

Intercultural language teaching practices of Spanish, English, and French teachers in Bilingual
Schools.

Diana C. Callejas, Edith del S. Carmona, and Andrea P. Carpio

Facultad de Educación, Universidad Santo Tomás

Maestría en Ambientes Bilingües de aprendizaje

Diana C. Callejas

<https://orcid.org/0009-0009-3234-571X>

diana.callejas@usantotomas.edu.co

Edith del S. Carmona

<https://orcid.org/0009-0007-6141-4986>

edithcarmona@usantotomas.edu.co

Andrea P. Carpio

<https://orcid.org/0009-0000-3389-7211>

andreacarpio@usantotomas.edu.co

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Abstract

The integration of interculturality into language teaching poses a multifaceted challenge, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive approach to language instruction. This document explores the intricate process of integrating interculturality into language teaching, recognizing the complexity and diverse perspectives inherent in this process. Participants include six high school language teachers in French, Spanish, and English from two private institutions in Bogotá and Medellín. Researchers employed a comparative descriptive study methodology to get an understanding about teachers' practices and perceptions, through qualitative instruments such as questionnaires, class observations, and focus groups. The analysis reveals discrepancies between the participants' perceptions and the practices they carry out to integrate interculturality. Findings highlight the potential benefits of aligning an intercultural approach with language education, advocating for policy adjustments to promote inclusivity and cultural self-reflection. The study proposes urgent professional identity transformations, emphasizing the importance of intercultural education in both school environments and higher education programs.

Key words: bilingual education, cultural awareness, foreign languages, intercultural education, teaching practices

Resumen

La integración de la interculturalidad en la enseñanza de idiomas plantea un desafío multifacético, destacando la necesidad de un enfoque integral en la instrucción lingüística. Este estudio investiga dicho proceso con la participación de seis profesores de francés, español e inglés de dos instituciones privadas en Bogotá y Medellín. Utilizando la metodología de estudio de casos, los investigadores examinaron las prácticas y percepciones de los profesores mediante



cuestionarios, observaciones de clase y grupos focales, revelando discrepancias significativas.

Los hallazgos resaltan la importancia de alinear un enfoque intercultural con la enseñanza de idiomas, proponiendo ajustes de políticas para fomentar la inclusión y la autorreflexión cultural.

Además, estos sugieren transformaciones urgentes en la identidad profesional en entornos educativos secundarios y superiores. Este estudio aborda los desafíos y oportunidades de integrar la interculturalidad en la enseñanza de idiomas en un contexto diverso y complejo.

Palabras clave: educación bilingüe, conciencia cultural, idiomas extranjeros, educación intercultural, prácticas docentes.

Introduction

In recent decades, Colombia's government has prioritized bilingual learning to ensure Colombian citizens can communicate in English and participate effectively in a globalized world. General Law of Education (1994) remarked the importance of learning English as a second language and established the differences between schools according to their English emphasis. The schools selected for the present research are located in Bogota and Medellín and have a multilingual proposal as a distinguishing feature; since French is considered as a foreign language, they are currently pursuing National Bilingual school certification by adjusting their curriculums to be taught, mostly, in English. According to their performance in the National test, both schools rank 99th and 231st, respectively, among 3.623 private schools nationwide; but within their departments, they rank 19th and 18th (Milton Ochoa, 2023).

Educational policies in Colombia, such as the National Educational Plan of 1996, National Bilingual Plan of 2004, and Basic Standards of Foreign Languages of 2002, have framed language teaching in the country. Bastidas and Jiménez (2021) extensively discuss these



policies, which provide insight into how bilingualism is perceived and how teaching practices are developed to promote English as a Second Language (ESL). Recently, there has been a mindset shift to the inclusion of intercultural competence in the recent National Bilingual program (MEN, 2021) which also requires a professional shift to face the challenges it brings.

Concerning intercultural practices in Colombia, Galindo and Moreno (2019) highlight the need of reevaluating the epistemological basics of interculturality and the nature and purpose of these practices. The authors argue that interculturality is characterized by institutions displaying practices that celebrate and acknowledge understanding from every culture. While there is observable coexistence between two cultures, there is a lack of reflection on both their own culture and others'. Besides, Truscott *et al.*, (2006) mentions the tendency to exclude intercultural practices as a core axis in the institutions' curriculum. The integration of interculturality in language teaching is complex and varied in perspectives and must be institutionalized to promote real and relevant comprehension among cultures through language, because "it is therefore not simply a way of teaching, but a way of understanding lived experiences of language and culture as the framing for teaching" (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013, p.6).

Truscott (2006) while researching the recognition of languages in Colombia inquired if teachers are ready for the challenge of teaching through interculturality and to foster in students' curiosity, openness, inquiry, respect for the difference of diverse cultural groups; while being aware of their own cultural identity. Therefore, researching how teachers include interculturality in their teaching practices through different teaching approaches and languages leads to more meaningful learning for students in multilingual schools. Thus, this research seeks to determine bilingual teaching practices that undertake interculturality in two Colombian urban schools through the subjects of Spanish, English and French.

Literature Review

Bilingual Education in the Colombian Context

Through decades of bilingualism initiatives, the Ministry of Education of Colombia [MEN]¹ (2006) has recognized English as a language that enhances individuals' skills in the job market. Initially, Colombia's bilingualism policies, as mandated by the Colombian Educational Law (1994), prioritized basic language competencies for communication. However, growing understandings of language learning, such as those articulated by Velez (2006) emphasize English proficiency not just for employability but also for global communication. The MEN (2006) further emphasizes the interconnectedness of language and culture, advocating for exposure to diverse cultural perspectives to foster cultural understanding and respect, while also prioritizing the importance of communicating using a language that allows people to access a globalized world.

Now, according to the current National Bilingual Program² by MEN (2021a) Colombia bets on plurilingualism and its integration in curricular design and its adaptation depending on the context and students' needs. For the program, the terminology used to encompass this functional plurilingualism begins with the cultural and linguistic reality of the country. For the MEN (2021a), the current NPB focuses on the consolidation of a functional plurilingualism policy because “Colombia is already a plurilingual country, thanks to its linguistic richness (65 native languages, 2 Creole languages, 1 Romani language, and one sign language)³” (para.2) and to expand the conceptualization of a plurilingual and pluricultural competence, Coste *et al.* (2009) defined it as follows:

¹ Ministerio de Educación Nacional will be referred to as its acronym MEN.

² From now on, Programa Nacional de Bilinguismo will be referred to as National Bilingual Program (NPB)

³ Taken from the Ministry of Education Website, in the section related to the National Bilingual Program.



Plurilingual and pluricultural competence refers to the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social actor, has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures (p.5).

For MEN (2021b) the purpose is the development of the intercultural competence in English, as well as, an intercultural competence that not only takes the characteristic elements of the target culture, but also promotes and values Colombian culture⁴. Considering this and the purpose to which the conception of being bilingual in the Colombian context has shifted from learning a language to access better opportunities to also, seeing language as the vehicle for communication, interaction, learning, creation of opportunities and personal development with the purpose of developing the ability of language use to make Colombian citizens “able to communicate in English to insert Colombia into the global economy and take part in cultural interactions...” (MEN, 2021a, p.6). These intercultural interactions are specified in the current bilingualism program, which sets six axes to which each educational institution must work on to accomplish the objective of the program and the National Development Plan. For instance, the MEN (2021a) in its second axis, which is related to bilingual and intercultural environments, specifies that:

this type of pedagogical practice will be beneficial for students and for teachers whose goal is to envision teachers’ pedagogical practice as agents of change and innovation to favor lifelong learning skills, as well as allows the use of language as an authentic and real tool for communication, for personal and intercultural development (para.10).⁵

⁴ All Spanish translations are by the authors.

⁵ Paraphrasing and translation from the authors. Taken from the NBP website.



The NBP allows stakeholders flexibility to adapt the program to meet local needs, and adaptability to appropriate the curriculum according to their contexts and needs. This requires a thorough evaluation of the context' needs to tailor the program accordingly for the school population, reflecting a contemporary perspective on teaching English as a foreign language. In conclusion, teaching with an intercultural approach for the Colombian context means to involve using language not solely for enhancing competitiveness in the job market but also for nurturing citizens' awareness of cultural diversity through the appropriation of an intercultural competence.

Teaching of French in Colombia

According to González (2010) throughout the history of language teaching in Colombia, the status of French as a Foreign Language in the country has not been derived from a language policy, on the contrary, it has been influenced by the interests of the government in charge. This assertion aligns with the viewpoint presented by the MEN (2002) which highlights that the course of French in the educational sphere is predominantly influenced by the fluctuations in diplomatic relations with France. To better understand the statements presented above, it is necessary to review the history of French language teaching in Colombia.

Going back to its origins as a mandatory language in high school, it is possible to find French and English at the same level. González (2010) traces a historical path which begins in 1826. At that time, according to the author, the students must study French in Fourth and Fifth grade for three hours a week to graduate. Later, in 1842, it was included French as a facultative subject in some programs in higher education. However, from the middle of 20th century, English has been predominant as a higher status language, being considered the language for businesses and jobs, meanwhile, French has represented the language of culture. In fact, nowadays the status of English is still predominant concerning other foreign languages taught in the country.



Between 1960 and 1980, some important changes benefited French as a foreign language. As stated by González (2010), there were cultural, scientific and cooperative agreements among France and other countries that facilitated cultural exchanges, including Colombia. A noteworthy outcome of this period was the reinstatement of French as a mandatory language for high school education, which increased the demand of well-prepared teachers to share their knowledge. Until 1993, foreign languages teaching in the country had been the target of unsteady executive orders from governments. It was in 1994, with the Educational Law, when a language policy was established for the first time in the country. This law drew an unpromising panorama for the future of French. González (2010) claims that this law caused the decline of French, as English was adopted by the majority of Colombian schools. Most of the schools settled on English as the unique foreign language to be included in their curriculums, neglecting the teaching of French.

Since then, teaching and learning of French have been decentralized, there have been district agreements and projects among the French Embassy and the Ministry of Education to promote the instruction of the French language. One of them is The FranCo project - *Francais en Colombie* - which focuses on strengthening the teaching and learning of French in secondary education. Currently, there are twenty public educational institutions in Colombia and more than 3,000 students aligned with FranCo's goals (Ambassade de France en Colombie, 2021). Another program to mention involves the French Embassy and the Department of Education of Bogotá. This cooperative agreement promotes the teaching of French in public educational institutions of the district (Secretaría de Educación de Bogotá, 2020).

