

**THE ANALYSIS OF INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS THROUGH THE  
PERCEPTIONS OF POSTSCRIPT'S MAGAZINE EDITORS**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

More than any other space of time during the whole history, information has become as relevant as today is. Individuals, regions, and nations are affected by all the elements that contribute to their development: education, economics, politics, and technologies. Taking into account the mass media, information has a great impact on public's perceptions about the reality that surrounds people. Furthermore, language learners must face the contemporary society and learn how to function successfully in a new cultural environment, with different values, sociocultural rules, and norms of behaviour.

This project is centred on the interaction of the official magazine of a language teaching program at a state university in Colombia, attempting to analyse and diagnose the status of Intercultural Awareness of the editors from the magazine which is called PostScript. Since its foundation in 2008, it was not considered the possible benefits that a creative space like this could represent for the population of the *Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa's* program (LLI), especially for those who actively participate in its entire process of construction. Its influence as an information tool, may impact the way the academic population reacts creating the research scenario which this study is focused on. This paper is structured in different sections: the first section, statement of the problem, explores how the concept of culture has impacted the ELT field from international to local perspectives debating how culture derives into the emergence of cultural awareness and possibly, an intercultural phenomenon inside the language program. Then, the theoretical framework will introduce the constructs and how they will guide the study. In third place, the literature review will draw how similar studies have been conducted in this area.

The methodology section displays some detailed insights about the context, the participants, and the data collection instruments that will be implemented through this study. Furthermore, the findings and discussion section, will present the data gathered and contrasted with theory and similar studies in order to expose the results derived from this research process. Finally the possible pedagogical implications of this study will be show as well as the limitations presented during the execution of the research and, as final section, the conclusion will compile the results.

## 2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The worldwide integration demands not only a change in society in political and economic terms, but also requires new challenges and changes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century education; thanks to internationalization, the barriers for human communication has diminished facilitating the cultural and social exchange, providing people new opportunities for learning languages and to learn about other cultures (TESOL's, 1997).

Before the 20th century, it has been commonly believed that language and culture, under the point of view of anthropology, were completely separated concepts without any relationship and connection. However, as mentioned by Ariza (2007), during the early 1920's the linguist Edward Sapir stated that language and culture could not be studied in isolation, that is, that language and culture are strongly connected to each other. Due to this relation, language is seen as the vehicle by which a community expresses its perceptions, assumptions and beliefs concerning their world. Later in the early 1990's, Kramsch (1991) argues that the teaching of explicit or implicit culture influences the teaching of social interaction, oral, and written language. Kramsch (ibid) also emphasizes the importance of a foreign language learner to become a learner of the second culture in view of the fact that language impacts the understanding of the context of the target culture. Additionally, the "*National Standards in Foreign Language Education project (1996)*" of the United States declares that learners cannot understand completely the nature of a language if they do not truly understand the context of the culture's target language.

One of the main concerns in the EFL field is the relation between the incorporation of cultural content within the language lesson. To what extent should culture be included in the lessons? Will students enhance their awareness through the inclusion of cultural knowledge

inside the EFL classroom? Questions like these ones, emerge from the insights and reflections that different authors have discussed alongside their literature, and their answers imply the discussion of a gap that it is still being argued by researchers around the world. For example, Olaya & Gómez (2013), drawn through Byram (1997), Lázár (2003), and Chlopek (2008) that EFL teachers struggle when including cultural content in their lessons. According to them, one of the reasons why EFL learners are not culturally competent is due to the fact that language teachers emphasize more on linguistic elements in their syllabi rather than in cultural issues. So, why EFL teachers rely more on language content than cultural issues, then? A question of this nature will enable us to reflect upon the need that we, EFL teachers, must be competent in the inclusion of the cultural competence in the lessons and to consider to what extend is culture incorporated (Olaya & Gómez, 2013).

Although the Colombian National Government and the National Ministry of Education intend to consolidate the Colombian educational system through programs like “Plan Nacional de Inglés: Colombia Very Well” (2014), arguing that one way of improving quality in education is to let students have access to knowledge and new cultures, and English language learning is one of the vehicles to achieve it. According to Hernández & Samacá (2006) Colombian educational system is not the exception. They insist on the need of incorporating culture in an explicit way, aiming to help EFL learners to develop awareness concerning their own culture as well as other cultural backgrounds. Just, when culture is taught explicitly and systematically, as these authors expressed, EFL learners arouse a sense of respect and tolerance, by discussing them in a significant way, raising moreover critical thinking, and an open mind towards diversity and other contexts.



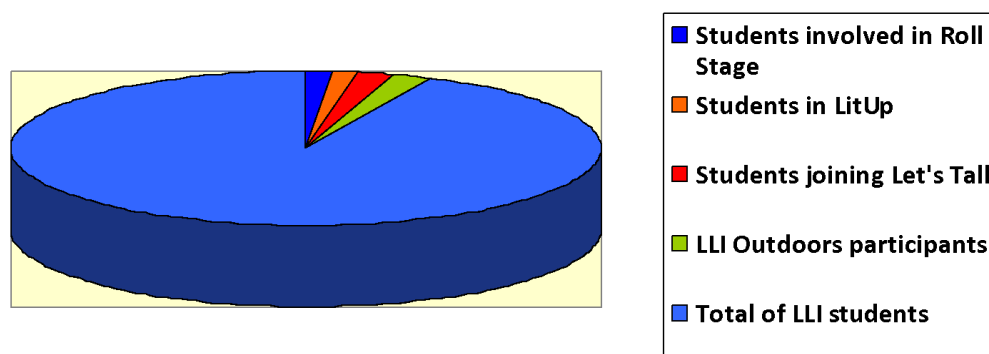
Elaborating an analysis and observing the current conditions of the higher education in Colombia, especially in the English Language Teaching programs, Olaya & Gómez (2013) report that pre-service teachers present a poor and not well founded notion about the culture and its inclusion in the EFL classroom. This explains the fact that ELT programs in Colombia, have recently included in their curricula a set of content subjects oriented to develop a conscious process of understanding culture as a valuable element for pre-service teachers to include and to enhance language learning.

In this sense, alongside with the earlier premises, the ELT program at Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira is aware of the fact that the students must be conscious of their own culture and also of others, promoting through the multiple activities developed the emergence of an intercultural awareness process in which the ELT student increases his/her knowledge of the world. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL, 2007) establishes a set of competencies, abilities, skills, and knowledge that the learner of L2 must possess. One of them is the sociocultural knowledge. The ELT program is immersed in an environment in which students interact, at least, in 2 languages. The phenomenon of bilingualism, then, appears to complete the set of competencies that the teacher in development needs to discover during his/her academic journey. The relation culture-language is unbreakable, that is, we cannot speak about one of the concepts if we do not mention the other (Kramsch, 1991). This, explains the importance of being *Interculturally* aware, that is, to be self-conscious about the difference between my own culture and the culture of the language(s) I am speaking.

The ELT program is comprised by 5 areas of study which structure its curriculum: pedagogical area, technological area, disciplinary area, research area, and sociocultural area. This last area has recently support cultural extension projects as a result of students proposals due to

the need of involve students in participating in these activities as a complement to their future professional profiles as teachers in development. These projects are, *Roll Stage*, *Lit Up*, *Let's talk*, and *LLI Outdoors*.

We have sounded out from the approximately 688 students of the ELT program how many of them really are involved in cultural activities and participate directly in them. The following graphics provide a reading about the current status regarding participation in cultural activities.



Based on the above results from a total of 670 students, only a 7.0%, participate in cultural activities, depicting a poor participation from the students in cultural projects. Being developed these activities in an ELT program, and having discussed previously the importance of incorporating the cultural component in the formation of a language teacher, we see that it is evidenced the need to reinforce the inclusion of culture in other environments, different from the content subjects, which are only developed through interdisciplinary areas of knowledge that model the curricula of the ELTP.

From the entire extension projects that are currently being developed in the ELT program, this research study is focused in analyzing one project in particular: the magazine PostScript. It was born as a quarterly publication in the *ELT* program at *Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira* in 2008 with the purpose of giving and highlighting information about remarkable events that happened during the academic term. In 2012, the PostScript project was launched again with a new committee coordinated by 6 students of the program and a professor as a leader of the team. In this opportunity, the magazine was redesigned not only as an information media but also as an interactive one in which the academic population of the program can make use of it with the purpose of publish research papers, articles, reflections, experiences, chronicles, etc, which are categorized in three main sections: Cultural, academic, and technological. In the same way, PostScript is a media which intends not only collect and share graphic information but also aims to be a source for its readers to have access about their own culture as well as others, by interacting in Spanish, English or even French languages.

As a result of the emergence of this project, a group of three students who are part of the team of editors in PostScript magazine and as a necessity from the intercultural area of the ELT program, it has been evidenced the need to inquire about the relevance of extra-curricular projects that might be oriented to acknowledge the possible contributions around the concept of culture which might derive in an intercultural proposal. It is intended, then, to inquire from the reasons provided previously, the analysis and diagnosis of how cultural awareness is revealed inside the team of editors at PostScript.

