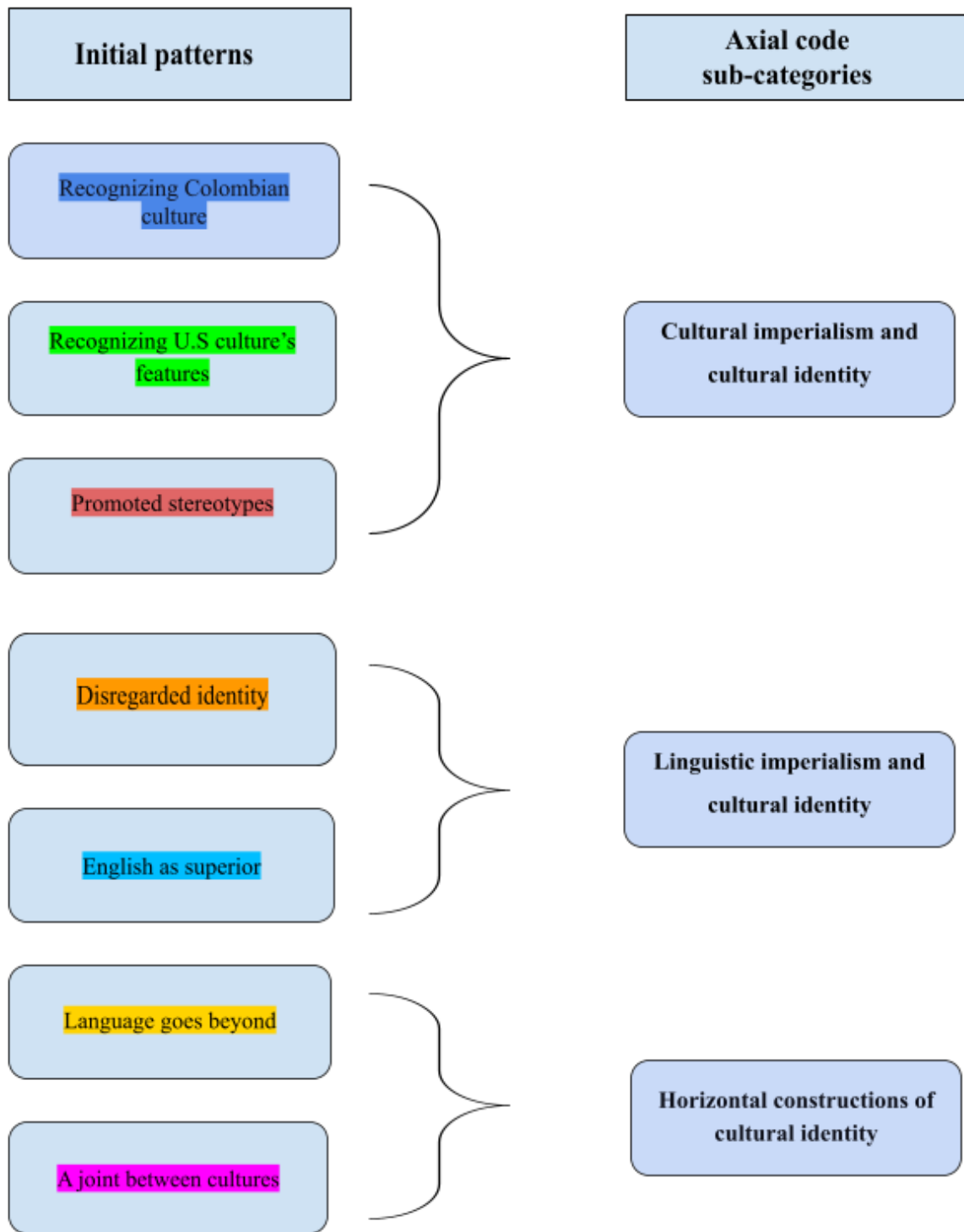
Appendix 3 - Examples of color coding- Open coding-interviews