More recently, the MEN in alliance with the Embassy of France in Colombia have launched the Suggested Curriculum for Teaching and Learning French as a Foreign Language



(FLE) in Official Educational Institutions in Colombia, grades 9th, 10th, and 11th (MEN, 2024).

In this document, there are pointed out the objectives, purposes and curricular guidelines, conceptual bilingual and pedagogical framework, as well as a pedagogical sequence as example, that set the basis for reinserting French language in the curricula of the country.

To sum up, international collaboration on language learning has had a positive impact concerning the teaching of French in Colombia. These agreements have not only promoted the exchange of knowledge but also fostered teaching training programs to improve the quality of foreign language education. However, it is imperative to emphasize that to broaden the impact and genuinely foster linguistic diversity in education, these agreements require divulgation, application, and collaboration from the ministry, educational secretaries, national and private schools in the country.

Bilingual Teaching Practices in Colombia

In a globalized world, as it is understood in the NBP by the MEN (2006), the communicative approach is the basis for teaching English promoted by the National Government in which learners are exposed to real situations to determine their good development in the second language. However, the reality seems to be far apart from this theory and the object of many criticisms exposed in Arellano et al., 2012, as cited in Herrera (2016), in which the content continues to be given without any proper cultural contextualization.

Together with this idea, the live practice involves the individual perception that every single teacher has due to their education process and experience, but there are some common factors categorized by Rodríguez and Otálora (2018) in traditional practices that delay the learning process. New perspectives are called to the arena to re-think the common practices, and



far beyond avoiding the use of foreign methodologies and approaches to contextualize them into the real situations that can be applied in the daily lives of future Colombian learners.

Therefore, a novel socio-critical approach emerges to enrich contextual analysis and objectives. Le Gal (2019) advocates for comprehending the intricacies of Colombian reality and diversity, thereby fostering the development of students who are not only academically competitive but also with a deeper understanding of their own identity.

To conclude, bilingual teaching in Colombia has experienced considerable changes since its very beginning, allowing language teaching to be more comprehensive and inclusive, where language fosters meaningful intercultural bonds and facilitates understanding among different cultures. The current NBP aims to provide students the essential tools to interact in an interconnected and culturally diverse world, fostering a deep understanding of language, culture, and personal identity. For this study, understanding that culture and language are intertwined determine the initial land on which this research takes place. Thus, observing the teaching practices undertaken through language teaching will help researchers understand the way as languages and cultures are entangled.

Culture in Language Teaching

From the transition from the grammar translation method to the communicative language teaching method, linguists have primarily developed language acquisition theories that heavily emphasize language use from a native speaker's perspective, “their social interaction and communication within a social group using one language” (Byram, 1997, p.9), as well as from a linguistic perspective focused on sounds, words and sentences that in context convey a message (Byram, 2021; Kumaradivelu, 2006; Kramsch, 1995) and pay relatively little attention to how



speakers of other languages employ language to convey more than transactional communication in a communicative framework that suits native speaker language use only.

Language functions as a dynamic vehicle for the creation and cultural expression of social groups by inhabiting the traditions, beliefs, feelings, history, etc. It is also considered as a social practice that has to be shaped in a way that students start grasping the correlation between their native languages and the languages they are acquiring through learning (Byram, 2021; Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013). Teaching and learning a foreign language encompass more than just linguistic proficiency. It's essential to recognize the critical importance of intercultural communication in today's interconnected society and among ongoing migration trends. For Carey (1989) cited in Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) "language is a cultural act in its own right through which social groups constitute themselves"(p.13). This implies that language is not only a tool for conveying information but also as an instrument for the formation of cultural identity and social relationships. Therefore, understanding how culture can be conveyed through language instruction can make a significant impact in an increasingly interconnected and diverse world.

The curriculum orientation of the NPB frames its conceptualization of the intercultural competence as what was stated by Malik (2003, as cited in, MEN, 2021b) intercultural competence as the knowledge, skills or abilities, and attitudes that the interlocutor / intercultural mediator must possess, complemented by the values that are part of a certain society and the numerous social groups to which we belong. For the MEN (2021) it is very clear on the role the English language has in the development of an intercultural competence through the curricular guidelines; however, it lacks an epistemological position that exemplifies or guides the curricular guidelines that will advocate Colombian culture and values through teaching. Despite efforts to

conceptualize culture within language education, it is evident that existing frameworks fall short in capturing its multifaceted nature; as evidenced in the current NBP of MEN (2021) in Colombia which establishes that there must be a recognition of the legitimacy of the Colombian student in his diversity, cultural heterogeneity, geographic, and demographic status, yet it is still unclear the conceptualization considered to achieve this purpose.

Identity also deals with culture, so it needs to be clarified to better understand the intercultural perspective in teaching languages. Vasquez (2011) defines it as “both contingent and relational. In other words, who we are as humans vary according to who we are talking to, where, and for what purposes” (p.539). In the same way, Liddicoat (2008) highlights the fluctuating nature of individuals’ identities. Equally important, Kano (2000) as cited in Mejía (2006), takes identity as socially constructed, people’s understanding of who they are depends on what others think of them, and as bilinguals “inhabit” different languages and their communities, identity is shaped by different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, teaching through interculturality provides the framework needed to convey deeper messages, understanding and knowledge between people, considering their identities, heritage and own perspectives, which is what the current Bilingual education program in Colombia aims to.

From a decolonized perspective of valuing cultural identities of countries known as colonized, Walsh (2008) states that the concept of interculturality is not yet constructed, “it is something in permanent change, insurgence and construction” (p.141) since it is necessary to shift mindsets to transform from the different structures by

—suggesting an active and ongoing process of negotiation and interrelation where the unique and particular aspects do not lose their difference, but instead have the



opportunity and capacity to contribute from this difference to the creation of new understandings, coexistences, collaborations, and solidarities. (Walsh, 2008, p.147)

Teachers are now entrusted with the role of being agents of change to guide students through the pedagogical mediation of the social reality in which students are immersed in (NBP, 2016) which entails understanding the challenge of incorporating a profound understanding of culture into their practices. Therefore, interculturality becomes relevant to tackle different societal challenges that humanity faces nowadays in migration waves, intolerance, discrimination, among others; and imperative to apply to foster a deeper appreciation for the complexities of cultural dynamics that helps learners navigate diverse linguistic and cultural contexts with sensitivity and understanding.

Intercultural Practices in Bilingual Environments

Language teaching and learning are undoubtedly related to culture, since every language, from its very beginning, brings with it a social and cultural background. Intercultural practices in bilingual education have been acquiring interest for researching during the last few years. Interculturality and knowing how to teach it have been challenging aspects of teaching languages, mainly for pre-service teachers (Moya *et al.*, 2018).

Evidence of these difficulties lies in the lack of knowledge regarding the integration of cultural skills into language teaching practices, the insufficient understanding of foreign cultures within undergraduate programs, the predominant emphasis in language teaching on the acquisition of the linguistic code (Prieto and Salamanca, 2020; Ramírez and Bustamante, 2020; Truscott and Tejada, 2020). These findings emphasize the need for a broader approach to language instruction that includes interculturality and enables learners to actively participate in diverse cultural contexts.

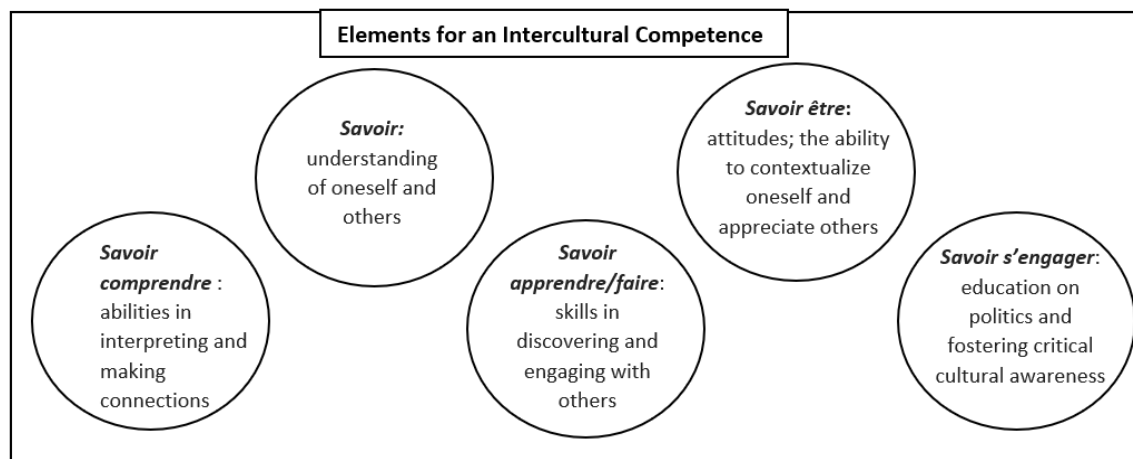


According to a research study made in three initial foreign language programs in Bogotá by Moya *et al.*, (2018) the concept of Interculturality for teacher educators is related to the contact among cultures and groups, where the comparison between cultures becomes the axis of these practices. Similar findings were provided by Galindo and Moreno (2019) in a research study conducted in three public educational institutions in Colombia. These authors exposed that, on one hand, the participating institutions associated culture with practices based on cultural knowledge from L1 and L2. On the other hand, cultural awareness is promoted by recognizing students' cultural heritage and identity and encouraging knowledge about others' cultures. In other words, this model enables the acknowledgment of cultural differences, based on the celebration of festivities from every culture involved in the process.

To have a better understanding of an intercultural perspective in language teaching and learning it is necessary to review some theorists who have made important contributions to this matter. The Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) model introduced by Byram has been a point of departure for fostering interculturality in bilingual settings, although it has been subject to new conceptualizations and critiques, reflecting its ongoing evolution from its origin in 1997 (Benhabib, 2002, as cited in Hoff, 2020; Hoff, 2020; Holiday, 2011, as cited in Hoff, 2020). ICC model focuses on various "savoirs" (knowledge) critical for fostering intercultural competence and distinguishes five aspects, synthetized as shown in figure 1.

Figure 1

Elements Intervening in the Intercultural Communicative Competence



Note: This information was adapted from the book published by Byram (1997). *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*.