After having exposed a complete description of the gap in terms of developing culture in the EFL classroom, and considering that the members of PostScript are pre-service teachers at the ELT program the following research questions were stated:

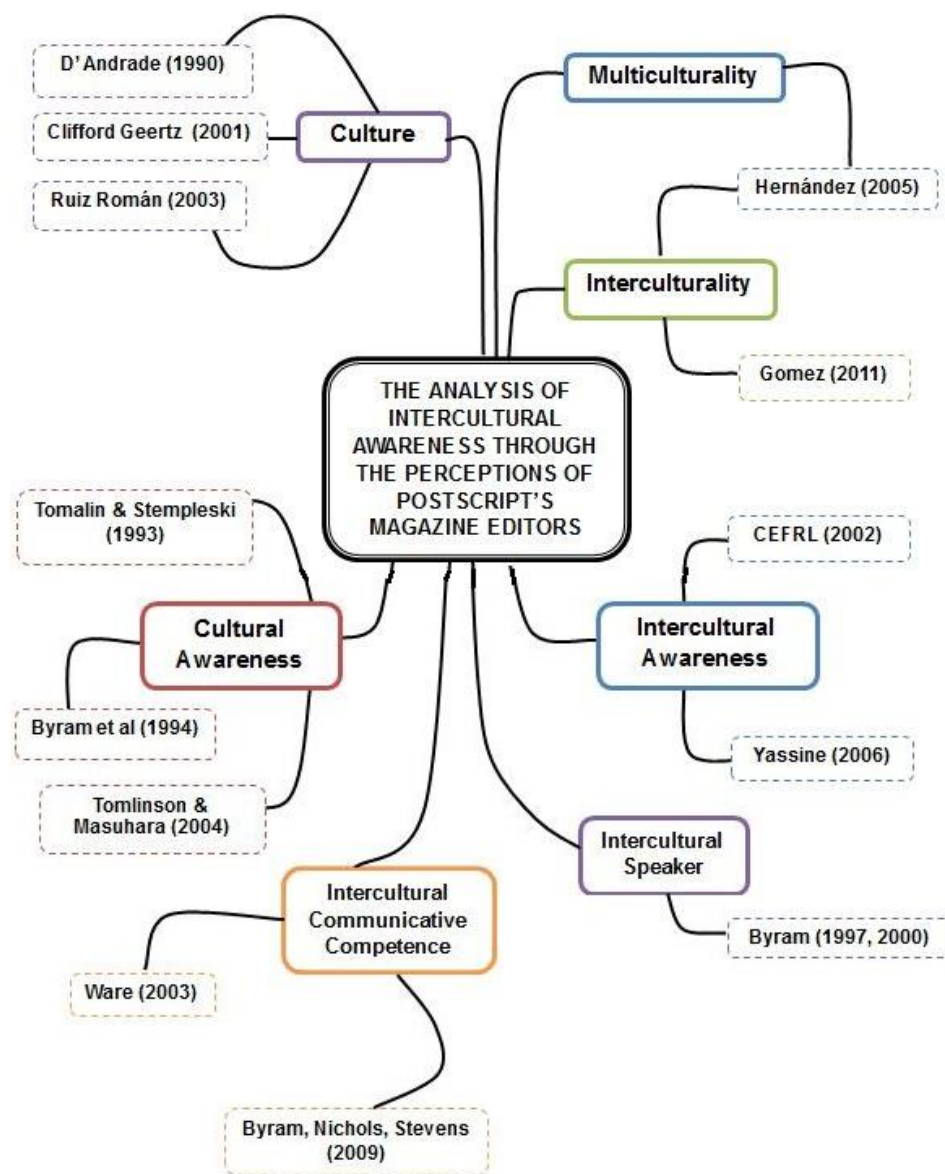
1. How has the Postscript project contributed to the development of intercultural awareness within the PostScript members?
2. How has the construction of a magazine affected the perceptions of culture within the Postscript members?
3. Which aspects of intercultural awareness do the project Postscript impulse?

### 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

For this section, first, three definitions will approach what culture is under the contributions of D'Andrade (1990), Clifford Geertz (2001) and Ruiz Román (2003); meanwhile the term of Multiculturality, it will be considered under the ideas of Hernández (2005) and respect to Interculturality, it will be described under the view of Hernandez (2005) and Gomez (2011).

On the other hand, three more concepts will draw what cultural awareness is under the points of view of Tomalin & Stempleski (1993), Byram et al (1994), and Tomlinson & Masuhara (2004); simultaneously, the Common European Framework of References for Languages (2002) and Yassine (2006), they will be acknowledge for addressing to the notion of Intercultural Awareness. Then, the concept of Intercultural Communicative Competence will be conducted by the approaches of Byram, Nichols, Stevens, (2009) and Ware (2003). As the final construct, Intercultural Speaker will be defined through Byram (1997, 2000).

The concept map below shows the reader an overview of the relevant terms for the present study:



### 3.1 Culture as a key component in language learning.

As culture is a term that has been addressed by many authors from different points of view and angles, it would be arbitrary to establish a single definition, therefore, in this section this term will be explored from linguistic notions due to the fact that culture is a factor intricately connected to the language.

Primarily, D'Andrade (1990: 65) states that culture is a

*"Learned systems and shared meaning and understanding, communicated primarily through natural language. These systems of meaning and understanding are not only representations about what exists in the world; have managerial nature, evocative and builder reality". (p. 65)*

That is, culture is not just a collection of data or customs, but a force policy that leads us to understand reality according to certain parameters and acts.

In the same way and equally important, Clifford Geertz (2001) expresses that culture is an ordered system of meanings and symbols, under which individuals define their world, express their feelings, systematize, and formulate their judgments. Finally, Ruiz Román (2003) argues that culture is a set of meanings acquired and constructed by man as a member of a community, that is, culture is an object created by man through communication for educational purposes. Both definitions state that culture is a system of symbols and meaning which has the purpose of giving sense and shaping the world and reality. Nevertheless, the former description establishes that culture is a tool for people to perceive and build their surrounding world in a personal and individual way while the latter scopes for a collective construction of the world with an educational purpose. For instance, myths, legends, stories, folk wisdom, and lore, are built from the individual to the collective thinking as a tool for cultural identity.

Seeing the different connotations and shades that the concept of culture has, from all the academic fields of knowledge, from psychology, to anthropology, passing through sociology, arriving finally at the ELT field, what all them have in common is the fact that language and culture are closely tied to each other; one cannot be separated from the other since they are

concepts that are part of the individual's nature as a member of a particular community. In the paragraphs below, the concepts of Multiculturalism and Interculturalism will be explored, in order to deepen more about the scope of this research study.

### **3.1.1 From “Multiculturalism” to “Interculturalism”**

The modern society, in which different perspectives, attitudes, behaviors and lifestyles converge, invites all language users, not only to comprehend and appreciate the aspects of their own cultural identity, but in turn, invites to consider the necessary recognition and understanding of other cultural forms and expressions immersed in his/her surroundings.

In accordance with the definition provided by Hernández (2005), we can establish a first distinction of the term “Multiculturalism”, as the co-existence of different cultures within the same geographical and social space, but without implying a relation or enrichment between these, that is, no existence of exchange between them. In depth, according to the author, “Multiculturalism” is generally treated when there is the presence, within the same place, of different cultures who cohabit but have little influence of one on the other or they may have a conflict relationship, as well, the society with its individual will be multicultural if they maintain a state of intolerance or tolerance towards various cultures, on the contrary when it is referred to the notion of "intercultural", when individuals establish interactive relationships between the different realities surrounding them, for all these reasons, Interculturalism goes beyond Multiculturalism as it is described below.



### **3.1.2 Interculturality: Acknowledging an approach towards the teaching-learning of language and culture.**

Therefore, the authentic use of the language oriented towards an effective communication, requires much more than the establishment and development of a cultural awareness, since the processes of interaction between cultures involve not only a contact between them, but a turn that involves knowledge of the context and its audience, which is summarized in terms of Interculturality. According to Gomez (2011), Interculturality is conceived as the mutual understanding of the differences when individuals from different contexts are met, as in the world today, is increasingly visible people set different relations, agreements and countless reasons to communicate with different cultures.

Similarly, Hernandez (2005) via Arch (1998), Buendia (1992), Jordan (1996) and Quintana (1992), state that the concept of "Interculturality," involves a comprehensive communication between the cultures that converge in the same space, thus generating a mutual enrichment, which therefore results in the recognition and valuation (intrinsic and extrinsic) by each of the cultures framed by equality.

In the field of language teaching, Interculturality plays a vitally important factor, since additionally to promote the recognition and evaluation between cultures it promotes similarly its reinforcement and enrichment in a creative and solidary way; for that reason, the materialization of Interculturality as from a cultural approach, encourages not only the development of the language user's personal identity, but at the same time arouse the interest for understanding the other from their language and culture. Based on the above considerations, the success of a communication between cultures, besides an appropriate linguistic knowledge about the target

language, requires, as the first stage, the development of an intercultural awareness for the subsequent acquisition of an Intercultural Communicative Competence, since awareness is reflected in the development of certain “Intercultural skills” which allows the language user to introduce himself/herself in a competence.

### **3.2 Cultural awareness: An inner sense of cultural identity.**

At the beginning of this chapter the concept of culture was discussed from the point of view of different scholars who agreed that culture is conceived as a set of meanings and symbols used by members of a community for shaping the world surrounding them. In this section, the conception of cultural awareness, which is considered as the bases of this research study, will be inquired under the contributions of Tomalin & Stempleski (1993), Byram et al (1994) and Tomlinson & Masuhara (2004).

