Understanding the beliefs about culture that E.F.L. (english as a foreign language teachers) Hold at C.L.U.S. (Centro de Lenguas de La Universidad de La Salle)

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B.A IN CASTILIAN SPANISH, ENGLISH AND FRENCH
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DEDICATION

I devote this thesis project essentially to God for giving me the health and the strength to accomplish all the goals I have proposed in this period of my life, now completed. To my parents for giving me an unconditional moral and economic support as well as their patience and trust. To my younger brother for being the example I have always followed.

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Diana Paola Duarte

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way of understanding this beautiful life as teachers.
Entender las creencias sobre cultura puede llevar a malinterpretaciones así como a etnocentrismo. En esta sociedad actual marcada por la falta de buenas actitudes entre las personas, tolerancia y equidad no sólo en la familia o en la vida de alguien, sino también en la interacción entre países, es necesario hacer una reflexión acerca de cómo las personas entienden su propia cultura para comprender la cultura propia y del otro. Es importante estudiar este aspecto de cultura porque va a contribuir desde el punto de vista de la educación, a crear mejores estrategias didácticas en las clases de idiomas (en este caso clases de inglés). Y también, con el fin de ayudar a establecer el idioma inglés no sólo como una herramienta de aprendizaje con un objetivo específico, sino como una manera de ver el mundo desde una perspectiva diferente, así como también, a facilitar el crear una sociedad más global y respetuosa.

Este proyecto de investigación usa un método de estudio de caso para recolectar y analizar información que proveerá las herramientas para entender el fenómeno educativo y, a partir de un análisis narrativo con instrumentos como observaciones de clase, entrevistas y cuestionarios a profesores, se reconozca y entienda la cultura de la enseñanza de una lengua extranjera como una parte significante de la práctica en el salón de clases, tomando en cuenta la cultura individual de cada profesor con el objetivo de incluir sus valores, sus costumbres y sus conocimientos previos que favorezcan una enseñanza integral.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Competencia intercultural comunicativa, globalización, cultura, creencias, experiencias.
ABSTRACT

Understanding beliefs about culture can lead to misinterpretations so as ethnocentrism. In this current society distinguished by the lack of good attitudes among people, tolerance and equality, not only in the family or someone’s life but also in the interaction between countries, it is necessary to make a reflection about how people understand their own culture to comprehend the own culture and the others’ culture. It is important to study this aspect of culture because it will contribute from the educational point of view to create better didactic strategies in language classes (in this case English classes). And also, to help establishing English language not only as a learning tool for an specific objective, but as a way of seeing the world from a different point of view and helping to create a more global and respectful society.

This research project uses a case study method to recollect and analyze information that will provide the tools to understand the educational phenomenon and, from a narrative analysis approach with instruments such as classes observations, interviews and questionnaires to teachers, the culture of teaching a foreign language is recognized and understood as a meaningful part of the practicum in the classroom, taking into account, the individual culture of every teacher with the objective of including their values, their customs and their previous knowledge that look with favor on to an integral teaching.

KEY WORDS: Intercultural communicative competence, globalization, culture, beliefs, experiences.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

In this project, we propose to understand teachers’ (inter)cultural beliefs in the teaching classroom. We also want to reflect on the cultural features in the classroom from the teachers’ perspective since it is one important issue about teaching English as a second language today. White, Zion, & Kozleski (2005) say that “Teachers bring themselves—their life experiences, histories, and cultures—into the classroom” (p.2). We then understand that teachers bring their assumptions and beliefs about what a good teacher is and does. They also bring their knowledge of education theory and content areas, research, human development, and love for teaching.

In this research study, the performance of the classes, the use of techniques of gathering information such as interviews, field notes, and observations, allow determine and analyze the teachers’ beliefs and knowledge about culture that they conceive in the classroom environment. This research also deals with the way the teachers’ own culture influences the way they develop their classes. Through this project, it is possible to observe how teachers assume the abilities of interculturality and intercultural communicative competence. This study thus contributes to creating an impact on teaching culture. Additionally, this research project intends to give parameters to future researchers about English culture teaching as a foreign language.

The contemporary citizen is exposed to situations that involve intercultural meetings, for instance, when meeting a person from another country in museums or international events, or when being in a job that demands proficiency on a determined language. Since this is a fact, the Ministry of Education presents policies in teaching and learning languages in the document about *Bases para una Nación Bilingüe y Competitiva*. These policies looks for developing capabilities
to understand other cultures and achieve effective communication in the mother tongue and in the foreign languages. These bilingual policies have three important cornerstones: language, communication, and culture. As linguistic learning is cultural learning, learning a language does not come only with grammar and linguistic aspects, but also with cultural and social characteristics.

Cultural learning comes from situations of interaction with another culture such as knowing people from another country, different traditions, thoughts, and interpretations of the world, and searching in different media (such as internet, TV shows, videos, books, newspapers) for information about the second culture. Cultural learning generates what is called in words of Irish and Scrubb (2012) “critical reflection”. This means that when there is reflection about the others and the own culture, wrong ideas about a certain culture can be avoided. This process of critical reflection helps people at the moment of interacting with a person from another culture. This critical reflection is given in every aspect of the daily life because all this social phenomena in the globalized world generates an identity in each person. Consequently, with the issue of critical reflection, Kluver (2000) points out that “intercultural communication theories have often noted the globalizing forces of economic integration, tourism, migration, as important forces that provide a rationale for increasing intercultural communication competency.”

Taking into account the aspects of daily life that shape every person as someone unique, in the language classroom, these experiences are considered to be the core to work on in terms of cultural learning, and for the teacher, these aspects should be included in the classes as features to learn the language without any culture being superior to another.
About the way of teaching a second language, including T.B.L. (Task Based learning), an approach based on the idea in words of the Willis (1997) of making the language non explicit and their own life experience as a main aspect in the classroom. This aspect will take to a deep reflection about understanding the beliefs of culture and reflecting about the way of learning a foreign language.

When studying this aspect of language, we need to reflect upon the influence of the contexts of a foreign language in the structure and understandings of the language. It means that it is important and essential not to separate a language from the place where it is developed. When teaching in concordance with the TBL approach, realities cannot be away from the language, and the teacher who reflects on it when teaching a second language is more capable of transmitting a language with not only the grammatical aspects, but, with an idea on how that language is perceived by the people who speak this as a first language.

**Research inquiry**

In this project, we aim to research on the different understandings and conceptions of culture that English language teachers hold at Centro de Lenguas Universidad de la Salle (CLUS). To get involved in a research inquiry for our degree work, in the first place, we developed preliminary observations about the way those teachers teach their English classes at CLUS. The purpose of those preliminary observations were to identify a research interest to work on. The preliminary observations led us to consider culture as a pertinent research inquiry.

CLUS works following the TBL approach. Culture is one the five characteristics of this approach. The incorporation of culture was not evident in the classes when we developed such
preliminary observations. Then, culture emerged as the core inquiry to research on. We considered the fact that culture might come implicit in the classes, but it was an aspect that needed research to see how implicit it was in the language classrooms at CLUS.

At this point, we reflected on whether working with the teachers or the students, because, culture was an aspect that both parties could reveal. We saw that there was no permanence in the courses. It means that students tend to drop out because of different reasons. Thus, some classes were not available to observe. This situation impeded having a constant demonstration of students’ manifestations of culture in the classroom. The decision was then to work with teachers because in this case, they were available for further observations for a prolonged time. When we talked to them, they said that they would continue working in the very same place, so, we decided that teachers were going to be the focus of our research on culture.

In the whole study, the most important characteristic to reflect on is the intercultural communicative competence (ICC). Taking into account that teaching culture was not explicit while teachers at CLUS were giving their English classes, there was a need to research on how those teachers fostered better abilities in the students to face a foreign culture without making the students’ own culture, what it is called by Byram (Byram, M.(2013, October 15). conference “From foreign/Second Language Education to education for intercultural Citizenship”, Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, Colombia.); “inferior” (in terms of one country having more influence and development in the economic, political and social aspects from another) to the English one.

For us, as becoming researchers, it was important to work on this topic because we think communication bases on the cultural features that come within human interaction. We perceived
that in language education, teachers have not yet taken sufficient conscience of the essentiality of intercultural communicative competence. More awareness of it may help share students and teachers’ ideas about the world in order to have a better communication process, which can help them improve their human relationships in aspects such as understanding and comprehending the other’s point of view.

Keeping this idea of culture as a relevant part of our study, the concept of ICC is an essential part of the target language. It makes speakers capable of knowing different ways in which they have contact with the world; Robatjazi, (2008). Specifically, for the context we work on, English language teaching, it is relevant to study on ICC because students from different majors go to CLUS to learn a second language. Learning a new language influences the manner they may see their reality. If teachers reflect upon their cultural features and the way those in turn influence their students, a better language learning process can emerge. Therefore, CLUS language teachers can be more open to communication without any barriers that imply being less or more important to someone. This is what our research aims at, finding out what teachers know and believe about teaching English culture at CLUS and the manner they incorporate it in the language classroom.