Patterns	Interview
<p>Disregarded identity- Identity changes</p> <p>Recognizing U.S culture's features</p> <p>Recognizing Colombian culture</p> <p>A joint between cultures</p> <p>English as superior</p> <p>Language goes beyond</p> <p>Promoted stereotypes</p>	<p>Interview example- 0511N1</p> <p>A: Gracias.Bueno Angel respecto a todas las cosas que ni aprendiendo a lo largo como de este tiempo con respecto a la cultura, a la cultura de Estados Unidos y demás,</p> <p>B: pues yo creería que si porque que usted nos ha enseñado que aquí en Colombia tienen muy buenas costumbres pues yo creo que como la diferencia no gastar tanto presupuesto en las cosas y saber ahorrar bien para cuando necesitemos algo, entonces yo creería que sí es bueno el cuidado que tienen aquí en Colombia y Estados Unidos</p> <p>A: okay, y ¿Tú te sientes orgulloso de ser colombiano?</p> <p>B: Sí porque siento que algo, algo ,algo, que nos reconoce de Colombia es que nosotros siempre vamos a estar aquí para defender a nuestro país y sabemos que Colombia es un país y su ubicación lo dice también.</p> <p>A: okay, bueno, ¿tú crees que lo que aprendiste de lo que hemos visto sobre estados unidos, de colombia ha hecho que tu perspectiva de estados Unidos o Colombia cambiara de alguna forma?</p> <p>B: Sí ha cambiado totalmente porque yo antes pensaba que estabas Unidos sólo era un país que hablaba inglés y ya y que tomar soda y eso pero ahora que seamos la diferencia entre el presupuesto sobre las ubicaciones que usted nos ha enseñado que tiene Estados Unidos y que sería importante muy importante hablar inglés si queremos visitar algún día ese país</p> <p>A: ¿tú porqué crees que el inglés nos puede llevar a conocer tantos países es decir porque el inglés es tan, tan importante?</p> <p>B: porque ese es el idioma más importante que conozco, porque ese idioma no se olvida por que la mayoría de los trabajos siempre son inglés(...) por lo que también tiene que mandar respuestas en ingles y todo lo que él hace en su trabajo es inglés, por eso la mayoría de personas deberían aprender ese idioma.</p> <p>A: okay , entiendo, ¿tú crees que nosotros podríamos usar el inglés para dar a conocer nuestro país en otros lados?</p> <p>B: si para que vean que nosotros no solo sabemos español sino que también que nosotros podemos aprender otro idioma que es el inglés y para enseñarles a todos como es importante el inglés aquí</p> <p>A: okay, ¿tú por qué crees que a la gente le gusta viajar tanto a Estados Unidos?</p> <p>B: porque estados unidos es un buen país, mi hermano vive allá y está muy bien enseñado un día que el vino a quedarse nunca creímos que de allá de Estados Unidos el primo de mi abuelito que vino desde allá es muy educado, allá no se creería que allá los enseñan y los educan muy bien porque vino muy bien presentado fue muy formal cuando estuvo aca.</p> <p>A: okay, y tu crees que eso no se lo enseñaron aquí en colombia? tu crees que eso no se lo enseñaron aquí en colombia?</p> <p>B: no porque a veces hay gente que uno se las encuentra diciendo todas esas cosas feas y allá en estados unidos eso no es nada normal, aquí si es normal, porque allá en estados unidos como hablan inglés no hablan tantas cosas feas como aca</p>

Appendix 4- Examples of color coding- Open coding - Cultural Logs

Patterns	Cultural Log
<p>Disregarded identity- Identity changes</p> <p>Recognizing U.S culture's features</p> <p>Recognizing Colombian culture</p> <p>A joint between cultures</p> <p>English as superior</p> <p>Language goes beyond</p> <p>Promoted stereotypes</p>	<p>Cultural Log-052CL2</p> <p>Hello! Bienvenido al lugar donde tendrás la posibilidad de expresar tus pensamientos y lo que crees... Vamos a comenzar un viaje a través del mundo, te gustaría conocer otras culturas? Here we go...</p> <p>Pero primero, quisiéramos saber:</p> <p>¿Qué sabes de Colombia?</p> <p>¿Te gusta ser colombiano?</p> <p>¿Hay cosas que no te gusten de ser colombiano?</p> <p>Si tuvieras la posibilidad de ser de otro país, cuál sería?</p> <p>¿Qué crees que nos identifica como colombianos?</p> <p>¿Qué sabes de Estados Unidos?</p> <p>¿Te gusta ese país? ¿Por qué?</p> <p>¿Qué crees que identifica a los estadounidenses?</p> <p>Es importante que sepas que estas preguntas las puedes contestar como quieras, dibujos, palabras, etc. Y no debes contestarlas todas, sólo queremos saber tu perspectiva...</p> <p>Sin más que decir, adelante</p> <p>Déjate volar astronauta</p> <p>En Colombia hay muchos tipos de comida, empresas, colegios y personas gentiles.</p> <p>Me gusta ser Colombiano porque puedo disfrutar con amigos, mi familia y pensar dónde viajar y quedar hay.</p> <p>No hay nada que me moleste de ser colombiano ya que nací aquí y aprendí a jugar football y a leer</p> <p>Me gusta Estados Unidos porque al aprender inglés en un futuro me ayudará a viajar a otros países y aprender el idioma.</p> <p>¿que identifica a los estadounidenses?</p> <p>Lo que los identifica es que ellos al saber inglés pueden sacar beneficios en otros países.</p> <p>¿ Te gustaría ser estadounidense?</p> <p>si me gustaría ser estadounidense porque sería más fácil aprender otros idiomas y por la comida y cultura.</p> <p>Me gustan mucho las preguntas ya que me preguntan la opinión mía y la de mis compañeros, también que a la profe con la universidad, también al decir todas estas palabras me ayudan a expresar mis sentimientos y sobre todo que gracias a la profe he aprendido más inglés.</p> <p>las preguntas para mi tuvieron un significado ya que también pude contar mis sueños, ejemplo, como si pudiera ser de otro país, yo elegí México ya que me encanta la comida picante, la cultura, como el día de la independencia que es el 5 de mayo.</p> <p>6/11/2019</p> <p>El día de hoy en la clase de inglés teníamos una tarea que se trataba de llevar un cuarto de cartulina y fotos que representaran algo de colombia, ejemplo, como cultura, historia, comida, etc. Mis compañeros y yo dijimos de cartagena y santamarta y en la cartulina dibujamos todo lo que tenía como lagos, mares, una muralla antigua, comida y cultura.</p> <p>8/11/2019</p> <p>¿Con la actividad de los posters cambió mi perspectiva de Colombia?</p> <p>si porque ya que me pueden explicar más de otros países, más de Colombia como la cultura, la comida, el idioma y las ventajas de otros países, ejemplo, Estados Unidos, Francia, etc, y con eso se pueden lograr metas en otros países y fin.</p>

Appendix 5 - Example of axial coding



Appendix 6 - Example of selective coding