Cultural awareness is a principle derived from the notion of culture which requires someone to develop a scheme of inner attitudes and values towards other people culture’s identity.

Byram et al (1994) argue that cultural awareness is the intrinsic capability that the language user has to compare his/her particular way of life with the target-language culture, which means that without the cultural dimension, it is almost impossible to deal with the learning of the target language.

Similarly, Tomlinson & Masuhara (2004) draw from Tomlinson (2001) that cultural awareness is the speaker’s understanding of “*his/her own and other’s people’s cultures*” (p.3). This understanding is developed from an inner sense of cultural identity and evolves at the time the differences and similarities are known by people, entwining the positive and negative aspects of the culture itself.

Finally, Tomalin & Stempleski (1993), drawn a very similar definition of cultural awareness; nevertheless they make a classification of its features to complement what the other two authors explained. The first feature is concerned with the influence of our behaviour upon our culture; the second characteristic has to do with the impact of others behaviour upon other cultures; finally the third element deals with the capability for expressing from our cultural judgements our opinions.

Gathering the different author's contributions with respect to the concept of cultural awareness, we conclude that they share viewpoints in the sense they conceive cultural awareness as an inner capacity that language users develop to compare and understand own and other's people culture, also the role that culture influences on people's behaviour and thoughts is highlighted as a vital component of cultural awareness.

During the approach of this framework it has been emphasized the close relationship between language and culture, both of which are factors that cannot be separated from each other considering that cultural awareness is a key element in the development of language learning, as Kramersch (1993) stated, the full development of cultural awareness not only allows the user to become proficient in a language linguistic aspects, but in turn this awareness allows the user to establish a relationship in accordance with the native culture and the target- language culture.

All previously presented, it leads us to attempt through the following study, to identify, analyse, and describe how the magazine PostScript contributes to the development of intercultural awareness within the PostScript members and how the construction of a magazine affected the perceptions of culture within the Postscript members.

### **3.3 Appreciating world realities through Intercultural Awareness.**

The perception, knowledge, and understanding of the relationship (in terms of similarities and differences) between the “world of origin” and the “world of the target community”, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2002) is framed in terms of Intercultural awareness, which establishes an awareness toward the diverse nature of both worlds, manifesting itself in an awareness in the way that each community appears from the perspective of the other.

Appreciating world realities, involves the development of certain skills that allows every language user to compare, contrast, understand and finally assimilate the worlds surrounding them. Meanwhile, in cultural awareness, the speaker requires first, to develop awareness concerning his/her own culture, for then being able to conceive other peoples’ culture, the Intercultural awareness does not establishes hierarchies in the construction of awareness in both cultures, since Intercultural awareness, involves the development of the awareness and understanding of the mother's culture to the same extent as other cultures. (Yassine, 2006).

As indicated by Yassine *ibid*, Intercultural awareness arises when people no longer assume that their culture and the way to see the world is the only and the best, but thus begins to evaluate and consider other perspectives and realities of the world surrounding them. From the above statements it follows that the intercultural awareness is the ability to recognize differences and similarities between their own culture and other communities (Van Hooft 2002, et al). This awareness is made visible by the ability to "decentralize", that is, abandoning the "I am the

center" and to be able to get closer to the perspective of the other individuals, from other cultures.

### 3.4 The Intercultural Communicative Competence

The notions of Culture and Interculturality facilitate the understanding of the Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), which is defined as the ability to interacting with “others”, accepting different perspectives of the world, mediating among those perspectives, and/or being aware concerning the appreciation of those perceptions. (Byram, Nichols, and Stevens, 2009). Byram (2009) et al, designed an ICC model, which consists in five skills denominated “savoirs”, of which two, they have previous conditions.

The first one is in function of the knowledge (*savoir*) of the own and the foreign society and its social processes, as well as the interaction and all that this entails in certain situations. The second one is framed in terms of attitude (*savoir être*), which refers to aspects such as openness, honesty, flexibility, empathy, awareness of “others”, the ability of solving conflicts and strains, aiming to establish and keep the relations and contact among cultures. In the same way, the ICC covers other two abilities, the first, *savoir comprendre*, which is related with the capacity of interpreting, comparing, and contrasting texts and events, meanwhile *savoir apprendre* “ it is the ability of analyze data from the own culture as the target culture, and the potential relation established between them. (Ware, 2003). Finally, *savoir s’engager*, a sub central skill, which implicates the other skills, and it involves the development of a critical cultural awareness and / or political education, which means being able to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit

criteria, perspectives, practices and products related with the own and other cultures and countries.

### **3.4.1 Teaching Languages and the Intercultural speaker's role.**

For Byram (1997), the Intercultural Communicative Competence requires a preparation beyond developing the ability to interact and mediate with semantic aspects from different cultures, and of recognizing elements from one and several social identities (cultures).

Byram *ibid* expresses in order to the effective use of languages, the need for the user to be able to develop strategies that allows him/her enjoy connecting and discovering new elements through the interaction with other social actors, thus developing a new capacity for which has not been trained intentionally. Such aforementioned skills are proper of an Intercultural speaker, who according to (Byram, 2000) is an individual who has developed the Intercultural Communicative Competence and thus is able to interact effectively across cultures, as is able to negotiate a form of communication and interaction that is satisfactory to all and achieve also mediate between people of diverse backgrounds.

Through the different contributions made by previous authors who addressed the concept of Interculturality and the concepts derived from there, we conclude by stating that Interculturality in terms of awareness and competence, enables the users of the native and the target language, to recognize all speakers not only as individuals belonging to different cultural

contexts, but also, at the same time, it allows them to develop skills and strategies that facilitates to move beyond their perceptions and attitudes towards other cultural realities, making more favorable the exchange of experiences and knowledge, in the same way breaking down stereotypes, disrespect, intolerance and other factors that impede the relationship and communication between cultures.

To conclude, the knowledge of languages is presented as an instrument that promotes better understanding between people and mutual understanding, while it allows the development of attitudes of tolerance and respect for other cultures, thereby contributing to the creation of a sense of a global citizenship.

#### 4. LITERATURE REVIEW.

It has been formerly discussed what culture and cultural awareness are, and the connection with intercultural awareness, and how they are related to the development of this research study. The studies conducted in different contexts will sketch the reader an overview about the impact of culture and intercultural awareness. They will illustrate some aspects and items that will be useful for this study as a basis for its methodology.

In order to establish some relations in this state of art regarding the factual constructs of the current study, some important contributions will be presented in this section that will help the reader to comprehend how other researchers approach intercultural awareness. There are some relevant connections to settle in this discussion, for instance, in the studies of Turizo & Gómez (2006) and Olaya & Gómez (2013) there have been some tendencies regarding the perceptions and misconceptions that people have towards the concept of culture and its relevance when including it in the language curriculum; whereas in the studies of Castañeda (2012) and Olaya & Gómez (2013) some of the findings pictured a tendency how media such as Internet and national TV programs impacted participants' perceptions of their awareness. Additionally, in the studies of Turizo & Gómez (2006), Bruguier & Greathouse (2012), and Castañeda (2012) there have been a trend in the development of the intercultural awareness of the participants which helped them to come to an understanding of their own culture as well as of others. Although Turizo & Gómez (2006), Castañeda (2012), Bruguier & Greathouse (2012), and Olaya & Gómez (2013) research have painted these relations, all the studies were developed with a different set of variables and contexts that may interfere in the final results of these relations.



Olaya & Gómez (2013) performed a qualitative research project that aimed to explore the perceptions of pre-service English teachers at three Colombian universities. The researchers used questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and documentary analysis; all of them focusing on knowledge, perceptions, and attitudes from the participants that were a total of 51 upper-intermediate EFL students from the three universities, aged from 18 to 22, including both males and females. The findings from this study helped to identify the participants perception toward the term of culture, which, according to the study, is a “static” definition narrowed in a set of terms such as identity, values, beliefs, customs, habits, and traditions. The study also reveals the fact that pre-service teachers do not recognize the relevance of culture which needs to be included in a language training program. This is also connected to the misconception of the participants that tend to confuse communicative competence with Intercultural Communicative Competence. Finally, the researchers expose that pre-service teachers should not only understand culture, but also deepen more in order to balance the learning of the language and the knowledge and comprehension of the culture-target-language. This idea is strongly linked to what they established through the objectives, which consisted on the idea of conducting a “diagnostic research” aiming to explore and identify the main attitudes that “EFL pre-service teachers had regarding the insertion of culture in the English class” (p, 50). The findings then, represent how language must be a mean to learn about the cultures and subcultures of the world, but also, it invites pre-service teachers and language training programs to enhance in terms of curricula, methodologies, themes, and positive attitudes in order to become effective intercultural interpreters of diversity and stronger exponents of inclusion.