The context of the research is the C.L.U.S. According to Universidad de la Salle (n.d): “El Centro de Lenguas es un centro de Educación para el Trabajo y el Desarrollo Humano, adscrito a la Vicerrectoría Académica de la Universidad de La Salle, el cual tiene como función primordial la formación en lenguas extranjeras de la comunidad universitaria lasallista y el público en general. La Universidad de La Salle ofrece cursos en lenguas extranjeras, personalizados y para grupos, en diferentes niveles de aprendizaje. Los cursos se basan en el
constructo teórico del Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para las Lenguas bajo dos tipos de enfoque: el comunicativo y el basado en tareas, permitiendo a los estudiantes saber cómo desempeñarse en situaciones reales que pueden encontrar en contextos específicos al viajar o al vivir en países en los que se habla la lengua de estudio; ofreciendo herramientas lingüísticas que faciliten la comprensión y permitan una comunicación efectiva.

El entorno permite a los estudiantes formar parte de un equipo de trabajo y contar con el apoyo de un tutor que ayuda a esclarecer posibles dudas y a fortalecer su aprendizaje.”

The case of this research is that teachers do not seem to make the teaching of culture explicit. In our preliminary observations, we saw that teachers did not go beyond the telling of the culture of English. They taught without making it logical to the class environment. Secondly, we observed that there was no relation between culture and the TBL classes. The classes were more grammar-based classes. Also, there was not a clear presence of ICC in such classrooms. This aspect brings to our minds the following thought “we do not know if teachers know about how to incorporate culture in the classroom or that they know about it but want to have it implicit”. All of this determined the path of the research project by giving an answer to the following questions:

**Research Questions**

What do teachers know and believe about teaching English culture in the EFL classroom at CLUS?

How do teachers incorporate the identified knowledge and beliefs in the EFL classroom at CLUS?

Then, this research looks for achieving the following objectives:
Research Objectives

**General objective**

To display teacher’s knowledge and to understand teacher’s beliefs of culture in the EFL classroom at CLUS.

**Specific objectives**

To explore teachers’ beliefs about culture for their English classes at CLUS.

To describe teachers’ experiences with the mediation between the target culture and the native (Spanish speaking) culture.

To determine the manner teachers incorporate culture in their English classes at CLUS.
Teaching English in Our Context

In many educational contexts, grammar features and language forms are more relevant and essential than any other language characteristics. Apparently, language teachers do not take into account other important aspects as function and use of language in the real context. Kramsch (2004) affirms that “Languages teaching as the teaching of forms to express universal meaning, it takes particular meanings, contextual difference, and learner variability as its core” (p. 2). To incorporate function and use of language into the English classes, it is important to understand the learners’ context; their ages, gender, social class, family history, education life experience, and in their behaviors.

In concordance with the affirmations from above, CLUS takes into account the importance of using the second language in the real life, and including the culture as an important aspect to communicate with people from other countries. These three aspects are part of the vision and mission of CLUS;

Visión:

El Centro de Lenguas de la Universidad de La Salle, llegará a ser la mejor opción para cubrir las necesidades de comunicación e intercambio cultural y académico de sus estudiantes y servir como un canal que fortalezca las relaciones entre las comunidades del conocimiento y las organizaciones, permitiendo el progreso profesional, el desarrollo intelectual y el mejoramiento de la calidad de vida de sus estudiantes.
Misión:

_Nuestra misión es proveer herramientas que faciliten la comunicación en lenguas extranjeras como elementos esenciales en el desarrollo integral de estudiantes, egresados, docentes, colaboradores internos y usuarios externos manejando altos estándares de calidad enmarcados en la filosofía y los valores de la Universidad de La Salle._

According to the vision and mission at CLUS, teachers should take into account the culture inside the classroom and follow the TBL approach in order to teach a second language. They must also follow a textbook that contains units to develop in each class. They then have to design the pre-task, task and language focus according to the topic and the TBL principles.

The goal of the TBL is to complete a task successfully in order to learn and understand the L2; Willis, (1998). It also takes into account the intercultural communication because students exchange opinions ideas, beliefs, knowledge, and other aspects. He or she includes culture as he/she is using a second language.

In line with Willis’ understanding (1998), the goal of TBL is to complete a task successfully in order to achieve and understand the topic. It has three important parts, pre-task, task and language focus. Pre-task is when the teacher introduces the topic to the class and prepare students for achieving the task (outcome). The task is the activity that the students do to practice the main topic and use the L2 in real life. They do it by following teachers’ instructions. Finally, language focus is when the teachers approach student’s mistakes and the forms of language.
Hence, the main work of the teacher is selecting the topic adequately according to students’ level and their context. The topic selection must include interesting activities that motivate and engage the students. According to Willis (1998), “the emphasis is on understanding and conveying meanings in order to complete the task successfully.” (p. 23). In other words, when a teacher makes one activity, she or he should have the objectives to achieve clear.

Language teachers must plan TBL classes carefully. Planning includes time, objectives, pre-task, task, focused language, and, as a final point, assessment according to the objectives. Perhaps some aspects such as time and setting may affect the class, but teachers should focus on following each step from the lesson plan.

According to the previous information about TBL, teachers have to focus on the main goal of the class in order to carry out a set of activities to achieve the specific outcome. Some techniques that the teachers can use to select the activities (outcome) may be:

- Creativity (painting, story, writing).
- Skill-based activities (repairing or assembling something).
- Problem-solving activities (jigsaw, crossword).
- Other kinds of activities such as routine transition, interpreting a role in a play, replying to an e-mail message, etc.

Therefore, teachers have to take into account different aspects to include in her/his lessons, such as, time, goal and activities to develop, but these aspects depend on the context and level of the language.
As Willis (1998) mentioned, “Task accomplishment by an individual involves the strategic activation of specific competences in order to carry out a set of purposeful actions in a particular domain with a defined goal and a specific outcome” (p. 25). Another technique to take into account is the instructions and the manner by which language teachers lead students to achieve the goal of the task. The instructions must be clear. The teachers explain the activities in English, but if the students do not understand them, they can use L1, and lead students to achieve the goal. The teacher has to understand the different abilities that students have. For instance, some of them work faster than others do, also some students are more interested in class than others.

In order to display teacher’s knowledge and to understand teacher’s beliefs of culture at CLUS, it is important to know how teachers incorporate the TBL approach inside the classroom with the culture, as the institution mentions in its mission and vision. To obtain this answer, there is a need of taking into account the interests and more when the students face a second culture, for them to be able to confront the reality of a second culture. This is significant in terms of teaching language and course content.

Paton and Wilkin (2009) talk about the importance of teaching language and course content for adults. Nevertheless, they essentially reflect on the relevance to go beyond in teaching more than just language depending on the needs and interests that students should have in an English speaker country. In regards to the theory, teachers at CLUS emphasize on the use of grammar and language skills throughout activities and tasks in which students must infer the grammar meaning, although teachers allow students to explore and make their own judgment on the aspects of culture that they include.
Moreover, most of teacher at CLUS make a constant and individual assessment along the students’ process in which the teacher provides a lot of input by explanations and use material to reinforce the language skills.

The way that teachers teach at CLUS, taking into account TBL clues that (McIntyre, Kyle, Chen, Kraemer & Parr, 2009) give, exposes that English learners have one part in common, they must deal between language learning and language acquisition. These authors show that the first one (language learning) refers to the language content that students learn or know in terms of structure, functions, and uses while the second one (language acquisition) refers to the use of the language for authentic purposes. In this case, at CLUS, the first characteristic (language learning) is seen at this context, but, in the aspect of using it for authentic purposes, it is not seen at the context.

With the use of the TBL approach at CLUS, the way of teaching English for adults share many aspects such as: the use of grammar with language management for communication in real context and the use of material for reinforcing skills. Although, both have one significant difference that consists in the importance of cultural aspects that are important to the learners when using English in terms of needs and interests. Therefore, teaching English for adults require some aspects of the culture such as economy, job opportunities, and quality life. (Willis, 2008)

To be effective at teaching English, language teachers need to comprehend the manner of teaching English to students. According to Osborn (2005), it is necessary to know the student well by developing interpersonal skills, and establishing a good rapport that allows closing the gap between teacher and student. Besides, teachers need to realize the students’ likes, dislikes and
difficulties in order to construct and reconstruct the pedagogical speech and to improve the relationship in the class.

Under this perspective, a definition of culture learning becomes relevant. (Paige, Jorstad, Siaya, Klein & Colby, 2003) mention that “Byram (1988) is congruent with Paige’s definition of culture learning in that it is anchored in three fundamental learning processes: (1) the learners’ exploration of their own culture; 2) the discovery of the relationship between language and culture, and 3) the learning of the heuristics for analyzing and comparing cultures” (p.8). Language teachers need to take into account these three processes in order to make a second language learning process significant for students.

