

**ACCENT AS PART OF CULTURAL IDENTITY: ANALYSIS OF THE  
INTERACTION IN L2 (ENGLISH AND FRENCH) AMONG STUDENTS AND  
PROFESSORS OF 4TH AND 6TH SEMESTER IN A LANGUAGES PROGRAM AT  
THE UNIVERSITY OF QUINDÍO**

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***Dedictory***

*To all L2 speakers who had been stereotyped by their accented speech.*

### ***Acknowledgements***

*We would like to express our sincere gratitude to our mentor who guided us all the way till the end. We would also like to thank the professors and students who participated in this project and to whom we owe the completion of this study.*

## **Abstract**

This qualitative research provides insight into how the mother tongue's accent present in the L2 oral production entails the culture of the speaker and how this, in turn, is a sign of the subject's identity. This project was carried out within a languages program at the University of Quindío. Two groups from 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> semester were observed at four different times to achieve the purpose of the study. The interviewed population consisted of four professors and twenty students who answered questions that inquired what their perceptions were concerning native-like accent and L2 accented speech. Likewise, the data analysis showed that L2 accented speech was a signature of the speaker's identity and worldview. It also reflected that social stereotypes regarding the mother tongue's accent in the L2 production, was seen as something undesirable and necessary to eliminate. This study concluded that although there were some subjects who considered L2 accented speech as a trait that had to be neutralized, the vast majority asserted that their mother tongue's accent was a symbol of who they were in the world.

Key words: accent, identity, culture, native-like accent, intelligibility, pronunciation.

## **Resumen**

Esta investigación cualitativa proporciona información sobre cómo el acento de la lengua materna presente en la producción oral de L2, refleja la cultura del hablante y cómo esto, a su vez, es un signo de la identidad del sujeto. Este proyecto se llevó a cabo dentro de un programa de idiomas en la Universidad del Quindío. Se observaron dos grupos del cuarto y sexto semestre en cuatro momentos diferentes para lograr el propósito del estudio. La población entrevistada estaba conformada por cuatro profesores y veinte estudiantes que respondieron preguntas que indagaban cuáles eran sus percepciones con respecto al acento nativo y el discurso acentuado en la L2. Del mismo modo, el análisis de datos mostró que el discurso acentuado era una firma de la identidad y la visión del mundo del hablante. También reflejó que los estereotipos sociales con respecto al acento de la lengua materna en la producción de L2, se consideraban como algo indeseable y necesario de eliminar. Este estudio concluyó que, aunque había algunos sujetos que consideraban que el discurso acentuado en la L2 era un rasgo que debía neutralizarse, la gran mayoría afirmó que el acento de su lengua materna era un símbolo de quiénes eran en el mundo.

Palabras clave: acento, identidad, cultura, acento nativo, inteligibilidad, pronunciación.

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## **Introduction**

Language is understood as a system composed by written and spoken signs through which members of a same culture can communicate and interact with each other; linguistic communication. In 1965, Dixon established that from the beginning of mankind, people were able to successfully transmit information without having an established language as it currently exists. Additionally, the first signs of language that humans had were based on facial expressions that led them represent certain messages; laughing to indicate amusement, shouting to indicate bitterness or happiness or raising the eyebrows to indicate surprise or doubt; non-linguistic communication.

Historically, languages have played a significant role in all societies. For instance, according to the Linguistic Society of America (2016) 7.099 languages are currently spoken in the world as a result of the cultural exchange that humans being have lived through history. Before, second language learning took place as a mean of learning another way to name the objects and to communicate with other. On the other hand, languages are currently learned with different purposes depending on the person's interest. One pattern that is maintained is that people speak two or even more languages to access to another culture and to have more job opportunities; as a result of the globalization.