In a similar way but with a different context, Castañeda (2012) conducted a research project at a state school in Bogotá, aiming to explore how students understand the materials charged of cultural content in the EFL classroom intending also to describe their perceptions about culture. The research was carried out with a group of eight graders comprising 51 both males and females aged between 11 and 16 with an Elementary level of language proficiency. The data was collected from audio-visual recordings, polls, field notes, and students' artifacts. Castañeda (2012) aimed to explore how teenagers “understood the course materials” with cultural content and to “describe their on the foreign cultures presented in such materials” (p. 29). The findings portrayed some interesting conclusions. Firstly, students read the foreign cultures using their own reality, that is, activating their schemata, connecting their prior knowledge, and using home culture, mainly, to contrast and compare. Secondly, Castañeda *ibid* mass media (“especially national TV”) has impacted the way students managed to understand foreign culture. Finally, the participants had the chance to compare themselves when reading the foreign culture using home culture parameters which mainly helped them to raise the awareness and improve their critical thinking on their self-concept.

There have been discussed two perspectives in terms of theorization and reflection. The following studies were developed from a practical point of view, where Turizo & Gómez (2006) developed an academic reflection in which a reading and a writing activity in an undergraduate EFL course at Universidad del Norte in Barranquilla was implemented and designed to discuss about the notions of culture and language; and to establish its relation inside the EFL classroom through an intercultural communicative point of view. After implementation, the main results explained that when placed in the “shoes of others”, it is difficult to avoid some tracks of our own culture, that is, the sense of empathy does not affect the sense of identity. Another result

showed the need for teachers' abilities to enhance the "teachability" of cultural awareness and to design class activities in which students can develop a sense of empathy.

Equally important, Bruguier & Greathouse (2012) inquired about the impact of an innovative English language course with students from different countries, including indigenous people from Mexico. The objective of the study was to understand how indigenous and non-indigenous people develop their sense of identity in relation to their own reflection while improving their English language skills. The participants comprised 18 non-indigenous people including two professors from Canada and the United States, and 6 indigenous people from Mexico. Classes were held during 3 hours per week during 13 weeks. At the end of the course, the participants expressed their insights about the process and these were the results: firstly, they became gradually, more "aware of their personal ethnocentric feelings" (p.206) establishing the connections to comprehend how important it could be when understanding other cultures. And, secondly, the participants raised their awareness on ethnocentric attitudes which helped them to compare and to analyse themselves raising an understanding of their origin.

We have seen the findings of the previous research models, what the authors did to seek their objectives and to inquire about the concepts of culture, cultural and intercultural awareness. These findings and their articulation with the methodological design and implementation of the research will help the current researchers to replicate and adapt some of these models for the present study. For instance, Turizo & Gómez (2006) and Bruguier & Greathouse (2012) have designed and implemented cultural activities; the PostScript magazine develops similar activities during the creative stages of its construction and it would be interesting to know if the implementations of such activities are influencing the cultural perception of the editors. And secondly, the studies of Castañeda (2012) and Olaya & Gómez have implemented similar data

collection instruments. Although they were carried in different contexts; the former with teenager students and the latter in ELT programs, their results created an impact in the improvement of a language curriculum, and we believe that our research project may have similar impact in our ELT program. Most research involving culture and intercultural awareness seeks to identify its impact within the EFL classroom and the connections that teachers and students establish when this awareness emerges. We are attempting to replicate some of the previous models illustrated in a particular context in which a magazine as an extension project of an ELT program, is the vehicle where culture is transmitted. The link between culture, intercultural awareness, ICC, and the construction of a magazine is non-existent, the revised literature does not establish the relation, but it is a matter of this research to do it, and to shed light on it.

## 5. METHODOLOGY

In the previous chapters, it has been discussed the fact that the team of editors of the magazine PostScript has been working on the project since it was re-launched in 2012. At the beginning, it was not stated what is seen in their perceptions towards the process of creation of a magazine. In other words, we attempted to identify the perceptions of the PostScript team in terms of cultural awareness alongside the process of edition. The development of this methodology was oriented towards the exercise of exploration, identification, and comprehension about the nature of intercultural awareness generated. Considering that the object of study is the magazine PostScript and the participants are the team of editors of the project, this research study had the elements to constitute a Qualitative Descriptive Interpretive Case Study.

### 5.1 Type of Research

As stated by Merriam (2009) qualitative research aims to understand the nature and how people construct meaning through their perceptions towards phenomena. The PostScript project frames the set of experiences, beliefs, and perceptions of its participants, which under the conceptions of Merriam (2009) enclose the phenomenon to be observed; categorizing this study into a Qualitative Research approach. At this level, this qualitative research is comprised by an interpretative approach in the way of attempting to make sense of the phenomena in terms of what participants perceive towards Intercultural awareness; on the other hand, a naturalistic approach that allows researchers to study phenomena in its natural and real setting which in this case is PostScript. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

## 5.2 Type of Study

In the sense of Case Study, Yin (1993) and Merriam (1998) argue that a case study is an empirical inquiry which is conducted with the purpose of investigating a phenomenon in its authentic and real context, which means that the current study was not carried out in a simulated scenario. Given these conditions, it is allowed to state that the present study is framed into a case study, due to the fact that the regular sessions of the PostScript and the collection of data was done in the same scenario.

As through the current study is attempted to describe in a detail way all the events surrounding this case, it can be stated that this research accomplish the parameters for being considered as a descriptive case study since this type of case is employed for illustrating events and their specific context. Situating in the case of PostScript, it is aimed to describe the circumstances surrounding the nature of the editors' perceptions in relation to Intercultural awareness, in this way, the researchers goal's is focused on gathering data which describes the situation as it occurs. (Yin, 2003).

The present study is interpretive in the sense of attempting to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them; also, this type of study focuses on the social construction of reality, in other words, it implies how and why people see the world the way they do (Rowlands, 2005). Therefore, knowing these characteristics, the present study scopes for understanding what and how the members of the PostScript perceive their Intercultural awareness emergence through the creation of the magazine.

### **5.3 Context**

The present research study was conducted at the Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) program of the Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira, which is located at the south-eastern of Pereira town, Risaralda (Colombia). This TEFL program founded in 2004, aims to respond the requirements in terms of preparing and professionalize English teachers with high level of quality concerning language, social and pedagogical aspects, allowing the graduated from this program be a professional able to face different educational realities regarding language, promote the quality and the enhancement of English in the region. It is important to highlight that to date, this program has promoted its first seven promotions of graduates and is also facing a process of accreditation.

The program has with an amount of 668 students from different social-economic status which ranges from low to middle.

### **5.4 Setting**

The current study was carried out in the magazine from the Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa program: “PostScript”, launched for first time in 2008 as a project from the socio cultural area of the program. After a recess, the PostScript was re-launched in 2012 by a group of six students coordinated by a professor, all of them from the Licenciatura program, but this time as an extension project derived from the Intercultural area of the Licenciatura program.

Since PostScript was re-launched, its vision was not understood only as an informative media, but also as an interactive environment in which students could make use of it in favour of showing their skills from research, Academic, Technological, and Cultural, due to the fact that PostScript attempts to encourage its participants to display all their creativity reflected on any

type of visual material such as photographs, drawings, paintings and more. On the other hand, the magazine encourages students to be tested in a foreign language, i.e. students have the opportunity for publishing either in Spanish, English and French.

The coordinating committee divided into sections (socio-cultural, academic and technological) has as its task to store, organize and edit all materials submitted by students without losing sight of the essence and style of whom posted the material. Significantly, the coordinating committee members also participate in the process of providing written or visual outcomes. To undertake such collection of products, PostScript publishes at the beginning of each semester. The students and teachers are informed about the guidelines and procedures for posting in this semester campaigns. From then, it begins on accompaniment work, in order for those who desire to participate in the current edition can do it satisfactorily.

Nowadays, the PostScript is positioned as an interactive information tool that aims not only to store and disseminate information but also generates stimulus between teachers and students to take the risk to write, developing critical thinking and share their ideas in the magazine.

## **5.5 Participants**

The subjects of this research study were the team of seven editors of the magazine PostScript comprising nine students from different semesters and a professor who is the coordinator of the Intercultural area of the program. The participants are six males and four females, whose ages range between 18 and 26 and who are between 3rd and 9th semester, who are characterized for their high academic performance, their average of language proficiency in



L2 (B2+) as well as their motivation for improving their writing skills and the willingness to cooperate as a team.

They are in charge of the informative campaigns addressed to students and teachers of the program aiming to release the necessary information and procedures for publishing written and visual material in the magazine *Postscript*; thereafter, the team has the effort to collect, organize and edit all material submitted by the academic community.

From the population previously described, three subjects of study were selected following the principles of purposeful sampling in qualitative research, which is not intended to be a non-randomly selection method. According to Patton (2002), purposeful sampling aims to select a target population contemplating the fact that the participants are “knowledgeable” about or “experienced” in relation to the research phenomenon. For this research project it implies that the sample will be selected under certain parameters which range from their role since they joined the magazine and the knowledge and experienced collected since their participation.

The following are the profiles of the subjects of study. Most of the information is gathered by the participants’ written personal description. All names further described are pseudonyms that cover participants’ identity as an agreement dealt in the consent format signed by them.

- 1- Participant A is a student from the ELT program; she is 23 years old and actually is in the 9<sup>th</sup> semester. She is part of the edition staff of the magazine, and her labour is oriented towards the cultural section. Lolita’s language proficiency level is B2 in English. To date

of research, she was working as English teacher in a well-known language institute in the city. Among her personal interests, reading is her favourite one.