As TBL aims for a comprehension of the language in terms of seeing it as a matter of the real life, the teacher is required to make the process of learning an issue that students can consider meaningful to their lives. To understand better the success of a teacher in the classroom, it is necessary to involve another concept called "being a teacher". According to (Kottler, Zehm & Kottler, 2005), for being an effective teacher, it is necessary to transcend in the students life by creating an impact and giving them something significant in their lives. Being a teacher and teaching English are very complementary. Both are necessary to accomplish a successful language class. The teacher’s mediation for managing both aspects properly may conduct to obtain more results of language learning.

**English as a Foreign Language (EFL)**

In this globalized society, English language have become the most important instrument to communicate with people with other countries. According to Rossner and Bolitho (1990), English language is a passport to enter to the new era that includes technology, science, politics
and education. Consequently, teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) takes a relevant role of worldwide education, in which students need to learn a second language in order to be part of the new era and social development.

Because of this, language teachers have an important task to introduce the target language culture to their students. As Dammen (2003) mentions, “culture in terms of individual culture bearers and their perception of the cultural reality they encountered in daily life, in this construct a so-called universal subjective culture system which represents a “group’s characteristics way of perceiving its social environment (Triandis et al.,1972,p.339)” (p. 12). The cultural reality and the perceptions of the social environment relate to the importance of the culture’s role inside the language classroom and context.

When teachers bring the target language culture to the classroom, a positive or negative belief arise as a consequence of the background of the person and the thoughts he/she has about the culture. These ideas can be divided in two categories, Ethnocentrism and cultural relativism. Ethnocentrism according to Booth (1979) as cited by Egger, B. (2006) “represents the universal proclivity for people to view their own group as the centre of the universe, to interpret other social units from the perspective of their own group, and to reject persons who are culturally dissimilar while blindly accepting those who are culturally like themselves”. The other category is defined as:

“Cultural relativism is defined as the view that no culture is superior to any other culture when comparing systems of morality, law, politics, etc. It's the philosophical notion that all cultural beliefs are equally valid and that truth itself is relative, depending on the cultural environment.
Those who hold to cultural relativism hold that all religious, ethical, aesthetic, and political beliefs are completely relative to the individual within a cultural identity.”

These categories are related because any person can be both ethnocentric or relativist for any of the two cultures and these beliefs influence how teachers and students think about the second language culture. However, it is important to remark, that not even ethnocentrism nor relativism should be part of an EFL teacher speech because it may fall into false judgments about any of the two culture involved in the language classroom.

To avoid ethnocentrism or relativism in an EFL classroom, the role of the teacher becomes determinant in the way how the students access to a second culture based on their own beliefs in the native culture. This access in the language class is given throughout language working as a mediator between the connection in terms of differences and similarities [determined by the characteristics that make every person special] that can emerge in any point of the class.

In concordance with the EFL, the respect of social identifiers is a key point for the students to be aware of the L2 culture. In the following scheme, the relationship between culture and language is explained in terms of understanding the objective of culture teaching in a second language classroom (See Figure 1)
This figure illustrates Kramsch’s interpretation of the way there must be a mediation point when learning a foreign culture. Culture one (C1) is the cultural base where a person interacts from the moment he/she is born. Culture two (C2) is the target culture when a person is learning a second language [in this case, English language]. Culture three (C3) is to be the main purpose that second language classes should be up to. Being the mediation point the culture three (C3) where the native speaker’s culture (C1) and the foreigner’s culture (C2) can not only maintain their own identities but also interact and contribute to the development of a better intercultural communicative competence. From this C3, millions of cultures appear and there are a lot of variations that can modify the conception of a C3. The teacher works as a mediator or manager between both cultures (C1 and C2) and makes students aware of the critical side of these manifestations and how the C3 is put through.

Every language teacher has its own culture in mediation with the second culture and in the moment he/she is promoting, showing, thinking, and reflecting in the class upon both of the cultures, beliefs based on preferences, likes, dislikes and judgments may arise and determine how
a person sees one culture or another. The objective for the teachers, then, is to help students seeing both cultures in the same conditions without barriers that can make one culture in a different condition than another, which is known as intercultural communicative competence.

Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is the way of comprehending the other’s reality, and making judgments about it. In Byram’s words (1997), ICC is the set of capacities a person has in order to communicate with a person from another culture in an equality of conditions. This type of reciprocal communication makes the person aware of the world, without any sense of superiority or inferiority. ICC also contributes to a second language speaker to see the second language beyond grammar rules that help construct ideas. Fantini (2001) also defines ICC as “the complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself” (p.1) These two explanations are common in the fact that the speakers need to prepare and be aware that they will be speaking with people from different cultures where difference is the essence of the ICC.

Learning another culture brings processes of understanding, tolerance and being open to opinions, contradictions and debate. In studies about culture learning, Lafayette (2003) suggests encouraging students and teachers of a second language to “deconstruct and rediscover” themselves in order to start creating the basis of a language learning where discovering the other’s and the own identity will help to a better comprehension not only of a language, but also of a culture.

To keep the own identity during the path that exists in the interactions between the two cultures, it is necessary that CLUS teachers take into account their beliefs about cultural manifestations at the moment of teaching a language in the performance and pedagogical
practicum of a teacher. They need to develop strategies in order to shape a better teaching experience. In Lorduy, Lambrano, Garces & Bejarano’s words (2009) “Uncovering teacher’s beliefs about Language teaching may help us to increase our understanding about their performance and practice in the classroom and will give us some traces of how to tackle effective ways to improve teachers’ teaching practice” (p 34). It is essential to highlight in this point that, when there is clear knowledge about how a teacher embarks into a cultural language learning environment, culture can come in a more explicit way for both teachers and students to be able to have intercultural communication.

In acquiring intercultural communicative competence, specifically for adults, Byram (1997) argues that this population, from the very beginning is interested in particular goals according to their foreign language needs, such as travelling abroad, getting a determined certificate, finding a job and being more open to the world. Nevertheless, those goals are in the teachers’ hands to be brought into the class, and they influence the way a student approaches to another culture, with certain degree of “cultural awareness”. Therefore, this conception should have the “values and significances” of a culture as important for a teacher by showing and helping the student develop their own perspective of the different social situation.

When the idea of an intercultural encounter comes in order to understand other reality, intercultural encounter is defined as the way people assimilate and make a judgment about a cultural manifestation different than its own. There are different ways of assimilation as it is shown in Table (1):
From the figure, it is noticed that the intercultural communicative speakers must be aware of the processes during intercultural communication, it is important for the teachers to know clearly each of them to avoid marginality, assimilation and separation and to focus on integration which is the ideal process to keep their own identity, to respect and accept the otherness.

Taking into account not only the particular objectives in a course, but also the social identities that come with the participants in an intercultural encounter, an intercultural speaker
must be aware of the characteristics of a certain group that are brought in a conversation, not judging, but interacting with a different perspective of the world.

Intercultural communicative competence involves reciprocal messages between the parts involved in the cultural encounters, where the people involved are called intercultural speakers. In Jaeger’s words (2001), “it is now permissible to be oneself, to retain one’s social, linguistic and cultural baggage, and that the role of communication is to be a tool for the learner’s further development of knowledge and understanding” (p.53). When teachers and students manage to develop their cultural background and also in words of Jaeger to “mediate, learn and self-reflect” with a foreign language, practices on teaching and learning will be improved.

Developing the concept of intercultural speaker shows that the individual who develops this competence takes the experiences as a point from where to evaluate, and make judgments. Byram (1997) refers to two skills within this process: the “interpretation” and “discovery”. The skills of discovery and interaction refers to the “ability of acquiring new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real time communication and interaction” (p. 13) This is evidenced in the research because throughout the beliefs, the world is interpreted, and with the experiences, the C2 is discovered by the new cultural knowledge. Thus, it is shown that in the intercultural encounters people have mediations between the two skills to evaluate and make judgments according to the background that each person has.

One of the aspects that an intercultural speaker needs to develop is the ability to decenter his own culture as the right one. This is possible when an intercultural speaker has certain skills, attitudes and values that allow relativize the different cultures. The concept that allows acquiring
those skills attitudes and values to reflect about other’s cultural visions of the world is called intercultural competence. Byram (1997).

From the ICC, the competence is developed in every person in a context of real interaction to comprehend, and be conscious the own and other culture. Figure (2) exemplifies the relationships between the most relevant aspects to take into account in the second language classroom in regards to this competence.

![Diagram](image.png)

*Figure 2. Relationship among ICC culture, EFL, ESL, Knowledge, Teaching culture, Beliefs and Intercultural Communication. (Own Elaboration)*

The concepts that are taken into account in the figure are: Culture that is the scaffolding that configures the way of being of every person. With the globalization, the parameters to
include English as a second language (ESL) and not as a foreign language (EFL) were adapted in the phenomenon of the acceptance of English as a global language. In the second language classroom, the knowledge and the beliefs about culture that every teacher has will be influential in the assimilation of the teaching of culture that every teacher has. Then, the inter-cultural competence is given as the mere knowledge about a second culture. In this part, the main point that appears is the ICC, understood as the capacity that a person has to communicate with another person being neutral in the interaction. These aspects are related in the sense that from the classroom, help configuring the intercultural communicative competence.