This model has provided valuable insights in language learning and teaching regarding interculturality, although some scholars have argued the need for a more comprehensive and nuanced approach to intercultural communicative competence that addresses the complexities of intercultural communication in today's diverse world. Hoff (2020) recognizes that the ICC model has been influential up to this day, and that stakeholders must be aware of the model's limitations as a guideline for intercultural teaching and learning in the 21st century. Some limitations arise from an essentialist view of culture and identity, depicting them as homogenous and characterized by immutable values and beliefs within a country (Benhabib, 2002, as cited in Hoff, 2020; Holiday, 2011, as cited in Hoff, 2020).

In this respect, Liddicoat (2008) examines some ways to understand an intercultural perspective in teaching languages and highlights how important cultures are in teaching

languages by stating that “cultures shape the ways language is structured and the ways in which language is used” (p.278). For him, students need help from teachers at understanding cultural differences between the target language from their own culture to avoid misunderstandings and creating problems. He also describes how culture has been taught as a separate skill, which is developed once speaking, reading, writing, and listening have been acquired. Instead of seeing culture as an isolated skill, “bilingual learners need to navigate between the languages and cultures they know, and they need to create identities for themselves which work in these contexts” (Liddicoat, 2008, p.279). To sum up, an intercultural perspective promotes understanding between language culture and learning language, developing students’ own culture and language awareness to later recognize others’ culture and language.

Likewise, Liddicoat and Scarino (2003, as cited by Liddicoat 2008) also contributed to this field, they provided a starting point for an intercultural pedagogy with a set of principles that are not properly intercultural, but they allow the creation of the proper environment for an intercultural perspective. As researchers, our scope to observe teaching practices evolving interculturality is grounded in these principles (see Table 1), considered as the foundation for language learning and under the epistemological approach of the master program Bilingual Learning Environments from Santo Tomás University, under the guidance and direction of one of its creators Sandra Milena Torres (Torres and Araque, 2020).

Table 1

Principles for an Intercultural Perspective in Language Learning

Principle	Description
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Active construction	It emphasizes learners' active engagement with language and culture to create meaning. Teachers foster purposeful interaction and reflection, facilitating understanding of cultural contexts and interpretation formation.
Making connections	It emphasizes the significance of interconnecting languages and cultures in language learning. It encourages learners to link new language and cultural experiences with their existing knowledge and cultural background.
Social interaction	It recognizes that learning inherently involves interaction and underscores that the primary aim of language use is engaging with others. Social interaction involves negotiating, adapting to, and understanding others' perspectives, as well as agreeing or disagreeing with them.
Reflection	It involves understanding personal thoughts, emotions, and assumptions regarding language, culture, diversity, and identity. It combines emotional and cognitive elements, contributing to comprehend the impact of diverse perspectives.
Responsibility	It involves learners' attitudes, dispositions, and values, acknowledging their role in interactions within and across languages. It includes striving for continuous self-understanding and developing intercultural sensitivity.

Note: Principles for Intercultural Language teaching and learning adapted from Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) *Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning*

As stated by Liddicoat and Scarino (2013), the principles included in table 1 “are starting points for an intercultural pedagogy, not an intercultural pedagogy itself.” (p. 59) They require implementation and improvement in pedagogical environments to develop an intercultural perspective.

Method

The following chapter sets the methodological framework of the present study. The design focuses on displaying the approach, type of research method, as well as, the participants,

and the methods of data collection. First, the researchers chose the context to study and describe which are two private institutions, one located in Bogotá and the other one in Medellín, primary cities in Colombia. Secondly, they collected the data of the study through qualitative instruments such as questionnaires, class observations and focus groups. Thirdly, they interpreted the data collected in each school to identify how teachers undertook interculturality in their practices, to finally report the findings to the stakeholders involved in the research.

Research Approach

For this study, the researchers used the qualitative comparative approach to guide the research. Since the purpose of this research was to determine how language teachers undertake bilingual teaching practices that involve interculturality through the subjects of English, Spanish, and French, qualitative design was best suitable for the study. For Cresswell (2017) “a qualitative approach is used as a broad explanation for behavior and attitudes, and it may be complete with variables, constructs, and hypotheses” (p. 70). Through this approach, it is intended to provide a broad explanation of how teachers in two bilingual schools undertake interculturality through the analysis of their behavior in class, and their attitudes.

The type of methodology chosen for the intent of the study is a descriptive comparative methodology. Authors such as Sampieri et.al (2014, p.92) stated that the purpose of descriptive studies is “to specify the properties, characteristics, and profiles of individuals, groups, communities, processes, objects, or any other phenomenon undergoing analysis”. Through the comparative method, it is intended to evaluate and interpret empirical results by means of a systematic procedure of comparing analysis cases (Sánchez and Murillo, 2021).

As those authors stated, the analysis, the evaluation, and the interpretation of the contexts are crucial and, so forth the researchers developed the instruments to monitor the procedures



involved in the language classes, and in this way, to determine the intercultural practices of two groups in formal education to be studied under the limits of this investigation.

Additionally, these definitions draw the path for this study, understanding this methodology as a filter through which a deep comprehension of the different ways that intercultural practices are undertaken through language teaching in bilingual institutions by describing participants' teaching practices and opinions intensively, to finally analyze the data.

According to this type of study, there are some steps followed to achieve the most authentic results, which include the selection of the context, data gathering, interpretation of the data and report the findings.

Walking along the general objective of this research, which is to determine how teachers undertake interculturality through language teaching by using the stages offered in the descriptive comparative methodology, further analysis of the data will allow the comparison and contrast of the elements identified in both institutions. To finally, report how teachers promote interculturality through their teaching practices.

As part of our study's scope, this study expects to contribute with the understanding of intercultural practices, a competency that must be developed in the students to gain a more conscious language learning in diverse bilingual environments. This involves a higher level of language proficiency that is divergent, analytical, and contextually meaningful. The goal is to seek more benefits around the cultural knowledge not only focused on the linguistic purpose but also in a more meaningful way. By the end of this research, we looked for supporting the contexts chosen to complement their visions of bilingualism by framing them, and the teachers' practices, through the elements they could consider to integrate interculturality in their curriculum and practices.

Participants of the Study

This study involved the selection of two national educational institutions from the private sector, sharing similar characteristics. School A is located in Bogotá while School B is situated in Medellín. These institutions include the teaching of both English and French as foreign languages in their curriculums at different levels of education. School A and B have common traits concerning the teaching of foreign languages, both count on national teaching staff and about 50 percent of the subjects included in their curriculums are developed through English.

Even though these institutions are not yet certified as National Bilingual Schools, both are adjusting their educational programs to accomplish the Ministry of Education requirements to reach this goal. To do this, both schools are preparing their students to achieve a B2 level of English proficiency in grade 11th. Regarding the teaching of French, School A includes it as a foreign language from 4th to 8th grade, meanwhile, institution B teaches this language from 5th grade to 11th grade, while teaching English as a second language is undertaken from nursery level for both institutions.

The participants in this study consist of six high school language teachers, specializing in French, Spanish, and English. According to the methodology of comparative descriptive study, observing and analyzing teaching practices in different contexts enabled researchers to identify differences and commonalities, which could subsequently translate into the enhancement of intercultural practice development processes.

Selection Criteria

The process of selecting the participants who made up the sample allowed the researchers to explore in depth the intercultural practices carried out in School A and B, in languages classes. In that sense, the procedure for collecting data focused on the purposive sampling, as stated by

Creswell (2009), because “that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question” (p. 166). For this reason, and as for the inclusion criteria established for this study, the selection criteria were purposive and focused on the teachers from secondary level that have undertaken intercultural practices according to their immediate supervisors. The sample size of the study is shaped as follows:

- In school A, the teachers chosen were the English teacher of 9th grade, the French teacher of 6th grade, and the Spanish teacher of 10th grade.
- In school B, the teachers chosen were the English teacher of 8th grade, the French, and the Spanish teachers of 9th grade.

The participants of the study included two teachers with 1 to 4 years of teaching experience in their subject area, one teacher with 5 to 9 years, and three teachers with 10 or more years of experience. Four teachers hold undergraduate degrees, and two have master degrees.

Methods of Data Collection

For this study and to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the subjects involved, the authors chose three different methods of collecting the data. The questionnaire, the observation, and focus groups.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a method of data collection that according to Taherdoost (2022) “it is based on a set of questions to gather data from respondents. Questions are the translated form of what researchers need for their study” (p.2). For the design of this instrument, researchers designed ten questions framed in two categories to gather information about participants’ perspectives about interculturality and their teaching practice. This instrument was distributed and completed online, enabling researchers to identify the characteristics and perspectives of



participants in the context of interculturality through language teaching. This instrument provided us with the information needed to operationalize answers to build categories in intercultural language teaching.

Observation

Observation as a method of collecting data refers “to methods of generating data which entail the researcher immersing herself or himself in a research setting so that they can experience and observe at first hand a range of dimensions in and of that setting” (Mason, 2002, p.86). Researchers observed twelve sessions, two from each participant, each lasting about fifty minutes. This method provided significant data to identify intercultural markers, as well as verbal, and non-verbal interactions among participants in three different language classes and the pedagogical approaches that teachers undertake to develop interculturality. The identification and analysis of these intercultural aspects through observation provided us with “meaningful knowledge cannot be generated without observation, because not all knowledge is for example articulable, recountable or constructable in an interview” (Mason, 2002, p.86).

Focus groups

According to Kitzinger (1995) “focus groups are a form of group interview that capitalizes on communication between research participants in order to generate data” (p.299). During the focus group, participants answered five questions that aimed to deepen the data gathered in the online questionnaire and the class observations on how they undertake pedagogical approaches that promote interculturality in class with greater depth. Therefore, having focus groups facilitated the interaction between the participants and the researchers to reflect on their perspectives and experiences when undertaking interculturality.

Data collection is a crucial stage for any research since it provides the information needed to further analyze and generate the output that will serve as transformational in the context in which the data was gathered.⁶ The following table shows the instruments and the techniques to be carried out throughout the research.

Table 2*Data collection instruments*

Research Objectives	Data Collection Technique	Data Collection Instrument	Purpose	Source and date and the link where the instrument is hosted.
Identify the role of teachers when undertaking interculturality through the subjects of Spanish, English and French in two bilingual schools by <u>analyzing</u> their pedagogical approaches.	Questionnaire Class observation Focus group	Questionnaire via a web form. Field notes (rubric) Moderator's Guide. According to Greenbaum (2000) researchers should consider the type of questions to be asked, the timing, the development of probes, and even the type of focus group when designing a guide. For this reason, and to delve into teachers' practices, researchers chose this framework to design the last instrument.	The choice of these techniques and instruments aimed to deeply identify the intercultural practices that teachers engage in. The questionnaire allowed us to identify information about the intercultural aspects and perspectives language teachers have about the topic, while the data collected through the field notes during the class observations was useful to determine to which those perspectives are immersed in the teachers' practices to subsequently design the instrument for the focus group.	Google form. Questionnaire (Last revision, Oct 20, 2023) Allocated in: Instrument 1 Questionnaire.pdf PDF format. Observation rubric. (Last revision, Oct 20, 2023) Allocated in: Instrument 2 Fieldnotes Class.Observation.pdf Focus group file. (approved and revised on February 29th) Instrument 3 Focus Group Semi-Structured Interview.pdf

⁶ The data was collected in Spanish since it is the language participants felt most comfortable with.