- 2- Participant DM is a professor from the ELT program; he is 26 years old and the coordinator of PostScript project. This participant's English language proficiency is C1. Among his interests, reading, teaching, and research are his favourites. He describes himself as passionate for teaching, and always committed to his work.
- 3- Participant J is a 24 years old male, student of the Language Teaching Program at the Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira coursing his 7<sup>th</sup> semester, he is very competent English language teaching and he is part of the edition staff of the magazine; his labor is oriented towards the technological section. This participant described himself as an organized and creative person, very collaborative and passionate for the Language Teaching, arts and social labor.

## **5.6 Researchers' role**

As stated by Fraenkel et al (2012) in participant observation studies, researchers actually participate in the situation or setting they are observing. The researchers of the current study performed the roles of observers as participants, defined by Bernard (1994) as the process in which the researcher establishes a relationship with a community and learns how to act without interfering participants' natural behaviour. That is, the researcher needs to adopt a neutral point of view with the purpose of avoiding subjectivity and biased results. Despite the fact that researchers are part of the research scenario, their primary role is going to be more observer rather than participant due to the high level of objectivity required to interpret data.

## **5.7 Data analysis and collection process**

The instruments that were implemented in the present study in order to collect data were Stimulated Recall (SR), Interviews (I), and Reflective Journals (RJ). They were the basis to conduct a systematic process of data analysis which is called Grounded Theory. According to Charmaz (2006) grounded theory involves a group of inductive methods which are systematic with the purpose of creating new theory from data analysis. As it is an inductive method, grounded theory relies on a set of strategies and procedures that aim to categorize the information collected; in this way, Merriam (2009) argues that the categories or concepts created by data analysis describe common patterns through contrast and comparison, which at the end will serve as an explanation of the actions interpreted from data; in others words, the emergence of new theory.

As the purpose of the current study was to diagnose the cultural perceptions of PostScript editors as well as their emergence of intercultural awareness, grounded theory contributed to classify the amount of information collected through data and helped the researchers to identify the common patterns among the categories which constituted the new elements of theory

### **5.7.1 Stimulated Recall**

For the current study, Stimulated Recall Interview (SRI) was used. As stated by Nguyen, McFadden, Tangen, and Beutel (2013) is a technique used in research in order to provide participants the opportunity “to view themselves in action” (p.2) aiming to recall participants thoughts concerning the events where they were involved. As the purpose of the present study focuses on PostScript editors’ perceptions towards cultural awareness and the role that the

magazine generates in the Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa's program, this technique offered the chance to identify what through direct observation cannot be identified.

SRI was used during the sessions where the PostScript team meets to plan and design the magazine edition with a frequency of once per month during the academic term. In order to collect data from SR, audio recorders were used to gather data during the creative sessions that the magazine PostScript had during the academic term.

### **5.7.2 Interviews**

Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2012) through Patton have remarked that the purpose of interviewing people is to find out what is on their minds—what they think or how they feel about something.

The current study implemented semi -structured interviews with the purpose of obtaining information that later can be contrasted and compared. Through these interviews, which were conducted towards the end of the study, the researchers gathered and identified participants' perceptions towards PostScript members' cultural awareness that are not easily recognizable through direct observation.

As an essential component of SR, interviews were used in order to inquire participants using recall questions to comment on memories, rather than simple and reflective interpretations, aiming to avoid subjectivity. It is important to highlight that researchers had the possibility to elicit in a more detail way the interviewee's responses through the use of probing questions which functions for seeking more detail in stories (Merriam, 2009).

As stated by Merriam via Patton (2002), exists six types of interview questions that can be used depending on what interviewee is saying and what researchers want to discover. The researchers implemented the two first types of questions here mentioned:

1. Experience and behavior questions – questions regarding interviewees’ experiences, actions, or behaviors.
2. Opinion and values questions – the interviewer is concerned with interviewees’ opinions or beliefs regarding a certain topic or event. Such questions might begin with “In your opinion”.
3. Feeling questions – require interviewees to reflect on their feelings. Such questions typically begin with “How did you feel when”.
4. Knowledge questions – questions that ask interviewees to recall specific factual information.
5. Sensory questions – are used to elicit information regarding what the interviewee say, heard, etc.
6. Demographic questions – are used to elicit demographic information regarding information such as the interviewee’s age, education, income, etc.

### 5.7.3 Reflective journals

A reflective journal is a personal record of researchers' experiences in the field (Bean, 1996). It contains a record of ideas and insights concerning observations and responses gained during the research process; in other words, reflective journals aims to reflect upon research in different ways. Additionally, through this type of journals implemented in inquiry, the person doing research has the possibility to think in a critical and analytical way regarding the work in process, and also for the enhancement of self-reflection and post action.

Since one of the purposes of the actual study is to analyse what is evidenced about cultural factors as a product of awareness, during this research, reflective journals were implemented in the sense it provides an exploration of different insights as the result of experiences as well as from the theory implemented during the whole process; besides, this method offers the opportunity for gathering data as from researchers' perspectives too.

Grosh and Glewwe (2000) draw that journals are instruments of data collection where the participants fill out the information themselves on a daily, weekly, or other basis. They also argue that journals are used to collect higher frequency data at much lower cost than conducting interviews. They are often used to track a particular behaviour or occurrence of interest. Journals will be used in the present study with the purpose of collecting self-reflective data from the researchers who will write their insights regarding the research process once per week at least.

As a summary, the following chart evidences the relationship between the methods implemented and the questions of this research project:

Research Questions	Instrument of data collection
How has the Postscript project contributed to the development of Intercultural Awareness in the <i>Licenciatura</i> program?	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Stimulated Recall</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Interviews</b></p>
How has the construction of a magazine affected the perceptions of culture within the Postscript members?	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Stimulated Recall</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reflective Journals</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Interviews</b></p>
Which aspects of Intercultural Awareness does the project Postscript impulse?	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Interviews</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reflective Journals</b></p>

#### 5.7.4 Ethical Considerations

Following the principles of ethics and in order to guarantee participants' welfare confidentiality, and dignity, different procedures will be taken into account to accomplish it.

In first place, the participants were previously informed about the objectives and purposes the research study is seeking and how their contributions will influence not just for the research itself but also for future studies in the field. Participants will be informed about the privacy of the data that will be collected, and they will be asked to sign a consent form if they have decided voluntarily participate in the research. (See Appendix 2, p 66)

Additionally, the participants were informed about the confidentiality of the recorded information obtained and how it will be treated. As a good ethical practice, a consent form was elaborated for asking them whether or not they require anonymity by using pseudonyms, also giving the participants the chance to distort their voices or even remove them.

## **6. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS.**

On this section, there will be described the aspects concerning culture, cultural awareness and intercultural awareness derived from the contrast between the theoretical contributions previously stated in the revision of literature and the data collected through all the methods; for instance, excerpts taken from stimulated recall interviews, interviews and reflective journals entries were triangulated aiming to validate and come up with the findings of the current study. Each category will have a general overview of the phenomenon to be described supported by data and samples which will be interpreted objectively while being contrasted by the theoretical foundations presented by authors included on the current document. Finally, the sections will have a semi-discussion paragraph that will afford to generate a final general discussion and conclusions.

### **6.1 Participants' view of culture as dynamic.**

The following segment will be dedicated to expose, the data that evidences how the process of constructing the PostScript magazine, in terms of content design and edition, has impacted or even affected the editors' conceptions about culture.

Aiming to refresh the conceptions that authorities who have worked to enlighten the notion of culture, it will be recalled the idea that culture can be understood as the social construction derived from collective thinking. D'Andrade (1990) and Clifford Geertz (2001), also concluded that culture and language are highly tied and exhort people to compare and contrast common factors allowing them to shape and give sense to the world and realities surrounding people.



During the implementation stage, some of the data collected brought results that demonstrates how insights provided by some of the PostScript editors, support what authors have expressed in relation with the idea about how culture is perceived as a non- static process.

Since the core of this research is related to culture, researchers wanted to inquire about participant's concepts and definitions of culture in their prior-knowledge. Through data, participants' answers demonstrated that they seemed to have a not-static view of culture. Ideas like "forming through time", "evolution" and "reformulating" suggest that they think that culture is unquestionably constructed alongside time and social and human manifestations.

The following is an excerpt extracted from a stimulated recall interview applied to participant A:

**[SRIA]**

**PA:** Para mí la cultura es lo que define a una sociedad y lo que la misma sociedad forma a través del tiempo.

According to what was expressed by participant A, it could be inferred that she identifies culture first, as a distinctive element among societies since it is an identity generator at any social group, and then, she perceives culture as a non-static social construction as it moves and it is affected with the pass of time.

Once, researchers investigated about the notion of culture from the participant's A perspective, for a deeply inquiry, the question about how culture is perceived, it is asked again, but now oriented from the role as editor in the magazine. The following, is an excerpt taken from an interview:

**[IA]**

**PA:** Si, puede ser...en cierta medida, quizá a través de la edición de ciertos textos, con ciertas publicaciones, con ciertos productos, pienso que... eso me ayuda a ver la cultura como algo que construimos entre todos.

The previously piece of data, helped researchers to reconfirm how being involved in the process of edition in the magazine, has shaped the perceptions of culture of some members of the magazine through topics of global impact in terms of politics, social mass medias, fashion, and cultural realities. Therefore, we could infer that constructing a magazine, is for this participant a process which involves not just the editors' ideas, but also it includes how others perceive the world, and it derives in the fact that culture, as a community construction, is a not ending process.