Chapter 3

Methodological Framework

Case Study

This study follows a case study research. Yin (2009) defines case study as an empirical enquiry that goes in depth with contemporary situations and limits in people’s communication. In the aims of this research, in which we want to know what teachers think about culture and how they apply it in the EFL classes, case study is the more appropriate method to develop our study. The main problem of the project is a particular social phenomenon that involves one specific group, known as teachers, and the identified problem that is the not enough evidences of teaching culture into the classroom.

The type of case study we are going to focus is the intrinsic or particular case study because, as Harling, K. (2002) says, it is done to learn about a unique phenomenon which the
study focuses on. Researches following this type of case study need to be able to define the uniqueness of this phenomenon distinguished from all others on a collection of features or the sequence of events. The case to study in this research work is that experiencing culture is not explicit in the classroom, with this case, the uniqueness of the phenomenon resides on the cultural confrontations of teachers and the way they express them in their classes to configure their and their students intercultural communicative competence.

Yin (2009) also develops the model for approaching this method. Figure (3) displays it.
In the figure, the procedures for a Case study start with the plan that is the organization of how the study will be developed, if the case can be studied. Then, the design determines the steps and actions to start recollect data in order to achieve the objectives with the case that will be studied and to what extent the topic will be analyzed. When preparation comes, people who will be involved in the project directly or indirectly are asked to participate, also, all the material needed for the development of the project is prepared. In the data collection, the instruments used in this project are observations, interviews and questionnaires, each one of them applied in different stages of the project. The Data analysis aims at discovering and expanding the characteristics of the case, and also, going in depth in certain answers that can determine the sense of the case. From the analysis, the results of the case can either be shared or we can redesign new steps to recollect data that can help shaping the case in a unique and distinctive way.

**Data collection instruments**

We use interviews, questionnaires, and observations to collect data to give an answer to the research questions and achieve the research objectives. We applied them face to face with the research participants. Data collection was between November 2012 and June 2013. In the following paragraphs, we explain the instruments and the procedures followed in detail.

**Interviews.** Interviews are the guide to achieve specific information that researchers want to get. In this regard, Lofland and Lofland (1994, p. 34) state that an interview protects similar information obtained from each research participant since there are no predetermined responses. Interviews are used in qualitative, social, educational research. They are applied as an important strategy for data collection. For this research project, interviews offer the possibility to obtain
responses and information with a lot of content. They also help keep a deep meaning in order to make a conscious and detailed analysis of the information.

According to Patton (as cited in Newton, 2010 p. 1), qualitative research has three types of interviews with open-ended questions. These are first, informal-conversational interviews; second, semi-structured interviews; and third, standardized open-ended interviews. An informal-conversational interview is the one in which an interviewer does not have specific questions and prefers to let the conversation flow. Semi-structured interviews are helpful in mini-studies or case studies. They focus on the main topic, as the interviewee feels free to talk about it. The standardized open-ended interview avoids disturbing factors as far as possible such as let the interviewer speak about irrelevant topics.

We decided to work with semi-structured interviews because this type of interviews allows us to ask openly for information about cultural issues that are relevant for our project. Besides, with this type of interviews and its structure, it was possible for us to give the interviewee the freedom for answering in a fluent way and without any restrictions. With this type of interviews, we expected to collect information about the concerns in our project such as: culture, intercultural competence, and intercultural communicative competence. With the information collected with interviews, we are able to categorize the information for findings of this research study.

The procedures we followed with this instrument were, at the end of 2012, we applied a first semi structured interview that worked as the foundation for a first approximation to the concerns that teachers at CLUS had with cultural issues. We noted down the research participants’ answers. Later at the beginning of 2013, we designed a second interview in order to
go deeper in the information previously collected. In this second interview, we used an open-ended interview with a concrete structure but with a wide range of answering. We audio-recorded the research participants in this second interview for a deeper analysis of data.

**Questionnaires.** Questionnaires complemented and verified the information gathered with the interviews. Questionnaires are also the aid for gathering missing information in the interviews. In agreement with Brace (2008), questionnaires are guides for the interviewers to get specific information that they consider relevant for the research study.

We decided to choose the questionnaires because the information gathered with the interviews seemed not to be enough. It was necessary to make an extra tool that let us collect the missing points we consider relevant to go deeper in our research work. The procedures we followed to apply this instrument were the following. After having collected the information of the second interview, we made an evaluation of the points we considered necessary to go deeper and re-discovered. The designed questionnaire had seven specific questions (open-ended and close ended) to get extra information. We applied the questionnaire to five teachers in order to complement the previous information. Throughout this instrument, we expected to fill the gaps that were relevant for our project and to get more and new information in order to make possible a complete data analysis in a more complete manner.

**Observations.** We decided to work with direct observation because it allows to be close and personal with the students and teachers, according to Byram (Byram, M.(2013, October 15). *conference “From foreign/Second Language Education to education for intercultural Citizenship”*, Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, Colombia.); “one of the most effective ways to learn about humans behaviors is through the use of direct observation.”
Observations were the third instrument we used. Kothari (2004) accounts for observations as a scientific tool systematically planned and controlled by reliability and validity for research purposes.

We chose this instrument because one part of the case under study was to identify whether or not the cultural component of the TBL framework was part of the language classroom. By using this instrument in the CLUS participant teachers’ classes, we could notice how culture does not have evidence in the EFL classroom. Besides, with this instrument, we also looked for confirming and complementing the evidence gathered in the previous instruments. In addition, this instrument allowed us to see how the evidence and the information gathered was working in the classroom environment under study. The procedures we followed to apply this instrument were designing the format to observe the specifics characteristic to identify the case, once we had the format, we decided the population in this case languages teachers at CLUS, then we went to class to apply the instrument to students and teacher, and finally doing the analysis where we could establish the first idea about the case.

**Type of Analysis for data collection**

We analyze the data gathered by following the narrative analysis approach. Narrative analysis focuses on life experiences that include people’s behaviors in a specific context. As Cortazzi (1993) mentions, “narrative analysis is interested in the cultural patterning of customs, beliefs, values, performance, and social context of narration” (p. 100). According to Merriam (2009), a narrative analysis focuses on the person’s narrations and descriptions about behaviors and experiences of a determined case, “the ways humans experience the world” (p. 202).
Our research then follows the narrative analysis of data in order to take into account the participant teachers’ experiences in a C2 with their English classes at CLUS. We use the instruments of observations, interviews, and questionnaires to obtain the teachers’ information. As we collect information from each instrument, we apply narrative analysis. In this data analysis approach, we could thus observe and analyze in a more precise way the information of the teachers’ experiences of culture in their classes at CLUS.

**Steps to analyze data**

Yin (2009) mentions that the best way to analyze data in a case study is according to the experiences collected. There is not a general structure to follow. However, it is important to take into account at least three (3) important steps. First, organizing the information according to the moment of collection. Second, editing the information collected. Third, writing-up the findings. The researchers should follow these aspects in order to maintain a thorough knowledge of the data.

We followed Yin’s procedures (2009) in this research study. First, we stated the research questions and objectives based on the preliminary observations in which we found the phenomenon for a deeper study. Afterwards, we reviewed the corresponding literature of the case identified. In this step, we focused on issues about culture; we mainly based our work on Byram’s and Kramsch’s theories. As we learnt more about the case under study, we carried out the third step by collecting the preliminary framework in which we focused our research; in this step we included all the concepts related to culture in an EFL class. Beyond, we structured the final information (fourth step) based on the teacher advisor’ recommendations and our decisions for our project based on the second observations and the second interviews that led us limit the
relevant concepts to focus the project. Nevertheless, there was not possible to carry out the fifth step called the conduction of pilot cases because it was not necessary. Then, the constitution of the whole elements (the sixth step) that we chose to structure our case study throughout a brief analysis of the second interviews and the second observations that gave the important missing about the phenomena studied.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis and Results

In this chapter, we display the data analysis in line with the case study procedures and the data analysis approach stated for this research work. The results found in such data analysis of this project give a response for the two research questions: what language teachers know and believe about teaching English culture in the EFL classroom and how language teachers incorporate the identified knowledge and beliefs in the EFL at CLUS.

This data analysis shows the answer of the two research questions in two ways. In the first place, by displaying language teacher’s knowledge and understanding language teacher’s beliefs of culture at CLUS. Secondly, by exploring language teachers’ beliefs for intercultural communicative competence for their classes at CLUS, and by describing language teachers’ experiences with the mediation between the target culture and the native culture.