Analyze bilingual teaching practices in English, French and Spanish learning environments of two urban schools.	Observation	Class observation rubric.	For the class observation, researchers analyzed the different dimensions in which interculturality is embedded in language teaching through the proposal of Liddicoat and Scarino (2013). With this, the authors want to gather more data that provides a clearer understanding of those intercultural elements present in teachers' pedagogical practices.	PDF format. Observation rubric. (Last revision, Oct 20, 2023) Allocated in: Instrument 2 Fieldnotes Class.Observation.pdf
Establish similarities, differences, and areas of improvement in terms of promoting interculturality through language teaching in School A and School B.	Questionnaire Class observation Focus group	Questionnaire responses. Field observation notes. Interview Guide and notes. Literature review.	Through the analysis of the participants' responses, their contexts, and current literature about the development of intercultural practices in class, researchers suggested ways to tackle the barriers present in each context by contrasting and comparing with existing literature and research.	Folder with the coding maps. cluster maps, hierarchical maps, word clouds, and coding files resulting from the analysis of the questionnaire and the class observations. Appendix F

Analysis

As a general objective, the present study aimed to determine bilingual teaching practices that undertake interculturality through the subjects of Spanish, English and French in two Bilingual schools. To accomplish this goal, researchers selected a qualitative research approach and a comparative descriptive methodology to first identify those intercultural teaching aspects of each institution; next, analyze the teachers' pedagogical practices, to finally establish the strengths, weaknesses, and areas of improvement of each institution to contribute to the schools' promotion of interculturality.

The data gathering process spanned three months, involving participants responding to an online questionnaire, conducting class observations for each teacher participant, and culminating



in a focus group held at each institution. Regarding data collection and analysis, the three researchers involved in the study participated differently. According to the conceptual framework of roles of researchers by Sampieri *et al.*, (2014), two of the researchers had a moderate participation, while the third researcher became involved as a passive participant. Their roles are justified by the fact that two of the participants applied the data collection instruments, while the third researcher did not have any involvement in that stage.

For the first stage of the data collection phase, participants took about fifteen minutes to answer the online questionnaire but gathering all the answers took twenty days. The second stage was executed concurrently with the first stage but it was a lengthy procedure due to its nature. During this period, researchers observed twelve sessions, each lasting about fifty minutes. This data allowed the researchers to identify teaching practices and perspectives concerning intercultural aspects, and, at the same time, to provide more precise and useful information to induct the construction of the last instrument. The last stage involved the design and further implementation of the instrument for the focus group, whose objective was to deepen around teachers' practices and to delve into topics that foster the enhancement of participants' intercultural practices.

Data analysis was conducted under the inductive-deductive method for qualitative research, as suggested by Sampieri *et al.*, (2014) this method allowed the researchers to start the process with an open exploration of the information gathered, which suggests an inductive analysis to identify the emergent themes and make connections among them under the premise of interculturality in teaching practices. For Hatch (2002) researchers do not collect data with “null hypothesis” (p.10); the intention is to “collect as many detailed specifics from the research setting as possible, then set about the process of looking for patterns of relationship among the

specifics” (p.10). Therefore, through the inductive analysis with a thematic approach, it allowed us to establish from an initial stage of data collection, the themes that characterized bilingualism in an exercise of comparative inquiry between the two institutions under the premise mentioned before. Later, this previous data examination constituted the basis for a deductive analysis in order to make a deeper exploration and interpretation of teachers' perspectives and practices concerning intercultural aspects in the focus group.

To analyze the data, the researchers followed some steps that are explained as follows. They first collected the data of the first two instruments analyzed them by doing a line-by-line analysis of each of the participants' answers; next, they defined the themes and sub themes for the design and application of the focus group instrument; finally, they did thematic analysis of the information gathered through all instruments to identify relations and patterns across participants' responses. According to Braun & Clarke (2006) thematic analysis can be followed in 6 easy steps which are explained and contextualized as follows; become familiar with the data, researchers reread the transcripts multiple times and the rest of the instruments to get familiar with the participants responses; next, they generated the initial codes of the information collected; then, they searched for themes in the information collected; to subsequently review and define the emergent data to lately; ran all the data through a Qualitative Data Analysis Software (QDAS) called Nvivo to obtain a hierarchical map of the themes, subthemes, and emerging data and facilitate the organization of the information and its subsequent analysis. According to Opie and Brown (2019) Nvivo is a qualitative data analysis software that “it is designed to help students, academics and researchers manage and analyze their qualitative data” (p.2) to “achieve a greater depth and/or breadth of analysis than using manual approaches” (p.3).

Figure 2



Steps for Data Collection

Step 1 Design	→ Literature background about collection instruments. → Delineation of the questionnaire and class observation forms.
Step 2 Identification	→ Election of participating schools → Context information of the schools → Approval and consent forms for teachers involved
Step 3 Initial analysis & Application	→ Application of the online questionnaire → Individual class observation and collecting data → Preliminary analysis to figure out the last instrument: Focus group
Step 4 Final Analysis & Application	→ Application of the focus group regarding teachers' perception → Codification by using Nvivo and defining thematics → Analysis according to the hierarchy and topics

Through the QDSA program, the researchers could gather the number of coding references of each institution which are presented below.

Table 3

Themes and sub-themes School A and B⁷

Research question: How do teachers undertake bilingual teaching practices involving interculturality in two urban schools through the subjects of Spanish, English and French?

Main Themes	Sub-themes	Non-participant direct observation. School A and B.	School A		School B	
			Nº occurrences	Excerpts	Nº occurrences	Excerpts
Bilingual teaching practices involving interculturality.	Intercultural integration in teaching strategies.	El docente hace preguntas circulares para guiar la discusión. Invita a la reflexión y a descentrarse en sus actitudes y creencias para mirar una nueva perspectiva de un tema controvertido (con respecto a Séneca, Virgilio y Gabriel García Márquez). Non-D.Obs: Spanish class 1. School A. Appendix E	31	“me gusta mucho mostrarles el diario vivir de personas de su misma edad en otros lugares del mundo” .Quest: English teacher. "construcción del conocimiento desde la comprobación o contrastación de hipótesis” Instr. 1 Quest: Spanish teacher	40	“...ellos incluso ya conocen, cierto, como jugadores de fútbol y relacionarlos con países de África y mostrarles otras culturas, otras vivencias del francés, del idioma, otras perspectivas, otros sonidos de ese mismo idioma y cómo se mezclan ahí con las culturas locales, cierto, y cómo eso va modificando el idioma. F. group: French Teacher

⁷ Non-D.Obs: Non-direct Observation; Questionnaire: Quest; Focus Group:F. Group.

“mostrar cómo en esa comunidad de lengua se trabajan y tratan ciertos temas que nosotros como hablantes nativos de otra lengua no poseemos” **Quest: English teacher.**

Resources promoting interculturalit y.	Se evidencia la interculturalidad mediante la selección de textos de diferentes géneros literarios, de la filosofía y autores grecolatinos para construir una posición propia en temas de poder, felicidad y realidad. Non-D.Obs: Spanish class 1. School A	11	"artefactos culturales que representan esa francofonía. Foc. Group: French teacher "manejo muchos videos, donde personas nativas hablan en la lengua que se está enseñando". Quest: English teacher	27	“Me gusta mucho lo audiovisual. Videos originales de autores que para mí son súper lejanos”. F.group: English teacher. “yo usaba mucho la fotografía, usaba mucho la música, ayudaba muchísimo también, como para ir acercándose, si por ejemplo el tema era poesía, entonces empezamos con música, con líricas para poder llegar a la poesía y en esa medida pues se iba expandiendo un poco” F.group: Spanish teacher. “material auténtico que trabaja problemáticas propias de ciertos contextos de la anglofonía” Quest: English teacher.
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"El producto resultante de la interacción de la clase es el de la interacción social. Las

estudiantes deben llegar a lograr el propósito de la clase por medio de la dialógica y del construir una posición que se acerque o se distancie de lo expresado por alguna otra estudiante. **Non-D.Obs: Spanish class 1. School A**

"entrevistas, canciones, videos conectados con otras tradiciones" **Quest: French teacher**

Challenges and possibilities in intercultural bilingual education.

Constraints on intercultural promotion.

"Los franceses huelen mal
– Se visten con boina –
Siempre comen queso –
La expresión Ohlalá –
Paris la capital del amor –
La torre Eiffel, entre otros. **(Non-D.Obs: French class 1. School B**

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"las niñas generalmente tienen unas condiciones muy homogéneas, viajan a los mismos lugares, salen a los mismos lugares, vienen de contextos muy parecidos" **F.group: French teacher.**

"creo que está siendo más problema que traducir el español a las lenguas que ellas están aprendiendo, en este caso. Sobre todo... a nivel de morfosintaxis, de gramática, de semántica, ahí viene el escollo" **F.group: Spanish teacher.**

"Bueno, este campo está surgiendo ahorita mucho y está sonando mucho, pero no es algo que todo el mundo sepa o hable de

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"Muchos son los que aprendían sobre esa diferencia, sobre que el otro tiene otra manera de pensar, otra cosmogonía, ¿cierto? Otra manera de actuar. O pasaba totalmente lo contrario, terminaban reforzando sus estereotipos negativos, haciéndolos más arraigados en ellos" **F.group: French teacher.**

"Yo pienso que un lío con el currículo es que muchas veces el currículo, sobre todo en lengua, está muy centrado en componentes de sintaxis, de gramática, de fonética, y a veces no se permite como expandir el diálogo hacia otras cosas, como esa interculturalidad, como es esa comparativa" **F.group: English teacher.**

"la falta de motivación de parte de los estudiantes de encarar este tipo de problemáticas". **Quest: English class teacher.**



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eso. Entonces, ahí
depende mucho de qué
tan consciente es el
profesor de lo que quiere
desarrollar en ellas de
esa forma intercultural”.