Through the following piece of data from a reflective journal entry, now, the researcher expresses how does she conceives culture:

**[RJ6S]**

**RS:** Durante el proceso de investigación, además de ir comprendiendo lo que en realidad significa la cultura, a la vez ha surgido en mí el ver a esta como un elemento que evoluciona de manera permanente y progresiva. Siendo una construcción social, la cultura entonces se ve en la obligación de involucrarse en un proceso de retroalimentación constante, por ende no hay cultura fija, cada día esta se mueve, se transforma, se dinamiza.

What was expressed in the previous excerpt, allows researchers to indicate that she, equally to participant **A**, recognizes culture as an element in evolution. The remarkable difference lies on the fact that culture is seen as an element immersed in a constantly feedback process due to its nature as a social construction.

Now, it is presented an excerpt taken from an interview, in which the participant **DM** expresses how he conceives culture from his role as coordinator and editor in the magazine:

**[IDM]**

**PDM:** [...] la construcción de la cultura es un elemento que se viene reformulando a partir de una cantidad de manifestaciones sociales y humanas [...] cultura sería el ámbito de formas de actuar, interpretar y comunicarse con el mundo [...]

Participant **DM** confirms a similar idea, equally expressed previously by participant **A** and researcher **S**, which suggests that culture is the result of a reformulation derived from social and human manifestations through the ways of acting, interpreting and communicating to the world.

We inferred that those social and human ways of manifestation, especially the act of “communicating”, derived in the idea that culture is dynamic as is supported by Trujillo’s view (2002) where the communicative processes shape the culture that is transmitted from generation to generation, that makes culture a dynamic entity in a continuous process of transmission-modification.

In short, all this contrasts the idea about the conception of culture has evolved from a “static” point of view to a “dynamic” one. Taking a look at the studies developed by Olaya & Gómez (2013), these findings opposites the fact that on other English language teaching programs was diagnosed culture perceived as static since participants thought that culture was “transmitted without suffering any possible alteration or transformation” (p, 54).

. The participants’ thoughts shed light upon the manifestation of an evolution towards how culture is seen. This perception is drawn not only under the personal and own social

background of the participants, but also from the context within the Magazine PostScript members are involved.

## **6.2 Incipient notions of Intercultural Awareness generated during PostScript magazine discussions.**

In the finding above was discussed the idea that describes culture as dynamic because it is seen as a social construction according to participants' view. Throughout this section, it is going to be presented evidence, interpretation, and theory that will portray the idea that some discussions generated during PostScript sessions, might promote a sense of intercultural awareness in some of the participants included in this research process.

Some of the data collected brought results which suggest that some discussion sessions at PostScript Magazine's, in this case, the discussion about including global trend topics such as xenophobia, racisms and discrimination, might promote and invites participants to implicitly spawn intercultural awareness while editors argue and interact concerning the creation of content, edition, and promotion activities.

The following sample, taken from a stimulated recall interview, evidences the idea previously stated:

**[SRIJ]**

**Investigador:** ¿Crees tú que es importante generar este tipo de discusiones como revista?

**PJ:** Yo estoy totalmente de acuerdo con que ese tipo de discusiones se tienen que implementar en parte dentro de la universidad, y ¿por qué? Precisamente nosotros que hacemos parte de la facultad de bellas artes y humanidades y como integrantes del área intercultural del programa, tenemos como una tarea obligatoria- implícita, leer nuestra propia realidad social.

According to the expressed by participant J, it mainly denotes that as a magazine, and as a project of the intercultural area of the ELT program, it is an editor's task to read, interpret and be aware of social reality surrounding this context, so, it could be interpreted that when editors discuss about those current topics, it contributes beyond the merely development of the basic tasks ( content design and material edition) but also it contributes to arise, at some extend, a sense of intercultural awareness in some editors.

Subsequently to this stimulated recall interview, aiming to inquire further information about this participant's perceptions, it was implemented a second interview. The following is an excerpt of that interview:

**[IJ]**

**PJ:** Sí, considero que es un medio para adquirir conciencia frente a nuestra cultura porque estamos en constante contacto con diferentes ideologías, con diferentes estudios...porque nosotros aparte de estar editando estamos leyendo nuestra propia realidad social, estamos conociendo la realidad del mundo, estamos como que reflexionando sobre lo que está sucediendo entonces creo que si hay un desarrollo de una conciencia cultural.

According to what was stated by this participant, the magazine is for him a vehicle through which a sense of intercultural awareness can be generated, since being an editor implies to be in contact with different aspects such as ideologies and studies from the academic community, that allow the editor to recognize and reflects, but at the same time compare and contrast what is occurring not only in his own context but also around the world.

Following the ideas previously stated, but giving special attention to the comparison and contrast as aspects that enclose components of cultural awareness, the next sample taken from a reflective journal entry, could reflect the idea exposed:

**[RJ1H]**

**RH:** [...] La edición como uno de los pasos finales al proceso de publicación, representa el ejercicio individual de cada uno de los miembros de la revista a leer y contrastar las percepciones y visiones de mundo frente a un tema, con cada uno de los sujetos que contribuyen a la construcción de la revista [...]. Pienso que la interacción del editor con textos (lenguaje escrito), aporta al desarrollo de ciertos aspectos que forman parte de la conciencia cultural del editor ya que dan una idea de la cosmovisión de otros individuos para luego compararla con la propia [...].

Corresponding to what is stated by the researcher **H**, the edition process requires each editor to analyze and contrast the different aspects, situations and perceptions in relation with those current topics the magazine approaches together with the contributions done by the authors' article. In this way, the interaction between editor and authors' article, mediated by a text, is granting in the editor, in some extend, intercultural awareness since editing a text invites him/her to read other people notions and then compare and contrast them with his/ her own insights concerning the topic addressed.

Participants highlight the importance of talking about current topics of global impact within the sessions and meetings that editors perform during the academic term. From the previous excerpts, we can evidence that clearly, PostScript magazine offers chances to some editors to discuss implicitly cultural content, and through that discussion, allow them to arise their intercultural awareness improving their self-concept.

This idea has been argued by Castañeda (2012) and Olaya & Gómez (2013) to which they establish the notion that participants are culturally aware whenever they are exposed to other cultural backgrounds over the analysis, comparison, and contrast from other realities (other people's opinions, insights, believes, etc.).

### 6.3 PostScript magazine as a reflection of cultural identity according to some editors.

It is well known that a magazine by their own nature as a mass media, it is a source for its readers to have access about their own world realities, tendencies and viewpoints as well as others, replicated through different materials such as, texts, articles, photographs, pictures, editorial, opinions, etc. and the official magazine of ELTP, PostScript is considered by some participants as a space that represents factors related to cultural identity.

To support the previous ideas, some pieces of data will be included since some participants depicted the fact that PostScript magazine reflects cultural identity. The following excerpt, extracted from a reflective journal entry, presents how researcher **S**, conceives the idea above expressed:

**[RJ6S]**

**RS:** [...] bajo mi propia concepción, el PostScript es una de las figuras que aporta a la construcción de identidad en el programa, pues pretende seguir reflejando y contrastando las diferentes realidades y visiones de mundo dentro de la misma comunidad académica, a través del trabajo de reportaje y edición de contenido, pero a la vez enmarcados por esas temáticas, que orientan el desarrollo de las ediciones semestrales.

Based on what was portrayed by the researcher here, it is understood how the magazine, it is a space that contributes to the construction of cultural identity, since it reflects as well as contrasts the different realities and viewpoints that underlie within the academic community, all of this framed by a thematic as the compass of each publication.

For exploring deeply this idea, next, the following sample shows the answers provided by a participant in an interview which was focus on the possible contributions of the PostScript magazine in terms of cultural identity:

**[IDM]**

**Investigador:** ¿Desde su experiencia como editor, cree que el PostScript refleja identidad? ¿Cómo?

**PDM:** [...] si yo leo una revista que me cuenta o que me refleja a través de imágenes como se ve el programa donde yo estudio estoy siendo consciente de esos patrones que tiene la cultura que quizás yo no lo veo porque estoy sumergido en ella [...] cuando yo veo eso retratado en una revista empiezo a tener identidad...ah... como nosotros somos más o menos así, porque nos vemos así, porque escribimos así y eso desarrolla concepto e ideas de cultura.

In the piece of data presented above, participant **DM** precises how the magazine PostScript is a media that reflects, through different material published on it, the cultural background and realities surrounding the ELTP. In this sense, the magazine is conceived as a space where different social and cultural realities, insights and way of thinking of people who publish on the magazine converge. Thus, according to sample, the magazine is reflecting besides than concepts and ideas concerning culture, it is shaping cultural identity in the editors' team, who through the edition process, are being affected, persuaded and aware by authors' insights embodied in their texts.

Equally relevant, the sample of participant **J** , indicates, how the reflection on diversity, shapes cultural identity in the magazine:

**[SRIJ]**



**Investigador:** ¿Consideras que el PostScript, como medio de comunicación, muestra las diferentes realidades dentro del programa LLI?