Currently, the interest of learning a new language has considerably grown up because of all the benefits that it accomplishes. For instance, learning a new language reduces the risk of suffering from Alzheimer, it improves multitasking abilities, it enhances performance in other abilities, it makes a person more flexible and open to other cultures, it builds self-confidence, it

expands career potentials, and it facilitates the mother's tongue comprehension (Dixon, 1965).

Language is a tool used by most of the people to decode the world. That is why it has been a subject of study since many centuries ago because of the impact that it has in a society and the strong relationship that is found between language and culture. Therefore, when a person learns a second language is also learning a second culture as a result of the link between language use and cultural and social identity (Van Dijk, 1997). At the moment of learning a language, the L1 has a huge influence on it because it is the base that the learner has to construct ideas that will help him to successfully communicate in the L2. There is vital to clarify that the cultural and social effect will differ depending on the age and the environment in which the learning process takes place. This research will be centered in an academic context in which the learners belong to a monolingual nation; Colombia and their native tongue is neither English nor French.

In the same way, it is asserted that learning a new language means learning a new culture because it is attached to the social, academic, familiar, and occupational field. Nevertheless, it cannot be understood that being proficient in a second language involves losing or reducing the mother's tongue accent (Moyer, 2004, p. 4). Therefore, this research pretends to analyze the accent as part of the cultural identity and its interaction with L2. Thereby, some issues will be addressed in the following sections in order to clarify and understand the principal points that the present research carries out: Bilingualism, identity, culture, accent, pronunciation, reduction, proficiency, and stereotypes

## 1. Statement of the problem

The relationship between second or foreign language and learners' identity and culture has been a subject of interest for many scholars. Then, when someone learns a foreign language and shows traces of his mother tongue in his production, he is showing traits of his identity. In 2009, Lammons presented a report which aimed to show how L1 identity is seen in L2 accent, in the sense that non-native accents represent the culture of the speakers such as values and ways of expressing themselves. Therefore, it was asserted that there are various reasons to consider that cultural identification may influence accent acquisition, that is to say, that to a certain degree it involves taking on another personality (Lammons, 2009, p.6). In this manner, the teaching-learning process of a foreign language, is a matter of relationship, of cultural convergences, and identities; those of students and teachers. In this sense, to talk about culture is to talk of belonging, identity, values, and ways of being that are reflected in the manner of speaking. Then, identity refers to "a series of traits, attributes and characteristics of a subject that, in turn, are multiple, hybrid, shifting, fluid, and in conflict, resulting in a never-ending construction process" (Panker, 2013, p.392 as cited in Varghese et al, 2005, p-35). Another valuable definition of identity states that identities are "socially constructed, self-conscious, ongoing narratives that individuals perform, interpret and project in dress, bodily movements, actions and language" (Pullen, 2011, p.66).

Therefore, it can also be added that what forms an individual as a person is shaped by the language he or she speaks. Thus, this calls into scene another crucial aspect: accent, which transcends to the bilingual level taking with it the rhythm of the mother tongue, which is not strictly necessary to be left aside as to have an intelligible pronunciation in the target language.

Subsequently, accent refers to the “Loose bundle of prosodic and segmental features distributed over geographic and/or social space” (Pinker, 2013, p.390). The way a subject speaks describes him in numerous ways. It is a tell-tale sign of who they are: origins, social status, ideas, and values. Relating this with the foreign language it is very similar since it represents how the speaker relates his “first world” to the second; the foreign language and its culture.

On the other hand, a central idea that causes misunderstandings about embracing or depicting a foreign accent in the target language is intelligibility. According to Munro and Derwing (2001), intelligibility can be defined as the extent to which a speaker's message is understood by the listener. In other words, it points out the overall assessment of how well a speaker can make himself understood. This is absolutely vital because it is believed that if a subject has a strong foreign accent in the L2, then, he or she is not able to successfully communicate or being understood in the target language environment. Additionally, proficiency, according to Oxford University Press (2007) refers to the “High competence in the system of linguistic knowledge possessed by native speakers of a language.” Then, the proficiency level tends to be wrongly judged by the accent the speaker portrays in the L2. This is all related to identity and culture because accents are nuances of ideologies characterized by the people who hold them. Thereby, when a speaker in his pronunciation displays characteristics of his mother tongue, he is showing how he understands L2, and how he or she expresses ideas in a bilingual context. Likewise, perceptions of identity are often reflected in a person’s accent, that is to say, the way a person speaks represents the way he/she views him/herself in relation to both the native and target language cultures.