**F.group: French
teacher**

Possibilities for intercultural integration	4 “Entonces también romper un poco los estereotipos de francés es Francia, francés es París, sino África es el motor de la francofonía hoy en día”. Foc. Group: French Teacher. “parte de los mismos lineamientos y los estándares básicos de competencia exigen que eso esté fijado literalmente en un apartado de la planeación, la planeación curricular” Foc. Group: Spanish Teacher.	27 “con ese estudio de Pre Colombina es llevarlo mucho a la cultura, a que aprendieran la idea de los guayuque, aprendieran mitos de los emberas, que empezaran como a acercarse también a eso, porque realmente no podemos negar las raíces que tenemos” Foc. Group: Spanish Teacher. “les hacía una comparación, como muchas palabras de lenguas indígenas han llegado a ser parte de la cotidianidad de la lengua en español. Les hacía, digamos, la comparación con la palabra tanga, una palabra guaraní, que tenía la misma función de taparse las partes íntimas y que termina siendo la tanga de Leonisa. Entonces es muy bonito eso porque era la posibilidad
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“Un artista que estuvo con un indígena Emberá - los alumnos preguntan si en Antioquia hay indígenas Emberá - El indígena vino acá, al artista le dijo que si quería entrar a su territorio debía pintarse, porque venía de otro lado y lo podían atacar los espíritus del lugar. El artista se vinculó mucho con eso (proceso con la jagua). Yo (profe) fui a experimentar, con la tinta, y nada que pintaba hasta que miren, quedé así (muestra sus manos). Los estudiantes se muestran muy interesados en el discurso de la profesora al hablar de esta práctica cultural de los grupos indígenas y lo sucedido con el indígena y el artista. **Non-D.Obs:**
Spanish class. School B

de... Yo digo que con este tipo de cosas hay que llevar a los muchachos como popa que se incomoden para que expandan esa conciencia. Y así lo hacíamos”**Foc.**
Group: Spanish Teacher.



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Interculturality in Language(s) Teaching and Learning	Relevance of interculturalit y in language teaching and learning.	La reflexión surgida en la discusión es la de las disposiciones éticas. Las estudiantes deben reflexionar sobre su ser, su identidad, y las manifestaciones de la misma dentro de la controversia entre lo ontológico y lo óntico. Non-D.Obs: Spanish class 1. School A	9	“Yo creo que toda expresión oral o escrita y gestual la considero debe ser traducible. Yo creo que se habla de la interculturalidad. Foc. Group: Spanish Teacher.	9	“ La interculturalidad es muy importante. No se puede sacrificar la lengua. O sea, el aprendizaje lingüístico es muy importante, deben ir a la par. Así como en nuestro contexto cohabita la lengua y la cultura, deben ir a la par” Foc. Group: English Teacher.
	Teachers’ perceptions about interculturalit y	“Las estudiantes deben definir un tema, por ello se les invita a reflexionar sobre lo que es controvertido para ellas desde su posición en valores e identidad” Non- D.Obs: Spanish class. School A	21	Es el diálogo entre culturas diferentes, cómo estas dos culturas se encuentran en un espacio. Quest: French Teacher.	21	“ese otro que viene de otros lugares, que tiene su manera de pensar. Si se puede tener conocimiento de cuáles son esas referentes, esas maneras de pensar, eso va a posibilitar mucho, y va a facilitar muchas cosas” Foc. Group: English Teacher.
				“El carácter ideológico, creo que como dice ... , se aprende en cada espacio, ... insisto yo, ...académicamente la gente de cada región tiene una incidencia ideológica muy clara, muy marcada. F.group: Spanish teacher		“se promueve el respeto identitario desde un acercamiento a culturas y lenguas indígenas”. Quest: Spanish teacher

The following figures show the hierarchical maps from each context obtained after the analysis ran through NVIVO.

Figure 3

Hierarchical Map School A

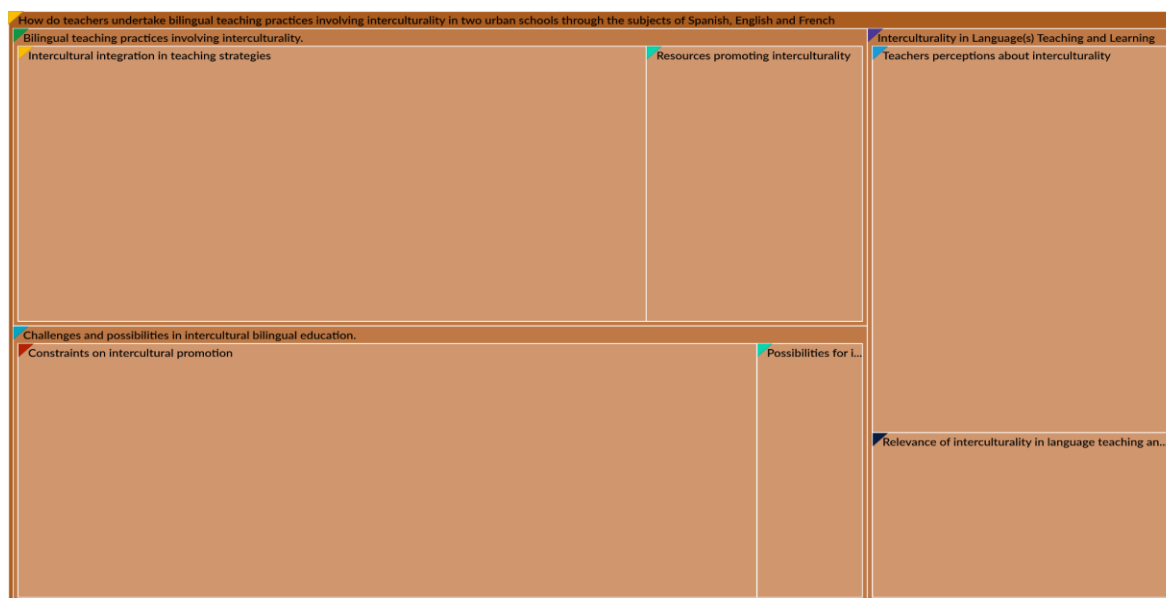
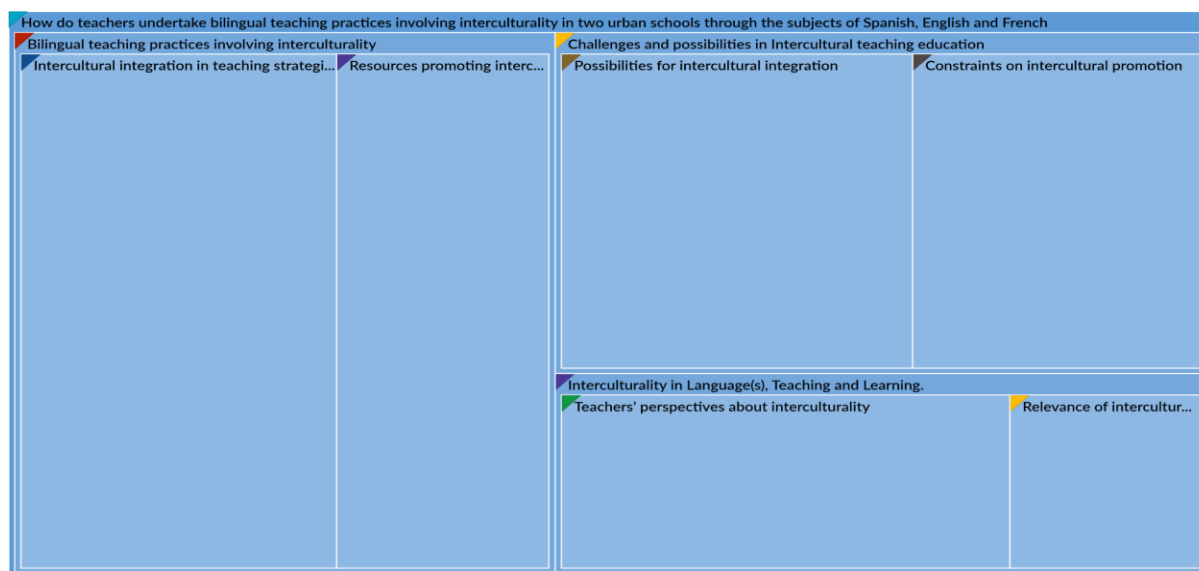


Figure 4

Hierarchical map school B





Both contexts were analyzed separately through the same themes and subthemes and displayed different hierarchies. The theme "Bilingual teaching practices involving interculturality" from both contexts had the highest number of coding references, so it was analyzed first in the chapter. Yet, according to the coding references, school A withholds from undertaking interculturality in their teaching practices. The second theme, "Challenges and Possibilities in intercultural teaching education," ranked second in the hierarchy of coding references. Notably, while participants from school A encountered more constraints, those from school B saw more possibilities. Results yielded that participants of school A have negative perceptions about the promotion of interculturality in their context due to different factors. Conversely for participants of school B, they have a favorable outlook of this topic attributing this to diverse aspects present in their discourse. (See table 2). Hence, this theme was analyzed second.

Finally, the last theme, "Interculturality in Language(s), Teaching, and Learning," included additional data related to perspectives about interculturality for school A. The results obtained in both institutions yielded that school A and B have similar coding frequency in regards to the participants' perceptions about interculturality but School B is slightly more aware of the relevance interculturality has in their practices. Therefore, this theme with the least coding references was analyzed last.

Bilingual Teaching Practices Involving Interculturality

In this theme, the purpose was to identify those methods in bilingual classrooms that teachers undertake to approach intercultural practices and how those practices can reach a global understanding of the knowledge. Revising the languages which were objects of this research, is noticeable there is a Eurocentric perspective of those teaching practices applied for teachers in



their environments, also because their conceptions about the languages, respond to

homogenization, as was introduced by one of the teachers during the focus group [Y bueno, uno habla mucho de proficiencia, como de estandarizar la lengua, pero uno siempre enseña la lengua desde una posición]. However, Mignolo and Walsh (2018) support that:

confronts and endeavors to move beyond the traditional model of higher education based “in the reason of Western Eurocentric thought.” Such model “is part of the project and will of the colonization of knowledge,” in which knowledge is thought to be outside being—living beings and the state of being itself—a position that does not understand and, worse yet, denies and negates the “being-becoming” (estar siendo) that sums up the dynamic of ancestral thought. (p. 70)

The contribution from this perspective seeks to open those standpoints that came to teacher’s minds when teaching languages avoiding the common and exclusive practices in terms of learning, approaching and acquisition.