**PJ:** [...] antes el proyecto se tenía como un periódico pero se vio la necesidad de convertirlo en una revista porque es una forma de reflejar la diversidad de la misma comunidad, entonces no tanto es el acto de comunicar eventualidades sino como de demostrar también percepciones y como la gente está leyendo el mundo, está leyendo su propia realidad, se está leyendo así mismo [...]

Participant **J**, considers that the magazine is a means by which the cultural diversity found in the ELT program is presented, more than just giving and communicating events and facts. In this way, according what is for him expressed, the magazine is aligned to demonstrate the perceptions, and how people at the ELTP is perceiving the world surrounding them. Therefore, according to this participant, we could infer that by framing the reality of the program, the magazine is a platform that exhibits the variety established within the program, its identity.

All the ideas previously presented are contrasted by Castañeda (2012), who conducted a research project through which she discovered how learning materials contributed to develop participants' sense of cultural identity and how they perceived the nature of course materials, being mass media one of them. We then, understand that material portrayed in the magazine PostScript has contributed according to the participants to generate cultural identity derived from authors' contributions. On Castañeda *ibid*, course materials, especially mass media and national TV, allowed participants to compare themselves at the moment of understanding and facing others' culture which also raise their awareness towards that. It has been observed through this researcher how mass media directly impact and work as a mirror which reflects characteristic and treats of participants' own culture raising their Intercultural Awareness.

#### **6.4 Interculturality according to PostScript members.**

Since one of the objectives is to inquire about the state of Interculturality in the magazine team, it is time to approach Interculturality based on some notions expressed by the participants of this research project. When some participants were asked about what Interculturality was, most of them gave a proximate definition. For instance, participants defined Interculturality as the interaction with other cultures through “knowing each other”, “to tolerate, communicate and solve” and “awareness about others’ cultural background”.

These notions were evidenced in just some participants’ responses as indicated in the following pieces of data. The first one is an excerpt taken from an interview.

**[IJ]**

**PJ:** De interculturalidad puedo entender como la interacción entre diferentes culturas, entonces por ejemplo cuando uno habla de una conciencia intercultural no habla únicamente de una conciencia cultural en lo que respecta a uno, sino en conocer por ejemplo otros aspectos de otras culturas con mayor profundidad.

The previous piece of data reflects the answer provided by a participant, who seems to perceive Interculturality as the interaction between cultures, in which it is not just approached owns culture awareness but also it requires to know deeply aspects concerning the target language culture, in other words, Interculturality based on the participant’s view is the interaction with other cultures and the awareness of one’s own.

To continue exploring the concept based on what some participants said, now it is introduced another participant’s point of view in relation with Interculturality. The following information is gathered from a stimulated recall interview:

**[SRIDM]**

**PDM:** La interculturalidad entonces es primero el darse cuenta que existen otros, segundo asimilar que existen otros, y como se asimila que existen otros, uno logra ahí tolerar esas diferencias para tener un objetivo o un fin común que es dígase por ejemplo comunicarse entre sí, solucionar problemas comunes, intercambiar bienes y servicios, establecer relaciones familiares, afectivas, de negocios con otros grupos culturales y para eso hay que conocer la otra y conocerse de una manera muy equilibrada.

Corresponding to the stated by participant **DM**, Interculturality is defined as the assimilation of others' existences, and once it is achieved, people is able to tolerate differences aiming to communicate successfully, to solve different problems, interchange assets and services, etc. Interculturality requires, according to the sample, to acknowledge not only the target culture but also to know the mother culture in a balanced way.

Finally, the last excerpt, extracted from a reflective journal entry, reflects on the core idea of this finding:

**RJ4J:** Por medio de algunos artículos e investigaciones relacionados al campo de la interculturalidad se ha ido ampliando mi noción sobre ésta, de manera que me doy cuenta que cuando dos personas están interactuando no solo están intercambiando información sino que también están “viendo” al interlocutor como alguien que pertenece a un determinado grupo social diferente al mío y por esto debo ser consciente en la forma de decir las cosas como también de interpretar lo que viene del otro, lo cual considero es un rasgo importante de una consciencia intercultural ya que no solo pienso en mi sino también en el otro.

Researcher here indicates, that Interculturality is more than people interacting, since merely than an informational exchange, people is at the same time perceiving the interlocutor as someone who belongs to a different cultural background; therefore, it is important to be aware of many factors, specially of the way of addressing others and to know how interpret the echo resulted during that interaction. He concludes affirming that Interculturality is being aware of what others think or perceive as well as the own insights.

To conclude, aligning what was presented by some participants in this section about the term here discussed with the notions provided by Gomez (2011) in this paper, who stated that Interculturality is the mutual understanding of the differences when individuals from different contexts interact, and those interactions, according to participant's view, are mainly mediated by the acknowledgement of the otherness, derive in effective communicative acts where tolerance and agreements have an important role. This finding reflects that, due to the fact participants not only accept their own culture as the only and the best, but also, consider and recognize other cultural realities surrounding them, it is inferred that they present some incipient features of Intercultural Awareness as is stated by Yassine (2006).

#### **6.5 PostScript magazine as a platform that attempts to promote awareness of Intercultural matters according to some editors.**

In the finding previously stated, data showed how some editors perceive Interculturality in terms of interaction, recognition of the otherness, tolerance etc. Alongside this finding it is presented how based on what some participants manifested, the magazine is perceived as a platform that promotes Interculturality in the sense it conjures not just what identifies the ELT program but, additionally, the information and material provided by people enrolled in other academic programs at the campus.

To evidence the idea portrayed above, the following excerpt taken from an interview, in which the participant **DM** expresses how through the magazine content (articles, poems, opinions, essays, paintings and pictures) PostScript, seems to promote Interculturality to some extent:

**[IDM]**

**PDM:** [...] porque además de esos contenidos pues también los comentamos a otras culturas, es decir, no solo la revista se queda acá sino que la llevamos a otros lados y traemos cosas que no son pertenecientes de nuestro campo pero que nos dan unas ideas de cómo se ven los otros, ahí veo la forma.

Pursuant to what is expressed by participant **DM**, the magazine is taking into account the realities surrounding the ELT program as well as the realities in which other programs are immersed. He adds that the magazine is dynamic, in the sense it constructs a reality based on different realities, although these do not belong to the academic program, they enrich the notion of how others perceive the world and reality.

A similar idea is found in the following piece of data extracted from a stimulated recall interview:

**[SRIJ]**

**PJ:** Yo creo que el proyecto de la revista ha contribuido no solamente digamos que al nivel de la licenciatura al desarrollo de una interculturalidad sino que a nivel de la universidad porque no únicamente las personas pertenecientes al programa son los que están interesados en publicar o por ejemplo en leer los contenidos que otras personas están compartiendo [...]

In accordance with was stated by participant **J**, equally as participant **DM**, he seems to agree in the fact the magazine promotes Interculturality within the program and, somehow, in some other academic programs whose students are interested in publishing or even to know what the PostScript produces.

The next piece of data reveals how a researcher identifies Interculturality which derives from each editor's cultural background and its influence when discussing about content design and edition:

**RJ7H:** Desde lo evidenciado en la mayoría de sesiones, especialmente en la de aquellas en las que se hace planeación y discusión del contenido, considero que la revista de alguna manera es un espacio que se ha prestado para que la interculturalidad juegue un rol importante, ya que allí se condensan los bagajes culturales que editor posee y esto sí que influye de manera directa a la hora de abordar, trabajar y presentar las posibles temáticas que orientan cada edición.

This researcher expresses that, due to the fact that in the editors' team it converges different social and cultural background proper to each editor, it is a reflection of Interculturality, adding also the idea that those backgrounds influence or even impact in the way each editor approach and expose ideas concerning content design and the edition process. In other words, those cultural backgrounds impact over the tasks required for each magazine's publication.

To contrast what is expressed in theory, Hernandez (2005) via Buendia et al (1992), agree that the concept of "Interculturality," encompass a comprehensive communication between the cultures that converge in the same space, creating a mutual enrichment, which therefore results in the recognition and valuation (intrinsic and extrinsic) by each of the cultures framed by equality. Therefore, those ideas keep relation with the ideas depicted by participants who considered the magazine as a media where social, cultural and everyday realities converge not only from the ELT program but also from other academic programs, consequently perceiving the magazine as an intercultural platform that offers the opportunity to appreciate other world perspectives and how each other is seen in the same environment.

## **7. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

This section describes the overall implications that the findings showed for the current research. Limitations in the design as well as the data collection methods are also described on this chapter.

### **Data collection and research design**

The first thing to notate during the execution of the research study is that it was not considered the synchronization with participants towards their schedules, which made difficult to collect all pieces of data expected from the design and the instruments of data collection. Having observed this inconvenient during the process of data collection it was required to redesign and schedule other sessions where to combine the use with the remaining instruments to fulfill the lack of more data.

This lead us to next point, where sample described as part of a case study scenario indicate that this was designed as convenience sample, due to the fact that it is not fully representative of the whole PostScript team. Future research as well as readers should then consider these findings with caution since they do not represent the whole status not only at the English Language Teaching program but also as the remaining population that constitutes the PostScript magazine; furthermore, the nature of the data collected proposes that the results and their interpretations are limited to the time and populations when the research took effect, and that as time continues plus the improvement of the ELT Program curricula, these findings may be positive or negatively impacted.