Accordingly, as a result of globalization, English has become an everyday matter that each person should be learning or planning to do so. For this reason, the vast majority of countries worldwide encourage their citizens to learn English in order to have better life opportunities. That is why the Colombian government implements programs such as ‘Colombia Bilingüe’ which aims to achieve good English level, first of all, at schools. Furthermore, special attention is paid to accent which tends to be confused or misunderstood with pronunciation. Normally, a subject is required to eliminate his accent in order to correctly interact in the target language. This phenomenon is called accent reduction; it is “the general desire to achieve native-like pronunciation by seeking to reduce or eliminate pronunciation patterns characteristic of the L1” (Hartshorn, 2013, p.2). However, it is interesting to note that the vast majority of people who speak English are non-native speakers, and that even more, they use the language to communicate with other non-native speakers. Ergo, this effort to eliminate accents and achieve foreign ones is a result of misconceptions respecting pronunciation. Consequently, Pullen (2011) asserts that pronunciation is the production of significant sounds in two senses: as part of a code of a language, and as used to achieve meaning in contexts of use (p.11). Then, pronunciation includes metrics such as stress, pitch, and duration but that are also permeated by the place in which the speaker resides or the society to which he or she belongs. Thus, in Colombia there are variations of English pronunciation: Vallunos, Paisas, Rolos, etc., most of which reflect their identities and cultural belonging in their accents.

In this manner, there is a bizarre pressure in Colombian classrooms for learners to acquire **a native-like pronunciation** and for teachers to have it. Nonetheless, the speaker’s identity, a central aspect to each teacher-learner of a foreign language, has been left apart and tried to

eliminate even though when it is inseparably tied up with the accent of the mother tongue. All of these are called cultural stereotypes both internal and external. They are internal because they are inside people's minds; is not good to talk with a Paisa accent, and they are external because society reinforces them; you must achieve native-like pronunciation to have a good level in the language. Conforming to Madrigal & Vargas (2012), "the concept of stereotypes can be understood as a general representation of how a given social group speaks" (p.83). The principal stereotype is that foreign accent is not acceptable in the L2, because it is not prestigious and, as stated before, it is not a sign of good level or pronunciation (Lammons, 2009, p.20).

Hence, accent reduction is ideological because it is a play of discourses and power. In Colombia, the society strives to achieve an English native-like pronunciation because it implies consumption of knowledge, technology, goods, and services available for and through English. Then, striving to achieve a native-like pronunciation leaving aside L1 accent, is a desire to identify oneself with groups that are superior socially and economically (Lammons, 2009, p21).

After having discussed assumptions of one's cultural identity reflected in the accent showed in the L2, there were designed the research questions as they follow:

## **1.1 Research Questions**

### **1.1.1 General Question.**

How does the L1 accent act as part of the speaker's cultural identity when interacting in the second language?

### **1.1.2 Specific Questions.**

To what extent does accent in L1 interfere in the interaction in L2?

To what extent does L1 accent influence oral proficiency in L2?

What perception do students and teachers have about their cultural identity and its interaction with L2?

How do social stereotypes about accent influence the L2 speaker's performance?

## **1.2 Objectives**

### **1.2.1 General Objective.**

To determine the involvement that L1 accent has in the speaker's cultural identity in the second language.

### **1.2.2 Specific Objectives.**

To identify the influence of L1 accent in L2 interaction.

To examine the influence of L1 accent in oral proficiency in L2.

To analyze students and professors perception about their cultural identity and their relationship with L2.