In this regard, we follow the case study research approach proposed by Yin (2009). This author states that a case study research approach helps recognize and understand specific situations and thoughts on a specific population in which different ideas shape determined cultural facts that make a community unique. In our project, we focus on the possible fact that
language teachers at CLUS are not much aware of the manner they take the issue of teaching culture insight the classroom. The steps to develop the data collection are as follows:

1. An initial semi-structured interview to know the CLUS language teachers’ background and thoughts about teaching culture at CLUS. At this point, the first data analysis starts with the narrative analysis that consists of analyzing teachers experiences in terms of emotions and feelings.

2. In order to verify the first insights, we designed and applied a second open-ended interview to the same language teachers. In this second interview, we ask questions about cultural features in the Colombian culture (C1) and in the Anglophone or foreign culture (C2). With the answers, we could see the manner teachers at CLUS perceive the foreign culture and the native culture to establish and contrast the differences among the teacher’s cultural experiences. This data analysis presents two main findings. There are language teachers’ knowledge and beliefs about teaching English culture inside the EFL Classroom and language teachers’ knowledge and beliefs about teaching English culture outside the EFL Classroom. Both findings include the knowledge and beliefs that language teachers at CLUS have in the C1 and C2.

3. This analysis follows the narrative perspective, or narrative inquiry. In Colette & Lightfoot’s (2004) words, “Narrative analysis is a mode of inquiry based in narrative as a root metaphor, a genre, a discourse. As a metaphor, narrative analysis involves explaining psychological phenomena as meanings that are ordered from some theoretical perspective, like that of a storyteller, and consist of information and comments about the significance of that information” (p. 10). This model, taken from the point of view of culture, aims to show and reflect on cultural subjectivities and thoughts. (Colette & Lightfoot; 2004).
4. In order to collect data as natural as possible, we conducted the interviews and the questionnaires in the first language (L1) of the language teachers, being it Spanish. In this way, we were able to gather more constructed answers from the language teachers at CLUS. According to Gass and Schachter (2004), in research of beliefs and thoughts, the second or foreign language can be a barrier for conceptual answers. However, as we translated all the language teachers’ answers, all the results are presented in English along this chapter. This situation does not happen to the observations since we did them directly with an observation log in English.

In table (2), we show the process for the case analysis that we developed throughout our three-semester pedagogical practicum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICUM I 2012-I Preliminary observations 30 classes</th>
<th>PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICUM II 2012- II Identifying the case</th>
<th>PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICUM III 2013- I Modelling the case</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finding, contextualizing, developing of a class, explore. Culture is not too evident.</td>
<td>Gaining information, culture 1, culture 2, beliefs on culture, to aboard, describe. Different conceptions of culture.</td>
<td>Understanding and contrasting, displaying. Different cultural experiences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table (2) Process for the case analysis that we developed throughout our practicum. (Own Elaboration)*

In the process of defining our case, it is important to say that it was a matter of one year starting from the first period of 2012 in which we achieved some findings that let us explore one
part of our case about the no clear evidence of culture insight the classroom. Besides, in the second period of 2012, we gained some information by applying the preliminary interviews that allowed us to have general insights about beliefs of culture, different conceptions of culture in order to identify the case. Finally, in the first period of 2013 by doing the final interviews with information that is more detailed and the questionnaires to fill the gaps of the interviews, we finally modeled and structured the case.

We present our findings in line with the insights found in the data collected and analyzed. Such findings go in line with the research questions, objectives, and theoretical framework. Each of the results found is an event present in the participant teachers’ answers and performance in the language class.

**Culture one and Culture two**

For a better understanding of the results of this project, it is necessary to define culture one (C1) and culture two (C2). For our findings, C1 is the culture of the speaker’s first language (in this research Spanish) as it refers to the scaffolding that gives to the speaker an initial vision of the world according to a determined context (our definition). This definition is based in the idea that “*Con este término se indica todo el conjunto de conocimientos y técnicas que cada grupo posee y que le es necesario para vivir en su ambiente*” (Pueblos indígenas y educación, 1987). (p.5).

Reinforcing the concept for our project and following the previous idea, Peterson (2004) says ““culture is the relatively stable set of inner values and beliefs generally held by groups of people in countries or regions and the noticeable impact those values and beliefs have on the peoples’ outward behaviors and environment””
Besides, going beyond there is a second author that we considered pertinent to expand our main cultural concept. It refers to Lederach, J.P (1995) who says “I understand culture to be rooted in the shared knowledge and schemes created and used by a set of people for perceiving, interpreting, expressing, and responding to social realities around them”.

Also, there is a third concept which our project is identified According to (1821) cited by Wagner T. (2008) culture is the collective programming of the human mind that distinguishes the members of the human group from those to another.

The C2, in Phillips’ words (2003), is the culture of the speaker’s second language (in this research English) as it refers to the process of acquiring the culture-specific and culture general knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for effective communication and interaction with individuals from other cultures. In our project, in which we observed how the English language teacher, whose L1 is Spanish, assumed a position in terms of the most pertinent information at the time of presenting the C2, the factors that we will develop below influences the content of the language teachers’ information and the manner they give it.

**Seven Components for Culture in the Classroom**

**How knowledge of culture molds the type of intercultural person you are.** The first component .This shows how the CLUS language teachers’ C2 knowledge determines the way a person lives in a different cultural context, being it the C1 usually. According to Cultural Conflict theory given by Thorsten Sellin (1938) as cited in Keel (2005), cultural conflicts occur as consequence of ethnocentrism, stereotypes, and prejudice. Thus, to prevent these conflicts, it is necessary for language teachers to increase awareness of their own attitudes as well as sensibility to cross-cultural differences. One example of this situation is given when a teacher mentions that
the experiences a teacher has in that second culture, considered “positives” or “negatives” are going to have influence for the students’ judgment of a determined second culture. At CLUS, language teachers reveal that the more a person knows the other, the more the person is going to know the other culture and the less dependence there will be on it. Therefore, when people increase sensibility and awareness to cross-cultural differences, they contribute to the well development of the other culture, avoiding cultural conflicts.

**How the language teachers acquire cultural knowledge.** The second component shows the fact of having lived in another country modifies the conception of C2. Most of the language teachers’ experiences, in terms of living abroad for a while, in countries such as the United States or England, have conducted to establish certain general cultural confrontations. To exemplify this component with data, one CLUS language teacher explains, “I established contact when I saw the opportunity with people that spoke in other languages”. Therefore, in these established cultural confrontations, CLUS language teachers acquire a perception about what they are going to find in the to-go countries. Once they are living in there that perception changes due to mutual interaction. Therefore, knowing another culture creates a new way of seeing it due to language teachers’ experience that modifies the previous conception that they had about it.

**Comparing the two cultures.** Our third component. In our analysis, language teachers agree that in encounters between a C1 speaker and a C2 speaker, factors such as activities during the free time, the respect for the others point of view, and the use of common topics to communicate determine differences in culture. According to Byram (1997), it is necessary not to think in terms of encounters between different language and cultural systems, but rather of encounters between individuals with their own meanings and cultural capital. It means that each person belongs to a cultural identity that determines the way of confronting the world when
interacting with others. For CLUS language teachers at their encounters, they must have respect for the others point of view. Those encounters are determined by the use of common topics to communicate. One example of this is: “How I, from my culture understand the other”. These example shows how teachers consider that people, should be from the own culture, understanding the other, that means not leaving away their own identity.

The four component is that **the communication experiences that some CLUS language teachers have lived with people from another culture, they report, has not changed the initial believe they may have had about the other culture**. Nevertheless, other sources such as books, newspapers, the Internet, and C2 native speakers can influence the belief that some CLUS language teachers can have about the C2. This finding reinforces Byram’s (1997) statement that explains how “People need the ability to decenter and take up the other’s perspective on their own culture, anticipating and where possible resolving dysfunctions in communication and behavior” (p. 42). Thus, communication works because of previous language teachers’ cultural knowledge at the time of interacting with C2 native speakers take an important function in clarifying doubts and misunderstanding in different cultural confrontations between a C1 speaker and a C2 speaker. A teacher mentions “It is learned in the university, with texts, videos and contact with other people, and after that, travelling”.

**CLUS language teachers thought that students’ beliefs on C1 are morphed because of confusion with C2.** The fifth component. It means that most of the students cannot notice the differences about what specific behaviors, costumes, attitudes, ways of living correspond to each culture. According to Paige (2003), “Without the language teacher’s active involvement, students become more rather than less ethnocentric in their attitudes toward the target culture”. Therefore, language teachers’ role in the classroom becomes a determinant fact in clarifying the
different misunderstandings that the students have acquired implicitly or explicitly by living experiences. In our results, we encountered that language teachers at CLUS have a determined role by acting as mediators in comparing the two cultures in a neutral way. In this idea, one of the CLUS language teachers says, “The intercultural communicative competence is the mediator between the intercultural competence of the CLUS language teachers and students and between the communications that is given between the two cultures.” To make this evident, the teacher made an activity in which the students had to speak about American movies and the teacher worked as a mediator by doing questions and giving examples for integrating the C2 and the C1 in the class.