The researchers observed the classes under the guidelines proposed by Liddicoat & Scarino (2013) which are active construction, making connections, interaction, reflection and responsibility (See appendix C). Data obtained yielded that in both schools a few participants follow some of those steps related with active construction, making connections and interaction mainly but without further reflection of the topics discussed as well as was also evident that teachers focused their practices from a grammatical point of view, were the structure, orthography and eurocentric pronunciation the highlight aspects in their practices. After thorough analysis, the information obtained through the different instruments was coded in the sub-themes previously determined by the researchers which are *intercultural integration in teaching strategies* and *resources promoting interculturality*.

Intercultural Integration in Teaching Strategies

In schools, most of the participants agreed that students must recognize their identity and at the same time feel part of a group, also reflect on this from a different and non-hegemonic perspective as it was presented in the excerpt below part of a Spanish class observation in School A *“El docente hace preguntas circulares para guiar la discusión. Invita a la reflexión y a descentrarse en sus actitudes y creencias para mirar una nueva perspectiva de un tema controvertido”*. During the spanish class observations in school A, it was evident that the resulting products of the classes were social interaction and reflection, two of the elements suggested by (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013), also seen in this excerpt *“El producto resultante de la interacción de la clase es el de la interacción social. Las estudiantes deben llegar a lograr el propósito de la clase por medio de la dialógica y del construir una posición que se acerque o se distancie de lo expresado por alguna otra estudiante”*. From what was observed, students must achieve the purpose of the class through dialogue by constructing a position that either aligns with or diverges from what another student has expressed. The Spanish teacher of this institution mentions that the approach he uses for his classes is dialogic. The participant believes in building knowledge through questions grounded in dialectical logic. For Enfalt (2019) dialogic approach is one of the best methodologies to apply when undertaking interculturality since it promotes learning and comprehension of the world in students. This approach helps teachers promote critical thinking among the group focusing on dialogue as a powerful methodology.

However, for the rest of the observations held in this school, interculturality was insufficiently undertaken. French and English classes were focused only on grammar and the development of some of the four language skills; even though the answers in other instruments mentioned different intercultural integration as in cultural knowledge as in history, routines and



traditions, etc. This is aligned with how these teachers see themselves as teachers; through the questionnaire, both mentioned that they like developing the four skills of a language in class. In conclusion, it is through mother tongue that students in this school are guided through an intercultural understanding, not through foreign languages, according to what was observed in the classes and obtained through the questionnaire and the focus group.

In contrast, school B has higher coding references in this sub-theme. Teachers of this institution, mostly the Spanish teacher, apply the elements for intercultural implementation in their classes. For this teacher, constructivism is her way of approaching her classes and metatextuality is an element she considers to enrich her lessons. This participant mentioned several examples of how she has managed and implemented interculturality, and most of them include contrastive and reflective practices that promote understanding and reflection among different ways of living, thinking, and knowing from other cultures. The other participants, specially, the French teacher, undertake interculturality by pointing out stereotypes and perceptions of different cultures, especially French culture.

During the same stage evidence shows a similar practice when teachers are motivating students to think in perceptions and stereotypes that define some Spanish, French, and English cultures because they mentioned that intercultural practice is managed through the contrast of perceptions and preconceptions between English speaking countries, like India, French and Colombian culture, the next excerpt model the previous idea “*les permitió identificar diferencias entre países, costumbres, culturas, tradiciones, etcétera, y también de la lengua*”. Through these inputs, teachers motivate the debate about identity and what defines them. Teachers undertake that to feel part of a group is to learn how to build up an identity in a group based on others' experiences as part of the interculturality and that is exactly what Bakhtin (1984) as cited in



Einfalt (2019) promotes the “concept of dialogism involves learning and understanding the world through a process of interacting with other people” (p. 50). In this line, there is emerging data concerning the *management and implementation of the intercultural component in the class* and the *contrastive cultural practices based on cultural knowledge*.

Moving forward to the findings during the focus group, teachers from school A expressed the importance of linguistic knowledge and culture, understood from an eurocentric standpoint, relevant to comprehend how to to gain proficiency in the languages through them. The following excerpt gives us an overview about what cultures are important for those teachers, “*algo también muy interesante es que, se habla de dos dialectos, el americano y el británico. Entonces, eso también marca un espacio de interculturalidad interesante para los estudiantes porque parten de lo que conocen de cada uno de los dialectos, pero también deben diferenciarlos, diferenciar diferentes usos, contextos, expresiones, y quizás se parte también un poco del español*”. Mignolo and Walsh (2018) previously have been put forward the lack of comprehension about intercultural practices when teaching languages:

Made evident here is the difficulty in understanding and accepting the precepts and praxis of interculturality as a decolonial project, including epistemic interculturality, that is, the intercultural co-construction of diverse epistemologies and cosmologies in which knowledge, as philosophy, is never complete but always “in construction.” (p.72).

There is an important field to be explored about how to manage more inclusive approaches regarding languages around language acquisition. Also, from every learning environment students cannot be reduced to a single perspective in a multicultural context. For the researchers, a decolonialized perspective is the basis of a new analysis and an urgent measure to remark on self-recognition and identity in culturally diverse countries such as Colombia.



As Einfalt (2019) mentioned “dialogism can be understood as a process of learning through social interaction, by constructing and negotiating meaning through the use of language” (p. 51). In school B teachers also used the previous practice to advance towards the culture comprehension in different languages searching the paths for both intercultural learning and linguistic learning. In this school, there is interesting data about social interaction as an opportunity to approach intercultural practices in a learning environment, mostly evident in Spanish classes, with fewer occurrences in French classes, and almost no occurrences in English classes. Finally, here is the confirmation of those contrastive cultural practices based on cultural knowledge.

Resources Promoting Interculturality

Regarding this sub-theme, participants of both schools consider that there are resources which help them to approach interculturality in their classes and to connect with colleagues on a different level and to call their attention into cultural aspects based on literature and audio-visual resources. Since we are immersed in 21st century skills, promoting tech means to have another perspective of the world and this will help students be conscious about the diversity around them as it is supported by González and Ramírez (2022) “to apply the components of Education recommends going beyond developing thinking in the classroom developing students’ soft skills through emotional management, and creating moral dilemmas.” (p. 3).

As an illustration of these statements, teachers in schools A and B mentioned literature as the main resource to guide students into a different context that allows them to be in a selfless position, as is drawn in the next excerpt, “*expandir la conciencia a través del estudio literario. Uno podría incluso llevar a que el estudiante entienda que lo que ha aprendido desde su proceso de educación cultural, inmerso en una sociedad como tal, no es lo único que hay. Entonces*



permite empezar a ampliar otras perspectivas, no necesariamente desde un idioma, sino justamente en profundizar dentro del idioma” participants in both schools consider that to present other realities motivate dialogical pedagogy and in this way a social interaction with cultural aspects involved. It is evident through the class observations and focus group responses how Spanish teachers undertake interculturality through contemporary literature and a constant reflection of going back and forth with the main idea and the layers present in the book to let students reflect on their identities and imagine themselves as part of the book universe.

Probably, the most remarkable about the other audiovisual resources used during the class, is the cultural perspective led by teachers who find in these sources the opportunity to show to their students’ cultural practices around the globe using as a vehicle the language that is being taught. Participants pointed out the use of different resources to approach interculturality in their classes. Most of their responses included audio-visual resources, photographs, cultural artifacts, and literary devices, such as, the simile and the metaphor. A participant mentioned that it is not the resource but the purpose of it.

Challenges and Possibilities to Promote Interculturality in Bilingual Education.

According to the data obtained, it was evident that participants from each institution have juxtaposed positions regarding the promotion of interculturality in their particular contexts in dissimilar levels, tones and perspectives. The data that emerged for this theme as constraints are closely related to the students’ context, curriculum, language and context, and language and culture. Some excerpts, despite not having many references, are seen as relevant for the research: they pertain to the marketization of languages for mercantilist purposes and students’ identity. As possibilities, the following data emerged: curriculum flexibility to promote interculturality, opportunities for cultural integration through decolonizing languages, the use of

mother tongue to promote understanding, and teachers' acknowledgement of interculturality in language teaching practices.

Constraints on Intercultural Promotion

The data obtained from both institutions yielded that participants of school A identify more constraints than participants of school B. Throughout the analysis, participants have juxtaposed positions about different elements related to interculturality. However, all the participants concurred that the students' context underlie different constraints that are described and analyzed as follows.

Participants of school A consider the student community to be homogeneous, making it difficult for them to show differences in their classes. There have been recent studies about the standardization of teaching practices and a homogenized view of students from different authors (Gomez-Gomez, 2023; Moya et al. 2019) their contributions have posited the importance of promoting a more inclusive visions of diversity in language teaching and pedagogy, and educational programs, in general. This way, students are most likely to feel seen, heard and valued in their learning environments.

Another constraint related to the students' context is the lack of motivation. For school B participants, students lack sympathy and motivation for intercultural matters and face some reluctance when this topic is being addressed, as evidenced in this affirmation; *“el reto más importante siempre son los estudiantes, los chicos y las chicas. Porque siempre hay como una barrera, y el que quiere recibir, lo recibe y no”*. This difficulty is addressed by different authors (Bauman, 2007; Camusso, 2019) about the urgency of enticing students to think critically and navigate through the challenges liquid modernity brings to education nowadays and to what Perez Llerena (2021) pointed out about the challenges English teachers face in their classes.



Moreover, these participants face cultural misconceptions and negative comments about people from different cultures, as evidenced by class observations and focus group responses. Recent research literature depicts that language teachers, especially English teachers, have to deal with stereotypes and cultural misconceptions in language classes with an intercultural component (Faustino and Patiño, 2021; Hossain, 2024; Moya et.al, 2019) Therefore, teachers need to have the training to tackle those challenges by guiding the discussion and reflections of the lesson to a deeper level.

Finally, data showed that for participants of school B, students' lack of self-awareness can hinder their comprehension of intercultural issues, which rely on appreciating diversity and acknowledging one's own identity. Truscott (2006) pointed this out when she stated that when undertaking interculturality “identities are not static objects which can be lost and found” (p.160). In this case, identity is not something that is either possessed or not possessed. It is something under construction since students are going through the journey of recognizing themselves and this process is different for everyone.