To analyze the effects that social stereotypes have in L2 speaker's performance.

## **2. Justification**

This research is justified by the fact that it is not necessary to reduce or eliminate the mother's tongue accent to learn and communicate successfully in the L2, due to L1 accent is part of the cultural identity of a subject. Also, any person who is learning or who is already mastering a second language would benefit greatly in countless ways. The contributions that are included in this research are the following: To recognize how important and meaningful it is for a speaker to keep or show the L1 accent in L2 production. To be aware that accent is a result of culture, thus, people should not be afraid or shy of speaking the way they do (L1 accent). To clarify the confusion that it is conventionally conceived about accent and pronunciation matter (which are completely different). To break down social stereotypes about accent many people have, which have measured “proficiency level” of each performer; learners and teachers. Besides, this research safeguards flexibility in terms of keeping or portraying native accent in the L2 oral production, as a means to overthrow classroom pressures to achieve a native-like pronunciation. Otherwise, it is fundamental to clarify that there were not found studies about accent, cultural identity and the relationship among them in the regional milieu. Hence, the depicted research is a pioneer in the field and in the regional context as well. Lastly, this study can be used to give educators and students different perspectives of what identity means and seeing accent as that inner aspect of themselves that reflects who they are, what their origin is and what it says from them.

### 3. Theoretical framework

The previous assumptions are now discussed and supported in the light of theories that will allow the reader to have a better understanding of the purposes of this study. Here it will be discussed the specific concepts on the subject of accent as part of cultural identity. This study is framed along the concepts of bilingualism, culture, cultural identity, interaction, speaking skill and accent vs. pronunciation.

#### 3.1 Bilingualism (From Sociolinguistics)

Before entering to discuss this concept it is necessary to mention that there are plenty of definitions and distinctions existing for bilingualism. As for the purposes of this study, it will be considered the approaches from sociolinguistics. To start, Blanco (1981) mentions that according to Cerdá Massó (1986), “Bilingualism consists of the ability of the speaker to use two languages interchangeably. By extension, it is said of the sociolinguistic condition by which a community uses two different languages to cover exactly the same collective and private communicative tasks”. Hence, the vast majority of bilinguals in Colombia use their L2 to accomplish communicative acts, regardless of their level of formality, within the educational environment. Furthermore, being bilingual also means that these speech acts reflect social and cultural dimensions of the speakers such as beliefs and ideologies depicted in the accent.

According to Baker (2001), it can be asserted that most bilinguals in Colombia are **Elective bilinguals** because they have chosen to learn the language in a classroom, in this case, university students and professors. Elective bilinguals are characterized by belonging to monolithic groups

such as Colombian Spanish-speakers who learn English as a second language without losing their first language. This is particularly interesting for the present study, since its target population faces discrimination for their accent in the L2, which in turn, merges with the notion of speakers as people that belong to a culture that has its values and has shaped their identity. Then, as this learning process occurs in the L1 context, showing traces of the mother tongue (accent) in the L2 performance is perfectly fine since it does not conflict with intelligibility other proficiency.

### **3.2 Culture**

Culture is naturally tight up with language and this relationship is inseparable while learning the mother tongue or a foreign language. In this manner, Kun (2013) states that:

... Culture is a system of societal rules and behavior. ... It is what people believe, how they act and interact, and the way they live, with specific traits, behaviors, attitudes, and traditions passed on through the generations of families. It is some element that closely linked with language with which it has dependent relationship. (p.197)

As Kun asserted, culture is language and vice versa, therefore, these cultural aspects represented by language are portrayed in the manner of speaking a subject depicts in his L1 and L2. In this sense, the accent one displays in the speech acts is a representation of the subject's identity, ideologies, and beliefs. Consequently, Kun (2013) says of language in terms of culture that "...The way in which people use the spoken, written, or visual medium itself creates meanings that are understandable to the group they belong to through, for example, a speaker's tone of voice, accent, conversational style, gestures, and facial expressions". Likewise, if manners, sayings, and gestures representative of a language tell where a subject comes from so does accent.