The sixth component is **The evolution of culture when teaching.** CLUS language teachers highlight the importance of traveling abroad in order to learn and know the C2. Inside the classroom, language teachers compare the C1 with the C2. They teach English according to their experiences in the C2 countries. The teaching tendency is that if the experience lived in the C2 was good, they show the C2 as a better culture than the C1, but if the experience lived in the C2 was bad, they show the C1 as a better culture than the C2. Throughout some evidences, in the interviews and observations, we could notice that:

- One language teacher compared the transportation in both cultures. He mentioned, “Some buses are terribly crowded [Referring to Transmilenio]”.
- Another language teacher explained that, “Education here in Colombia is pretty bad [in general terms for all the levels]”.
- The same language teacher reported, “British people are really kind in London.”

Throughout these evidences, we find that interpreting culture depends on how the person
lives and experiences it. Such interpretation modifies the interpreters’ behaviors and perceptions relating to the C2. These experiences affect the manner CLUS language teachers teach the C2 inside the classroom. It may happen because the CLUS language teachers’ experiences are the bases of teaching C2.

**Interculturality in the classroom.** The seventh component Even though CLUS language teachers believe that it is important to travel and live abroad in order to learn a C2, they also believe that learning more of the second language and C2 can be possible by keeping contact with the lifestyle of a foreign country (not always an English speaking country). The language teachers reported in the interviews that living in a foreign country is a way of learning culture. It means that these language teachers believe in the importance of living in a context where the person can be involved in the culture and L2 use in a real life. For example, one language teacher mentioned, “Immersion in the culture by living in there is the way of learning culture.” In this statement, it is noticeable how the language teacher gives importance of the fact of living in another culture. It is the same factor that Paige (2003) highlights, “most importantly it is knowing how to learn from the context while immersed in it” (p. 177). This statement confirms the CLUS language teachers’ beliefs of the importance to keeping contact with a C2, in order to learn it.

The second belief that the language teachers at CLUS hold is keeping contact with the lifestyle of a foreign country. For these teachers, it refers to the way students learn issues related to the C2 inside the classroom. This belief emerged throughout the interviews. For example, one language teacher highlights “Students learn with everything that happens in the English class environment.” This statement shows the importance of interculturality because, to our
understanding, any language teacher that develops the C1 in interaction with a foreign language directly promotes interculturality in the classroom. An important aspect to take into account in here is the language teacher’s experiences with the foreign language. This issue becomes present when they introduce issues of the C2 to the students. In our observations, CLUS language teachers talk about the C2 according to their own experiences. They even compare the C1 with the C2. According to Maureen (1999) “all communication is intercultural to an extent and the degree of interculturality depends on the degree of heterogeneity between the experiential backgrounds of the individuals involved” (p. 193). It means that developing the C1 in interaction with a foreign language is a direct way of intercultural communication. Besides Maureen’s words accounts for the experiential backgrounds of individuals, for our research, this background is what language teachers at CLUS use to present the C2 to the students.

Discovering the C2

The previous resources show the importance of keeping in contact with the C2 in the real context. Half of the CLUS language teachers participating in this research mentioned that it is not necessary to travel to an English speaking country to learn that C2 because it is possible to do it here in the C1 context. They believe that we can learn about the C2 throughout different media at any moment. They affirm that it is possible to learn a C2 here in our context throughout videos, readings, articles of the C2, even inside the classroom with the other students’ experiences in the C2. For example, one language teacher mentioned in the interviews “About how you learn of the culture of the English speaking countries, it is learned in the university and with texts, videos and contact with other people.” In this statement, language teachers consider the importance to be involved in the C2 here in the C1. This confirms Maureen´s idea (1999) that the recognition of
another’s culture (in this case C2) resides on how the C1 speaker treats the interaction as an intergroup. It means that one foreign person can teach culture just with a simple conversation because many ideas will be exchanged. It includes knowledge, beliefs, languages even religion.

In opposition to this, another language teacher’s idea comes in. He says, “How do you learn culture? Living it, I think. I had a really different experience than the rest of other people, I lived alone as a Colombian.” This language teacher highlights the concept of “social membership”. He defines it as “how to adjust and feel myself as a group in there, to generate a social membership, to create social groups.”

From this perspective, the differences between CLUS language teachers’ statements are evident. On one hand, they affirm that it is necessary to travel to the C2 country to learn its culture. On the other hand, they express that we cannot learn the C2 culture in our C1 culture throughout different resources. Issues get more difficult to understand when, in the second interview, another CLUS language teacher highlights the bad educational system that we have here in Colombia, especially in English. He suggests “a lot of exchange programs and it should be free because people do not have money.” His interpretation is that the education at CLUS is not enough in order to learn and know a C2. To him, it is relevant to keep contact with the lifestyle of a foreign country. The institutions should help students to travel abroad in order to have a high quality of education.

About this discussion, our inside is that language teachers’ idea about teaching culture depends on their own experiences. If they have traveled abroad, they suggest traveling abroad. If they have not, they suggest living the C2 in here. If their languages education experiences have not been good, they suggest either traveling abroad or not but preferably traveling in order to learn and understand a C2.
Language Teachers Talking about Culture

Taking into account the analysis of data collected for this research, we discovered five components that express what Language teachers know when talking about culture. The following aspects come around in the class:

**Positivity in teaching behavior.** In a first perspective, we can say that in CLUS language teachers’ opinion, positive changes in the attitudes for learning the language make students more aware of language and the way to deal with it in the real life. This means, the more positive you come to a foreign language, the better learning you will have about it. This result is very positive, because theoretically speaking, following Maureen’s postulate (1999), in the moment of intercultural encounters, the theory of anxiety/uncertainty talks about how people meet strangers and how they are immersed into different situations. Maureen’s theory of anxiety/uncertainty states that people generally think about negative perspectives when they are introduced into new cultural situations, but as the encounter flows, thoughts start to change in a positive perspective. This part of cultural communication shows that language teachers at CLUS are having an early good approach of culture in their practices towards language learning. These teachers bring the students cultural situations that they (students) may primarily see negatively, but as the class evolves, start being positive helping them have a different introduction to the second language and the C2.

**Difficulties on teaching.** CLUS language teachers explain to their students the features about the second culture and teach them how to solve their classmate’s doubts. This result is particular in this research because we can see how the language teacher wants the students to help themselves in solving their doubts in the aspects of culture. The language teacher does not want
to be the only one who knows about a topic, the language teacher wants the students to help
themselves to solve their doubts. For example, one teacher mentions “What it’s interesting is the
possibility to know what they think”. Another teacher says: “The fact of knowing the cultural
facts makes them [students] have a more wide open mind towards tolerance and the acceptance of
ourselves”

Assimilation of culture. According to the evidences collected in the questionnaires, the
general idea of culture, and the manner students come to it, resides on the following aspect:
language teachers make students live the culture; in consequence, they can learn about an L2
culture. Data demonstrates that they make the students live the C2 culture with energetic movies,
transportation topics, and L2 accents. For example, one language teacher says, “The way of
learning how a foreign culture functions is by the direct experience and immersion”. Another idea
of a teacher is: “we are hardworking people, we have energetic movies but, our education is bad”.
One teacher mentions: “How do you learn culture’ Living it I think” These quotes demonstrate
that the approach language teachers have for culture is with material that can relate how life is
lived in a foreign context

Language and cultural features of L2 do not come easily to assimilation, neither for the
language teacher nor for the students. Features such as relativism and ethnocentrism, for
example, are perceived as difficult concepts to assimilate. At CLUS, where the language teacher
is in charge of a whole group with heterogeneous views of language and culture (as our
observations demonstrate), the language teacher feels the responsibility of helping the students
when language and cultural problems and doubts appeared. In response, the students believe and
appropriate what the language teacher says because they feel everything the language teacher
says is true. At this point, there is a need to clarify that a belief of culture is determined by the relativism and ethnocentrism of a social phenomenon. In relation to the features of L2 to assimilate, a belief in a cultural fact, from either the language teacher or the student, may determine whether the believer considers it socially correct or incorrect. This situation makes the concepts of relativism and ethnocentrism difficult to understand and treat in the language class.

Another result deals with CLUS language teachers and the handling of cultural issues in class. When a CLUS language teacher knows dealing with cultural and language situations, students become motivated with new features of language and make reflection upon learning from the mistakes and misunderstandings of language and culture. This situation allows language teachers new opportunities to learn the different ways of helping students approaching to a language and its culture.

**Physical features.** Physical expressions have relevance when teaching a language and its culture. According to our observations, language teachers at CLUS particularly use paralinguistic, face expressions, particular tones of voice, kinesthetic, and responsive attitudes in class. We can conclude that they are dynamic and relaxing teachers because with expressions such as applauding, pointing out the people, and walking around the classroom that shows a particular kind of behavior in the culture of teachers at CLUS. We determined that they are stressed when students do not pay attention to the activities of the class. In this second case, language teachers use expressions of “okay” and “nodding” to confirm acknowledge, nominating and eliciting, and for making students pay attention. All of this goes in line with Argyle’s (as cited in Byram, 1997) ideas in terms of non-verbal communication throughout culture. This author assures that eight aspects define this type of communication. These are:
facial expressions

- gaze

- gestures and other bodily movements

- bodily postures

- bodily contact

- spatial behavior

- clothes and appearance

- nonverbal aspects of speech”

In addition, we noticed that at CLUS, language teachers express one of the functions of non-verbal communication that is in words of Lyons, (1972) “not supporting verbal communication” with expressions such as “ok” “that is right” “correct” and more.