Another constraint related to the promotion of interculturality is the participants' view about the integration of the language in a context. Participants of school A have a perspective of language as a system with tints of language as a discourse. Through different authors in contemporary teaching and learning theorists and practitioners, language as a system is studying how particular sounds put together, become larger units of meaning on its own; and language as a discourse, as a way to use language structure in a particular context (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). These participants stated that language learning, in this case Spanish and English, are embedded in the context that are strictly related to the dialectal variations of the language user (Spanish in the South and American and British dialectal variations, see appendix F). For them, being



interculturally competent may not be as significant as the linguistic intricacies that language users encounter because the problem lies on how to translate Spanish to other cultures and vice versa. For them, dialectal variables aren't teachable; students encounter obstacles when immersed in such situations. Culture is only attainable through immersion. Therefore, the importance of embracing post-method language teaching practices that trace a circular line around language and meaningful use to shift the mindset into a less linguistic one (Al-Kadi, 2020; Arikan, 2006; Gonzalez-Blanco, 2024; Kamaradivelu, 2006).

For Byram (2021) it is not possible that students obtain all the knowledge from the different cultures and identities that they can encounter; but certainly for him, teachers have to find ways through strategies aiming to compare, contrast and cope with situations that students may encounter is what can be done to develop a higher sense of diversity in the world; although, the geographical difference and the social proximity between speakers of the same language, there also can be shared meanings. The teaching and learning of languages are still transitioning from the linguistic perspective of the language to a post-method perspective more relevant for language use.

As stated before, participants from school A understand languages as systems that work separately. For them, there are notable differences between English and Spanish regarding structure, conciseness, and punctuations that influence student writing style. They identified translation as a challenge, especially from other languages to Spanish due to the richness in vocabulary Spanish has compared to English' concreteness. They also recognize the complexity of learning both English and Spanish simultaneously, leading to mixing and conflicts in writing. Several authors have pointed out how each student's language and culture are inevitably bound to the outcome of integrating language and culture in their own process of making meaning and



interpretation and the way “culture is linked to language in three major ways, semiotically, linguistically, discursively” (Kramsch, 2014, p.37; Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013). Byram (1997, 2021) highlighted that it is through the act of comparing and contrasting that students can navigate between multicultural settings in a respectful way. Therefore, any language teacher teaching in a bilingual environment should expect a mixed outcome for any speaking or writing task since it is the dominant language of the student that is going to frame the language acquisition.

Another constraint identified was the different levels of acknowledgement about interculturality, as well as some preconceptions about the topic, participants of school A have. A participant mentioned that teachers are the ones to decide to which depth is interculturality going to be implicit or explicitly implemented in the classroom as mentioned in the following excerpt “*Bueno, este campo está surgiendo ahorita mucho y está sonando mucho, pero no es algo que todo el mundo sepa o hable de eso. Entonces, ahí depende mucho de qué tan consciente es el profesor de lo que quiere desarrollar en ellas de esa forma intercultural*”. Therefore, for them, the development of interculturality is something that pertains not only to the teachers’ agency and the depth of their engagement, but also to the level of awareness the teachers’ community has about the topic. Different Colombian authors have pointed out in several research the importance of teachers cultivating their critical thinking and updating their practices that help their students to develop the abilities needed for the society nowadays (Truscott, 2006, 2016, 2022), in this case, the intercultural competence.

Curriculum is also a constraint participants of both schools identified. Both contexts have perceptions that language and culture are not fully integrated in the school curriculum because, for them, it is more focused on linguistics. Hence, the “linguistic focus” of the English, French



and Spanish curriculum hinders the total inclusion of interculturality in their practices. Additionally, the French teacher of school B expressed that the school does not have a clear objective for the development of French in the school, since students do not acknowledge the importance of the subject for their lives and see any intercultural practice in the language as meaningless. Therefore, for Byram (1997, 2021) the syllabi in which foreign language teaching should be built on needs to have deeper and further linguistic realizations of politeness considering the way in which others live, speak and write. Curriculum is the map to achieve educational goals. Languages taught in any institution must be integrated with the vision for learning the language in the country and the reason to consider its learning in the school. Hence, schools need to integrate and adjust to their own context the new suggested curriculum for French instruction (MEN, 2024)

Finally, a participant of school A considered another challenge in their context to be related to the commercial plans present in education today. This comment was only expressed once but it is important to delve into it. For him, “*los planes mercantiles, el idioma como mercancía, deja de ser el derecho a la cultura*”. This participant shedded a light to *de facto* practices that are affecting the objectives of language use. By mercantilist plans, this participant pointed out what Castro and Lopez (2020) described in their article called “*About the commodification of education*” in which they mention that “it is an alienating process that undermines the social and cultural processes of a society, while simultaneously hindering and preventing the transformation of human development. By attempting to sell services, it minimizes the construction of autonomous and critical thinking. (p.182)⁸. For this participant, seeing language as a commodity that only can be attained through privatization of education,

⁸ Translation from the authors.



hinders the ulterior purpose of language use, in this case, promoting cultural rights because language and culture are intertwined.

Possibilities for Intercultural Integration

Through the analysis of data collected, researchers identified possibilities for the integration of interculturality through the participants' responses. For School A, possibilities are less represented in their responses than for participants of school B (see table 2); however, they pointed out ways to undertake interculturality in their practices. These possibilities are related to the school context, opportunities for cultural integration through decolonizing languages, the use of mother tongue to promote understanding and finally, teachers' acknowledgement of interculturality in language teaching practices.

Data indicates that participants of school A and B work in contexts that allow them to integrate different methods into their practices. According to one participant interculturality-related values like respect for difference, respect, and empathy have to be integrated in the planning because it is a curricular guideline and part of the bilingualism approach for Spanish and Foreign Languages learning, while others noted how fellow teachers have also integrated such aspects into their teaching practices (see appendix F). As for school B, participants expressed that the school's vision and pedagogical approach afford them the freedom to integrate interculturality into their practices, granting them pedagogical autonomy. However, this perception contrasts with the curriculum perspective they identified as a constraint which is understood as a constraint in policy but not in the delivery of the classes.

An interesting aspect revealed by the data is the different levels of awareness among teachers regarding the decolonization of languages for all participants. The possibilities emerged from both contexts regarding decoloniality in two different perspectives point out the importance

of applying a more meaningful approach to language use. Participants have found that showing what is different from the cultural roots, allows them to develop a more comprehensive scope of what is inherent to culture. The frequency of coding was certainly lower for school A than for school B; nonetheless, data showed that for participants of School A, a way to decolonize language teaching is by broadening students' scope about culture and languages spoken not only in the hegemonic countries but in the colonized ones. For school B participants, the scope of this matter is higher. They also indicated attempting to discover alternative ways of life by incorporating values and cultures that are typically not acknowledged as dominant. It was also evident how the Spanish teacher integrates decolonization through the development of awareness of the indigenous roots Colombians have by means of Latin American literature, art and reflexive exercises. In this context, there is a strong understanding of promoting interculturality from a decolonized perspective and to what Walsh (2008) stated about decoloniality of knowledge and to find ways to retreat from Eurocentric epistemology in school settings; through the application of strategies that draw a line from coloniality, and through decolonial pedagogies that promote ways of thinking and understanding oriented towards acknowledging other types of possibilities.

Another potentiality recognized was a notably different narrative and teaching strategies presented by English and French teachers at school B regarding the utilization of Spanish in their methodologies. They consider using students' native language (Spanish) as a possibility to pursue meaningful intercultural interactions with students in class. Through class observations and focus group responses, it became clear that English and French teachers at school B frequently utilize students' mother tongue to explain concepts and facilitate interaction. For instance, the French teacher employed Spanish to clarify instructions, presented a video with

Spanish audio, and encouraged the use of both French and Spanish in writing activities to help students with their comprehension. Similarly, the English teacher, when recalling an intercultural experience during the focus group, found that when teaching seasons in English, the use of Spanish reduced barriers to understanding, as he reflected during interactions with two different student groups. This type of interventions is a type of cultural filter which for House (2015, p.68, as cited in Karismawati, *et al.*, 2020, p.309) a cultural filter is applied when the translator tries to capture “socio-cultural differences in expectation norms and stylistic conventions between the source and target linguistic-cultural communities”

Finally, in this line of possibilities, teachers’ acknowledgement of interculturality in language teaching practices was certainly higher for participants of school B than for school A. They embrace the topic of interculturality to see others from different perspectives, imagine alternative scenarios, and become more familiar with their own culture, believing it enriches lives and contributes to growth and knowledge, emphasizing diverse perspectives in the classroom. For Ortega *et.al.*, (2016) the reason for constructing a decolonial pedagogy lies on the premise that through education, society has to recognize that they have excluded afro descendants and indigenous groups' ways of living, teaching, learning from traditional knowledge. Therefore, it is through a decolonial pedagogy of resistance and (re)existence (Mignolo and Walsh, 2018) teachers can “displace Western rationality as the only framework and possibility of existence, analysis, and thought” (p.17) to start recalling, reimagining, and resignifying South American indigenous and black heritage. As one of the participants stated, it is an identity reaffirmation.

Interculturality in Language(s), Teaching and Learning.



Several scholars have acknowledged the complexity of interculturality in teaching languages (Liddicoat and Scarino (2013), as cited in Truscott and Sánchez, 2020; Moya et al., 2018; Truscott and Sánchez, 2020), additionally; it is imperative to acknowledge the sociocultural diversity present in educational settings within our country (Rodríguez and Araque, 2020), thus making interculturality a more nuanced and challenging subject to navigate. This recognition of the multifaceted nature of interculturality sets the stage for understanding teachers' insights into the intercultural aspects and perspectives regarding teaching and learning through the online questionnaire and the focus group. Teachers' understandings of interculturality mirrored its complexity and diversity, as there was no single definition nor a practice that adequately encapsulated its essence. Participants from both schools show a clear understanding of aspects related to interculturality, but Spanish teachers' view reflected a wider awareness towards teaching and learning interculturality, meanwhile English and French teachers' responses show more limited perceptions about it. This divergence in teachers' perspectives reflects the complexity and diversity of interculturality in the educational context, highlighting the need to address these differences in the training and professional development of teachers.

Taking into account the earlier distinction, participants' responses reveal two key dimensions: *Teachers' cultural awareness and perspectives*, as well as *Relevance of interculturality in language teaching and learning*.

Teachers' Cultural Awareness and Perspectives

Some teachers from both contexts grasped interculturality as a dialogical space among different cultures and the way as these cultures meet in a common space. A dialogical space encompasses how teachers facilitate students' engagement and integrate language within their

classrooms, fostering understanding about students' perspectives, their utilization of language to convey ideas, and how these interactions define and influence their worldview, as it is revealed in the following excerpt: *“Es el diálogo entre culturas diferentes, cómo estas dos culturas se encuentran en un espacio”* (English teacher, School A). The dialogical space referenced by teachers served as the primary focus observed by Einfalt in her study on the development of intercultural competence, wherein the fostering of dialogic interaction was found to align with the cultivation of various aspects of intercultural competence.