Also, research journals, as first attempts of the researchers to gain insight this method gave as a result the description of hunches which were addressed towards another purpose in order to give support and triangulate upon the other methods.

Equally important to highlight during the implementation of the research was the lack of studies that described similarly the execution and design of a project of this nature, which on the whole, helped us to correctly address the focus of the current study and the formulation of the research questions which resulted by the findings shown that it may create an impact in the improvement of the ELTP language curriculum which is proposed to be done explicitly through the subjects that approaches all cultural dimensions.

Finally, the project provided as a result, the necessity to continue exploring, from the Literature Review, and concerning the editors' intercultural awareness with the aim to develop a second stage where the perceptions of PostScript magazine readers will be observed and consulted as well as their intercultural awareness from the information shared through magazine's contents.



## 8. CONCLUSIONS

The current research study proposed as main objective to explain how PostScript magazine has influenced the development and emergence of intercultural awareness through its members and editors as a response to this specific objective: to acknowledge the concept of culture that participants have from the construction of a magazine. Having exposed the results of the current study, it is a matter of fact to notate that it has been an experienced that has helped to enrich the state of art regarding the notions on cultural awareness that the participants showed during the implementation. It is equally important to highlight that there were also unexpected findings which in contradiction to theory, depicts the need to continue discussing and researching to reach to a response that suits the inquiry and the nature of future research studies.

In first place, participants from project PostScript understand culture as a non-static process, which evolves through time and it is reformulated. It is evidenced mainly through data collected, showing how its members consider their intervention on edition processes which build and reformulate culture. For this reason, they assume the responsibility as an information media diffusor to the academic community at the university which maintains all changes and cultural innovations flow. The construction of a magazine implies the dialogue from the different notions and interpretations of editors' world, as a result, the process of edition becomes a dynamic exercise which constantly presents updates of what it is intended to be shown as national and international culture.

Secondly, as an information media diffuser, magazine PostScript establishes a cultural identity pattern which is in charge of being known as the image of the English Language Teaching Program and it is through editors' decisions and conceptions that this perception is appreciated by the academic community.

Through theory, intercultural awareness is conceived as people assumption towards their own culture and how they do see the reality and the world (Yassine, 2006). As non-expected, it is seen that on a practical way, the participants showed a remarkable preference onwards the foreign culture, rather than their own. This is prompted through the exercise of analyzing Multiculturality that characterizes us as a country and habitants of the world. Data reveals how editors are worried to show the perceptions of the world from people who publish at the magazine, which transforms the magazine into a platform that promotes cultural diversity. Same way, it is also perceived that editors develop an "incipient" intercultural competence since the process of edition of the magazine works as a mirror which reflects our own cultural characteristics.

As a third significant result, data triangulation has allowed to establish the idea that participants highlight the importance of recognizing cultural knowledge (declarative knowledge), behaviour, (procedural knowledge) and the different forms of communication (linguistic knowledge) of other cultures during the process and development of an intercultural competence. It is conceived an "incipient" intercultural awareness exhibited through the definitions that editors have regarding Interculturality and the paper that this awareness has on developing content throughout the magazine.

It is evidenced that through publishing, editing and designing tasks cannot be properly executed if not established a collective notion of culture, for that matter it is necessary to discuss the social context and reality where the magazine takes place. The social context highly determines the topics presented, and it is through this thematic selection exercise that it is settled a complete process of deep reflection with a critical sense about current cultural trends. PostScript editors, as participant – students of the ELTP find that this extensive academic space is a way of interpreting social phenomena aiming to manifest it to the academic community in general. PostScript editors is then a critical and cultural thinking core towards developing intercultural competences that nourish students' professional profile yet does not provide a complete process of intercultural competence.

To conclude, PostScript as a project allow students from different semesters and cultural backgrounds not to enter and be members of a magazine, but also as part of an space that generates critical reflection of intercultural aspects through discussions related to thematic, content, activities, and journal reports. By this way, PostScript as an information and media literacy platform attempts to promote intercultural awareness in editors as well as its readers.

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## APPENDIX

### Appendix 1

#### Interview Questions

¿Sabe usted que es cultura? ¿Cómo la puede definir?

Desde su experiencia como editor, ¿Cree que se ha desarrollado conciencia cultural dentro del PostScript?

¿Sabe usted que es intercultural? ¿Cómo la puede definir?

Entonces, ¿Ha contribuido PostScript como proyecto al desarrollo de aspectos ligados a la interculturalidad?

¿Consideras que la lengua es un medio a través del cual uno puede adquirir la cultura? ¿Por qué?

¿Existe alguna preferencia frente a la propia cultura y la foránea? O ¿Tú prefiere la propia sobre las demás? ¿Por qué?

¿Cómo consideras que ser cultural o interculturalmente consciente influencia en nuestro futuro como profesores en desarrollo?

¿Tú consideras que los medios de comunicación y los temas dirigidos en algunas asignaturas de LLI han influenciado en la construcción de la revista?

¿Ha contribuido de alguna manera u otra toda la formación académica, la formación que ha recibido del mundo, a su rol como editor dentro de la revista?

## Appendix 2

### Formulario de consentimiento informado

#### *THE ANALYSIS OF INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS THROUGH THE PERCEPTIONS OF POSTSCRIPT'S MAGAZINE EDITORS*

Este formulario de consentimiento informado va dirigido hacia los editores de la revista PostScript del programa Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa de la Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira. El objetivo de este documento es invitarles a participar voluntariamente de la investigación que tiene por título “*The analysis of Intercultural Awareness through the perceptions of postscript’s magazine editors*” y cuyo propósito es indagar sobre la consciencia cultural a través de las experiencias recolectadas en el proceso de edición de la revista PostScript.

El presente documento consta de dos partes: una primera en donde se le informará de manera verbal y escrita sobre el contexto de la investigación; la segunda parte constará de un formato en el cuál usted firmará su constancia de su participación voluntaria en este proyecto.

### Parte I: Contexto de la investigación

#### Introducción

Presentes los investigadores Stephanie Asprilla, John Cepeda y Hugo Giraldo, estamos realizando como pre-requisito de grado nuestro proyecto de investigación del programa Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa de la Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira que tiene como objetivo explorar la consciencia cultural de los editores de la revista PostScript a través de su proceso de edición.

Usted es libre de decidir si desea participar desde hoy mismo en el proyecto. Si ha decidido participar podrá usted solicitar más información a los coordinadores del proyecto en caso de que lo considere necesario. En éste formato de consentimiento encontrará posiblemente conceptos que no entienda, si es así, siéntase libre de preguntarnos si lo requiere. Si tiene preguntas para más adelante podrá formularse a cualquiera de los investigadores presentes.

### **Propósito de la investigación**

Como ustedes saben la revista PostScript surgió en el año 2008 como una necesidad desde el área socio-cultural del programa Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa no sólo como un medio de información sino como una herramienta interactiva en la que los estudiantes y profesores puedan participar de ella desarrollando sus habilidades en los campos de la investigación, la escritura creativa, la opinión, el arte, etc. Siendo este un proyecto nuevo en nuestro programa, creemos que es necesario conocer las contribuciones que la revista genere en términos de consciencia cultural, en este caso, de sus editores.

Aceptando usted la participación en nuestra investigación, autorizará que las sesiones en las que los editores participen durante el proceso de edición van a ser grabadas audiovisualmente y que su integridad como persona será protegida. Los datos recolectados en estas sesiones serán tratados confidencialmente y únicamente para propósitos investigativos. Queremos resaltar que su nombre real no aparecerá, por lo que se utilizarán pseudónimos con el fin de proteger su identidad.

Siendo usted sujeto de investigación cuenta con el derecho de estar al tanto de los avances de nuestra investigación, en cuyo caso podrá usted contactarse directamente con cualquiera de los investigadores a uno de los siguientes correos electrónicos:

[saasprilla@utp.edu.co](mailto:saasprilla@utp.edu.co)

[cepeda@utp.edu.co](mailto:cepeda@utp.edu.co)

[hagiraldo@utp.edu.co](mailto:hagiraldo@utp.edu.co)

## **Parte II: Certificado de consentimiento**

He leído detalladamente la información, o ésta me ha sido leída. He tenido la oportunidad de preguntar sobre el proyecto y cualquier pregunta que haya hecho ha sido respondida satisfactoriamente. Doy el consentimiento voluntario de ser participante de esta investigación:

Nombre del participante \_\_\_\_\_

Firma del participante \_\_\_\_\_

Fecha \_\_\_\_\_

*Día/Mes/Año*

Hemos leído la información a los participantes potenciales, y dando lo mejor de nosotros nos hemos asegurado que los participantes entiendan lo siguiente:

1. El contexto de la investigación
2. Los objetivos del proyecto
3. La importancia de los aportes de los participantes en la investigación.

Confirmamos que el participante se le ha dado la oportunidad de hacer preguntas sobre el estudio, y todas las preguntas hechas por el/la participante han sido contestadas debidamente.

Confirmamos también que el individuo no ha sido presionado a dar su consentimiento, y que éste ha sido otorgado de manera voluntaria.

Una copia de este formulario de consentimiento informado ha sido entregada al/la participante.

Nombre de los investigadores \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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Firma de los investigadores \_\_\_\_\_

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Fecha \_\_\_\_\_

*Día/Mes/Año*