Attached to physical expressions, in this context of CLUS, we notice that language teachers express that personality features are important when teaching culture. Aspects such as liking a determined kind of group, attitudes towards it, and an adequate environment for teaching and learning are seen as an important characteristic of a second language class.

**Didactic features.** Taking into account the observations made for this study, we can say that the general opinion on how culture should be taken into account from the didactic perspective at CLUS is that language teachers’ strategies are essential for a good class development when working with middle-aged groups. CLUS language teachers express that teaching culture should have foundations on the language teacher’s own experiences. The same
ones that can help students to overcome the difficulties of being in a different cultural context. One punctual example is when a language teacher says “Actually, I was going out with my ex-girlfriend, she is British, so, I learned a British culture” and later he starts telling the story with his girlfriend in the United Kingdom. Our data evidences that middle-aged students are more interested in learning the C2 when the language teacher talks about these kinds of cultural experiences.

Besides, another CLUS language teachers’ idea, common in the questionnaires, observation logs, and interviews, is that if the language teacher produces a good environment where students feel motivated to go to class, better results in terms of language and culture knowledge take place. We could find in the data collected that language teachers, who encourage students, receive a better performance from them in class. The students’ involvement in the class makes the language teachers feel more comfortable and motivated for teaching English and its culture.

Therefore, the result found in the instruments indicates that, according to the CLUS language teachers, if they have attitudes towards the class like interacting with students, giving feedback, and talking about their experiences, the students will feel confident with the language and prompt to learn about its culture. This idea brings within itself a reflection upon how to understand the role of the language teacher as a facilitator for aspects such as language use and culture. It can definitely help students have a better perspective on the target language and its culture avoiding ethnocentrism that can misjudge a determined culture.
Overall Connection of the Results

The figure shows our overall interpretation of the manner the CLUS language teachers perceive culture and interpret interculturality. The results we analyzed indicate that these teachers move from ethnocentrism in L1 and ethnocentrism in L2, towards relativism in L1 versus relativism in L2. We adapt Bennett & Ikeda’s (1998) as cited by (Newton, Yates, Shearn & Nowitzki, 2010) model to understand the development of intercultural competence in the language classroom to picture our interpretations. In such model, the authors talk about intercultural sensitivity (interculturality in our figure), denial/defense stage (ethnocentrism in our figure), and adaptation/integration stage (relativism in our figure). The adaptation we make goes in line with the findings presented along this chapter of data analysis and results and the theoretical framework of our study. See figure (4)
On the left part of the figure, we can see the side of ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism in L1 refers to the cultural negative beliefs that CLUS language teachers have of L1 (Spanish), with statements such as “…our education is bad” and “they [people from C2] have a very distorted image of our country because of the background of violence, corruption and social and mental underdevelopment of our population”. Ethnocentrism in L2 refers to the negative beliefs that CLUS language teachers have of L2, such as “However, by being there [in the country of the C2], I saw that, although life quality is better, they also have problems of unemployment, social security and drugs.”

In the figure, it is notable how CLUS language teachers are moving up and down from ethnocentrism in L1 to ethnocentrism in L2 when they compare and balance the negative aspects of both cultures. As our results show, language teachers at CLUS seem to be in the halfway between ethnocentrism in L1 and ethnocentrism in L2, (as the curved line shows), because they are still in the process of identifying the intertwining between the two languages. In this process, they are also reflecting upon the inferences of the cultural facts in their thoughts about either culture.

During the process indicated of comparing and reflecting, language teachers at CLUS are constructing understandings of interculturality towards a sense of relativism. The rightwards arrow in the center of the figure indicates that CLUS language teachers are in the path of choosing whether they will prompt to relativism in L2 or relativism in L1. The path they have walked is not yet complete because they still have the need to feel identified with relativism in L1 or Relativism in L2 (on the right side of the figure). Relativism in L1 are the positive beliefs that CLUS language teachers have of L1 such as “I saw that they [people from the C2] felt very
curious for my country. My traditions because I noticed they see Latin people as happy people and given to their families”. Relativism in L2 are the positive beliefs language teachers have of L2 such as “The facilities that the people from the United Kingdom gives are unique and irreplaceable.”

In the path from ethnocentrism to relativism, the understandings of interculturality come around with Byram’s (1997) theory of intercultural communication. This theory aims for the intercultural speaker to go from ethnocentrism (either L1 or L2) to relativism in L2 (see as the pointed arrow). The result of this process, according to the theory, is that an intercultural speaker must go from ethnocentrism of L1 to relativism in L2 and for an L2 speaker from ethnocentrism in L2 to relativism in L2. Therefore, from our own deduction, English language teachers at CLUS who manages two languages should go to relativism for both languages.

From this point of view, we can say that there is intercultural communication between the language teachers and students, and between the students and language teachers, even between the very same students. In addition, there is intercultural communication between language teachers and students and vice versa. There is intercultural communication between L1 speakers (language teacher-students) and L2 speakers (language teachers with people they know from another English speaking country). In all these processes, there are new axioms created between people no matter the status of a culture towards the other. Such axioms are the results of this research study discussed along this chapter.
Chapter 5

Conclusions And Pedagogical Implications

To understand the results of the instruments in terms of the research questions of the project, Table (3) shows the corresponding question and answer:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>ANSWERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do teachers know and believe about teaching English culture in the EFL Classroom?</td>
<td>Culture is not transmitted, culture must be lived. Teaching culture involves being open to another way of thinking without judgments or making oneself feel inferior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do teachers incorporate the identified knowledge and beliefs in the EFL class at CLUS?</td>
<td>Teachers incorporate culture knowledge and their beliefs in the language classroom by giving real life examples and comparing one manifestation with another of their own context</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3. Results of the instruments in terms of the research questions (Own Elaboration)*

Once, we finished the data collection and the analysis of the information necessary to have an answer to the case, we encountered that for the first question, teachers consider that culture is not transmitted and taught because the second culture just belongs to the context that comes from, so, the way that a C2 can be evident in a certain degree is when the teacher creates some spaces that try to emulate a situation in the C2 culture. For the second question, teachers consider that culture can be incorporated in multiple strategies such as giving examples about real
life situations and comparisons between aspects of different cultures. However, the strategies
depend on the teachers’ experiences with a second culture, pedagogical knowledge and how
relevant the teachers consider a determined topic.

Case Study

This project was led throughout the case study in order to understand teacher’s beliefs of
culture at CLUS. During this project, we learned the principles of doing research such as:
collecting data by following the instrument procedures and the case study procedures,
systematizing, organizing, analyzing and interpreting data, and categorizing and defining results.
Additionally, we studied authors’ concepts related to all the main constructs for supporting this
research. At the end of this research, we hold a greater knowledge about case study, and research
instruments, on one side, culture, communicative competence, and (inter) culturality, on the other
side.

Throughout this research study, we learned that research on language teaching does not
necessarily point to the implementation of a pedagogical design to improve students’
performances. Research on language teaching also deals with identifying a phenomenon,
understanding, and explaining it. Therefore, in this research study, we focused on analyzing,
reflecting and exploring teachers’ beliefs for intercultural communicative competence for their
classes at CLUS. In this research, we also gained knowledge in order to have more to teach
English since it will be easier for us to understand and include C2 in our English classes.

We may conclude that most of people consider creating teaching solutions more
important. However, they do not care about comprehending pedagogical phenomena to
understand a reality. It is relevant to understand a context, as Michael Byram mentions; “it is
important to understand our own culture and identity and it is easy to understand the others” (Byram, M. (2013, October 15). conference “From foreign/Second Language Education to education for intercultural Citizenship”, Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, Colombia.) It refers to the importance of comprehending the C1 and its reality to comprehend the C2 and its reality, too.

**Task Based Learning**

According to the TBL approach used at CLUS, English teachers must include the five components (problem solving, real life, culture, communication, language (grammar)) inside the classroom. Nevertheless, we could notice throughout the observations that teachers do not take into account all components since they focus on grammar. Besides, the C2 is not evident during the classes. Hence, including the culture component is important to involve the students into activities in which they can experience the cultural experiences in C1 and C2.

**Culture.** Culture is a difficult word to define. As Byram, (Byram, M. (2013, October 15). conference “From foreign/Second Language Education to education for intercultural Citizenship”, Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, Colombia.) highlights, “culture is one of the two or three most complex words in English”. Additionally, it is a topic that demands a lot of theoretical and social work. Throughout this project, we found different concepts related to culture, but we defined culture as the speaker’s first language (in this research Spanish) as it refers to the scaffolding that gives to the speaker an initial vision of the world according to a determined context.