In this respect, according to Matsuo (2019, as cited in Einfalt, 2019), ongoing dialogue, across various periods and in diverse settings, expressions, language, and their interpretations become varied. Essentially, individuals construct meaning by actively participating in exchanges with others, whether by sharing, agreeing, or disagreeing with different viewpoints, ultimately shaping their own understandings and perspectives. Not all the participant' teachers related interculturality with a dialogical space; nevertheless, as it was shown above, it is a great possibility to start cultivating respect, cultural awareness and recognition of one's own identity, nevertheless, to achieve this, teachers must create immersive and thought-provoking scenarios that allow individuals to perceive themselves in novel ways, as it is suggested by Einfalt (2019). In this regard, Kumaravadivelu emphasizes the pivotal role of teachers in implementing and developing a post-method pedagogy. He argues that through this pedagogy teachers enhance their “capacity to cultivate a reflective stance towards their own teaching” (2006, p. 178).

Additionally, other teachers viewed interculturality as an opportunity for communication and understanding of group differences, which inherently involves self-recognition. Teachers' perceptions suggest that interculturality fosters a deep appreciation for diversity and the authentic acknowledgment of individual identities. In this respect, Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) state that



“a solid approach to culture in language education should integrate a range of different understandings of culture” (p. 21). Teachers recognize the significance of embracing diversity as a means to broaden understanding, as reflected in the following remark: “*el respeto también, pero tratar de enlazarlo con el valor de la diferencia, o sea, que lo diferente es lo que posibilita el cambio, el crecimiento*” (Spanish teacher from school B). Interculturality is, according to teachers’ perspectives, a meaningful space where students’ background, languages, and individual identities are integrated into the teaching and learning process.

Finally, it is necessary to highlight some observations from Teachers at School A, who hold that there exists an ideological aspect embedded in teaching and learning, nevertheless it was not observed among participants from School B. They consider language teaching to adopt an ideological stance in order to be displayed. Their perspectives align with Bernstein et al. findings (2023), who state that teachers' language ideologies exert a considerable influence on their perspectives on language usage and behaviors, ultimately guiding their choices regarding language teaching and communication. According to the authors, various factors, such as personal language background, geographic location, community context, educational background, teaching experience, and personal beliefs, can influence educators' language ideologies. Teachers also referred to the ideological characteristics that are shaped by regional differences and academic influences, which is evidence in the next quote:

“El carácter ideológico, creo que como dice P, se aprende en cada espacio, o sea, no es lo mismo hablar español en Lima que en Buenos Aires, que en Bogotá, que en Asunción, que en La Paz, que en Quito, que en Caracas, no es lo mismo. Por más español que sea, insisto yo, incluso el carácter académico, académicamente la gente de cada región tiene una incidencia ideológica muy clara, muy marcada” (Spanish teacher, School A).

It denotes the ideological aspect or orientation that individuals acquire based on their geographical location and educational background, which inherently permeates teachers' practices.

Relevance of Interculturality in Language Teaching and Learning

Interculturality in the educational context acquires meaning and importance due to, in essence, interculturality seeks to break with the hegemonic history of a dominant culture and other subordinate ones, thus reinforcing traditionally excluded identities to build, in everyday life, a coexistence of respect and legitimacy among all groups of society (Walsh, 1998, as cited in Walsh, 2005). Thus, this theme suggests teachers' perspectives regarding the importance of incorporating an intercultural component into their teaching and learning practices. Data collected suggest two emerging topics related to a Motivational component to undertake interculturality, on one hand, and Language usage and its linguistic emphasis, on the other.

From one perspective, teachers from School B refer to Interculturality as a motivational aspect to engage students in the language learning, as this excerpt highlights: *“para mí esa parte de la interculturalidad es como el gancho principal que uno puede tener con los estudiantes para traerlos a la lengua.”* (French teacher, School B). Some scholars acknowledge that motivation encompasses not only the cognitive and affective aspects of learning, such as effort exertion and positive attitudes, but also the sociocultural dimension, including the learner's desire for affiliation with the target language community (Gardner, 1999, Sanz et al. 2019, as cited in Ferrando, 2023). Teachers from School B find it particularly captivating that intercultural practices are well-received by students. However, participants from School A, while acknowledging the importance of intercultural practices and viewing them as essential in language teaching, find the integration of interculturality into teaching practices to be annoying.



The French teacher states that the intercultural component in teaching languages could be implicit or explicit, accordingly to the teacher, but it could be irritating if they make explicit cultural differences and values, as it is stated in the next excerpt:

(French teacher, School A)

Previous responses from teachers at both schools lead us to consider the level of awareness towards interculturality as a determining factor in whether to include such practices in language teaching or not. According to Walsh (2005), Interculturality constructs a different societal imaginary, allowing for the consideration and creation of conditions for a distinct social power, as well as a different condition, both of knowledge and existence, aiming towards decoloniality. In accordance with Walsh's previous framework, it is evident that teachers play a pivotal role in effecting social change through intercultural education. It is essential for educators to engage in reflection and gain a profound understanding of contemporary global realities. This understanding is imperative for mitigating the lack of tolerance and empathy towards individuals belonging to marginalized groups. In brief, as it was observed in responses from above, the motivational component related to the implementation of intercultural practices, could serve as a starting point for both institutions to enhance student engagement in language teaching and learning.

On the other hand, teachers' perceptions about interculturality deal with language usage and its linguistic emphasis. They believe that interculturality is inherently present in every language, as it is embedded within the grammatical, semantic, and morphosyntactic context, suggesting that cultural elements are intricately intertwined with language structure, meaning, and syntax. They consider language to be comprehensible due to the common code embedded within it, which, for them, represents interculturality. Teachers' viewpoints agree with Kramsch's



(2013) symbolic system, which considers that language extends beyond mere linguistic

structures to become an essential element in the formation and communication of culture.

Without language and other symbolic constructs, cultural elements would lack significance and unity. Additionally, some teachers view language teaching as more than just imparting grammar rules; it involves inculcating a specific perspective on understanding and organizing the world, which is related to interculturality.

Conclusions

The present research aimed to determine how teachers undertake interculturality in two bilingual schools through the subjects of English, Spanish and French. The results yielded a disparity among schools in the undertaking of interculturality in their teaching practices, with interculturality through foreign languages being the least undertaken in both contexts, indicating a gap from the current national bilingualism policy. There is an evident oversimplification of interculturality for some participants, while others have a higher understanding and promotion of the topic in their discourse and their teaching practices which was also addressed by (Álvarez, 2010; Galindo and Moreno, 2019; Hossain, 2024; Truscott and Fonseca, 2009; Truscott and Tejada, 2019).

Integrating an intercultural approach aligned with a linguistic focus of language, teachers, students and the school community can benefit from the competences this type of education brings to the table. The reconfiguration of the bilingualism policies within each institution, as well as the integration of the intercultural approach into the micro curriculum could foster a wide range of language use, meaning and interpretation (MEN, 2021; Truscott and Tejada 2019) by addressing the complexities of a turbulent world abundant with societal challenges, contributing to building a more inclusive, empathetic, and reflective society.

Professional identity transformations are urgent and can take place when acknowledging the importance of including the intercultural approach in school settings and in higher education programs. There is a need for professional transformation requiring a mindset shift to include more meaningful interactions through language use that is responsive to current educational settings and societal complexities, as evidenced in (Llorente et.al, 2024; Truscott and Tejada, 2020). Moreover, to promote a deeper alignment between teachers' practices and their beliefs about interculturality, it is essential to encourage ongoing reflection. By reflecting on their experiences and integrating them into their teaching strategies, teachers can more effectively incorporate intercultural principles into their classrooms, fostering a more inclusive and culturally aware educational environment.

Considering poststructuralist teaching methodologies such as translanguageing, dialogic approaches, and language as a social practice to pursue intercultural use of languages in diverse contexts could promote more flexible strategies for language learning and use. For Zavala (2018) literature displays that language as a social practice is understood as the use of different semiotic resources when communicating through named languages and should not be justified which for Garcia and Li (2016) is considered as translanguageing. Also, Einfalt (2019) proposes the use of the pedagogy of dialogism posited by Bakhtin to promote intercultural competence by using the language to construct and negotiate meaning, an important resource used by languages teachers as has been evidenced in the present research.

5.1 Limitations and Recommendations

It is important to highlight some limitations concerning data collection. Due to end-of-year closures and various school-related activities, class observations in the English environment



for School A and the French environment for School B required extension. The year-end dynamics prevented the adequate documentation of intercultural aspects within these subjects.

During the period in which the study was established, with the results and achievements, a second and third stage are proposed. The study was limited to two contexts and it could be broadened to a more representative scope. Additionally, the number of classes observed should be higher in order to have a more systematic data gathering. It is important to consider complementing focus group responses with individual interviews to other stakeholders.

Further Research

Further research about interculturality could be addressed through another methodology, with more participants, in order to broaden teachers' perspectives about interculturality in Colombia which requires more time for the analysis. Moreover, it can be taken into account how teachers who teach different languages addressed interculturality in their teaching practices and how these practices are aligned with their perspectives. Also, it can be considered students' perspectives concerning what they have learned about interculturality. Additionally, this type of study could be useful for the integration of a mandatory course about interculturality in more undergraduate and postgraduate programs in the country. Also, conduct a subsequent study between schools that rank at the top of the rankings and national bilingual schools to compare them in terms of the application of interculturality. Finally, action research could be conducted in each institution by applying strategies such as teacher training about interculturality from a Colombian perspective; as well as to raise awareness about the different authors that created methodological frameworks on how to integrate interculturality in language teaching, didactic strategies, and curriculum; and by including the school community in forums about raising intercultural awareness.

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For any research project, it is necessary to compile some consents from the institutions participating in the research project, as well as, authorizations from the direct participants of the study. The appendixes with the consents and the instruments are specified as follows

[APPENDIX A](#) Consents from the schools and the participants, [APPENDIX B](#)· First instrument (online questionnaire) and data collected, [APPENDIX C](#)· Second instrument (class observation guide), [APPENDIX D](#) Third instrument (semi-structured interview for the focus group), [APPENDIX E](#) data collection evidence, and [APPENDIX F](#) annex of evidence of data analysis in specialized software.