With respect to the research context and its participants, we may conclude that the C2 is not evident despite it should be part of teaching languages, according to the vision and mission at
Throughout this study, we reflect in terms of culture upon accounting for living culture in language classes at CLUS.

**Culture is not Theory and You Cannot Teach Culture Because It is not static**

We encounter in our data from the theoretical framework that Culture is part of a community and it is continually moving forward in a dynamic way by influencing peoples’ way of living and peoples’ experiences. According to our research results at CLUS, the entire participant teachers create a brief space for the students to live their own C2 experience in a certain degree. In this order of ideas, students learn and understand English throughout its own culture.

**Culture is not Giving Information. You Need to Make Students Live the Culture**

According to our findings, we could realize that Language should be the means to experience culture because language is an essential part of culture. According to our research results at CLUS, we conclude that teachers make an effort to bring the C2 throughout language into the classroom but not in a “pure way.” It means that teachers use English as a mediator between C2 and C1 to make the students comprehend and reflect upon their own way of comprehending the C2.

According to the CLUS need now of applying the cultural component of TBL in the classroom, we conclude that teachers need to explore culture in an accessible way for their students through TBL. The reason for this is that one of the five components that makes this method worthy is culture. CLUS language teachers make an effort to integrate culture in their classes by different means such as giving real life examples or sharing their experiences with their students and by making some role-plays to emulate the C2. However, these actions not always resemble the cultural component of TBL. How culture is part of TBL and how
encountered teachers do this issue. To analyze this idea, and the possible pedagogical implementation, we have to consider the curriculum of every institution to make the ICC an aspect of the second language classes. Byram, M. (Byram, M. (2013, October 15). conference “From foreign/Second Language Education to education for intercultural Citizenship”, Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, Colombia.) reflected about the role of the curriculum in the institutions to make the cultural environment, an issue that is not only given in the development of the class, but as an educational situation of relevance. Some teachers make an effort to incorporate the aspects of the C2 that they consider important for the students to learn. Notwithstanding, this effort is not enough due to the not transversal incorporation of culture as an aspect of the second language class at CLUS.

Interculturality

The pedagogical context has five components that are always present in an intercultural class: Students Teachers, Contents, Contexts, Factors (Language levels). Along our research, we perceive that each of those components is still working independently within their own dimension. When the teacher is being aware of the aspects about culture and intercultural communication in the class (the teacher as the model of an intercultural speaker, and the students as new intercultural speakers), she or he is not making students experience culture or letting them a space to become culturally aware in a certain degree. However, she or he may be integrating all the components that are present in the intercultural class. It denotes that it is in the teacher’s hands to incorporate and make students aware of interculturality. As it was mentioned in the chapter of data analysis and results, when the teacher is a manager and mediator of culture, students are more critical with their own and the others’ culture. They will also see language learning not just as a tool for a determined good but as a way of thinking about themselves. In
this point, it is remarkable to say that the teachers and students’ experiences in both cultures are a way of incorporating it in the language classroom. Thus, teachers need to see that not just the C2 cultural manifestations are part of learning a language, but also, how they see their own C1 in terms of a non-native language.

**About Intercultural Communicative Competence**

The characteristic that is essential to mention in this part is the Intercultural Communicative competence, which Byram (1997) defines as the abilities every person has to go around different cultures than its own and being able to interact among them without making one more important than the other. In this regard, and, with all the work developed in our project, we can conclude that:

**Intercultural communicative competence needs to be re-thought.** First, the perceptions of ICC in language teaching seem to be very elitist because interculturality is understood from so-called “big or important cultures”. This means, teachers usually see the second language culture as the one that can give a better interpretation of interculturality rather than its own. From the results, it is evident that teachers tend to see C2 as more superior than the C1.

A second aspect is that **ICC does not take into account personality features of the teacher who is the responsible of making it given in the classroom.** Throughout the completely theoretical study of the intercultural communicative competence, we could not observe how the teacher’s personality and preferences determine the way she or he can be more or less intercultural. From this point, a question emerges, what does it imply to have determined personality features in being an intercultural communicative person? Our tentative answer is that it implies that the teacher be able to analyze material and determine how useful and
important this can be for teachers and students in the language classroom. However, further research is necessary to give a sustained answer to this question.

Then, we reflected about the fact of learning about a culture different than the own, and we can say that when we learn about a C2 (English cultures), we are less dependent but aware of our own and the other’s culture, thus less ethnocentric in C1 and C2. We have to know that the more aware we are of the other’s thoughts, ideas, likes and dislikes, the more open and understandable we are to the world, and what people bring within it. By taking into account the last fact, it is important to say that, for teachers, there is a need of mixing culture inside the classroom. It does not only increase the knowledge about a topic. When teachers have a class environment where both cultures come inside a determined topic, both parties should be able to reflect upon and analyze cultural features, in this case, English features. In this regard, we need to reflect upon the manner we show our world with language and see the other’s world. Learners and teachers of a second language should see the second language interactions in the EFL as a way of viewing realities that configure and help see the different characteristics of the world.

According to our results and theory, we conclude that teachers are in the need of pulling down culture in students’ conceptions and perceptions. They need to help not only students but themselves in exploring the intercultural communicative competence in its full expressions, not just in parts. Teachers and students need to be able to understand that the manifestations of the world are not only coincidental facts that happen inconsequentially. They need to be aware that we do not only define our community, we develop it worldwide.
UNDERSTANDING THE BELIEFS ABOUT CULTURE EFL TEACHERS HOLD

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Appendixes

Appendix 1: Interview format used to analyze CLUS teachers background with a second culture – Data recollection stage

Universidad de la Salle
Facultad de educación
Licenciatura en Lengua Castellana, Inglés y Francés

Práctica pedagógica y proyecto de investigación

Título del proyecto: Understanding the beliefs about culture that EFL teachers hold at CLUS (Centro de lenguas de la Universidad de la Salle)

Investigadores: Diana Paola Duarte, Juan Gabriel Coca León, Nelson Camilo Rojas Suancha

Primero que todo, queremos agradecerle por su participación en este proyecto, para nosotros, es realmente valioso todas las ideas que usted expresa. En esta entrevista, nos gustaría que expresara sus ideas y opiniones acerca de su bagaje en la interacción con una cultura diferente a la nuestra y como estas interacciones influencian sus clases. Las preguntas serán hechas en español para que se sienta libre de responder cuanto más quiera sin alguna limitación.

1. En tu profesión como profesor (a), ¿Cómo has aprendido acerca de la cultura de los países donde se habla inglés? No importa si has viajado o no

2. ¿Qué ventajas traería para los estudiantes conocer acerca de la cultura de los países donde se habla inglés? (¿Cómo lo trabajas en clase?)
3. ¿Qué experiencias has tenido comunicándote en inglés? ¿Cómo las has vivido?

4. ¿Qué aspectos del inglés consideras importantes enseñar para que los estudiantes tengan una comunicación efectiva con hablantes de otros países?

5. ¿Qué características tienen las personas de habla inglesa cuando hablas con ellos?
Appendix 2: Questionnaire format used to analyze in-depth CLUS teachers background with a second culture – Data recollection and analysis stage

**Universidad de la Salle**  
Facultad de educación  
Licenciatura en Lengua Castellana, Inglés y Francés  
Práctica pedagógica y proyecto de investigación

**Título del proyecto:** Understanding the perceptions about culture that EFL teachers hold at CLUS (Centro de lenguas de la Universidad de la Salle)

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**CUESTIONARIO**

A partir de las respuestas que nos dio en la primera entrevista, diseñamos este cuestionario con el propósito de profundizar en sus pensamientos acerca de la cultura y sus creencias. Agradecemos su colaboración con las respuestas

Nombre del profesor(a):_____________________________________________________

1. ¿Con qué frecuencia habla con personas de otro país?

   ________________________________________________________________
2. ¿Ha vivido en un país de habla inglesa?

3. ¿Qué ha aprendido de personas de otra cultura cuando ha hablado con ellos? (formas en las que se comunican, cómo son, en qué creen, cómo se comportan)

4. Después de hablar con nativos o no nativos de habla inglesa, ¿La percepción que tenía acerca de ellos(as) cambió? ¿Por qué?

5. ¿Cómo hace para que los estudiantes perciban la cultura de habla inglesa?
   (Responda marcando una X al lado de la opción la cual se identifique más)

   ✓ Yo les enseño cultura
   ✓ Yo les transmito cultura
   ✓ Yo hago que los estudiantes vivan la cultura
✓ Yo les ofrezco cultura

6. Desde su perspectiva de cultura, ¿cómo se ve usted en comparación con los hablantes de otra lengua con los que usted ha hablado?

7. ¿Cómo ha visto usted que ellos nos ven a nosotros?

8. Describa de su parte su expresividad comunicativa (verbal y no verbal) y corporal que ha experimentado cuando usted interactúa con hablantes de otra cultura