Another suitable definition for culture was proposed by Herskovits (1948) (as cited in Rangiz and Hadati, 2017):

... Culture is essentially a construct that describes the total body of belief, behavior, knowledge, sanctions, values, and goals that mark the way of life of any people. That is, though a culture may be treated by the student as capable of objective description, in the final analysis it comprises the things that people have, the things they do, and what they think.

Then, the accent in a language represents its culture which in turn, reflects the speaker's identity since it is a tell-tale of the social group to which the speaker belongs and how she/he sees the world. Thus, second language learners display their social belonging in the accent they hold in the L2 interaction. This is stated by Aydemir (2013, p.1) when he says that "Perceptions of identity are often reflected in a person's accent, in other words, the way a person speaks represents the way she/he views him/herself in relation to both the native and target language cultures". In this regard, this is mostly seen in the case of elective bilinguals who learn a language in the context of the L1 and naturally, the accent of their mother tongue transfers to the L2, showing strong bounds to their culture and therefore identity.

### **3.2.1 Cultural Identity.**

As language is understood to be the result of a socio-cultural construction, it cannot be taken as an isolated aspect far away from culture; aspect that is completely relevant in this research. Thus, Peirce (1995) argues that some second language acquisition theorists have struggled to establish the relationship between language learning and language context. Also, she takes in consideration the fact that those theorists have not settled up an accurate relationship between the



second language and the target language. In the same way, Pierce defended the idea that language is attached to culture and they cannot be analyzed in isolation. Additionally, as people communicate and interact through language, the culture and the context have a relevant role when talking about second language learning. That is why it is necessary to explore cultural identity, defined as the grouping of values, beliefs, traditions, symbols, and behaviors that interfere in a society and influence their individuals' performance, Hinkel, (1999). When a person learns a second language he is carrying with himself all the information that he already has about the world based upon his mother tongue or L1 in order to accomplish any linguistic goal or to understand the target language or L2 taking as a reference his L1.

Pierce presented that sometimes second language students are being labeled at classrooms because of the cultural background through which they behave. For this reason, in some classrooms there are found students named as the ones who do not participate, who talk a lot, who are introvert or extrovert without knowing that these are factors that have been coexisting under diverse situations that take place in the students' context and they are seen as "normal" for them. Therefore, Byram and Morgan, (1994) establishes that a language learner cannot just lay aside his cultural identity and completely adopt another one when trying to gain proficiency in L2 because his identity is part of himself and it has shaped him and constituted him as a social individual.

### **3.3 Interaction**

The concept interaction plays a relevant role in this research because it is focused on determine the level of interaction between L1 and L2. For this reason, it is vital to have a complete

prospect about what this concept means. Starting with a basic definition, on Merriam Webster dictionary, interaction is defined as mutual or reciprocal action or influence. Then, it can be understood that interaction implies to have an effect on something; in this case, the impact that this research is attempting to analyze that is the execution between the target and the native language.

On the other hand, linguistically talking, Young (2008) defines interaction in second language learning as conversational and linguistic modifications that occur in discourse and that provide with necessary linguistic input. The previous definitions present that interaction in language seeks to help the speaker to better understand L2 based on L1. Thereby, Long (1980) established that interaction in language directly affects the meaning that is understood by the speaker and the input that he receives usually during a communicative breakdown when meaning is negotiated through clarification requests and confirmation checks with the other speaker in order to achieve a communicative goal.

Additionally, Seedhouse (2004) formulates that classroom interaction is also significant in order to help students to increase their proficiency level. Thus, it is necessary to present a communicative activity to be seen as free as possible and not forced by the teacher. Furthermore, when participating in an activity students' level must be distinguished by the teacher in order to be sure that all the students will actively co-work and interact with classmates from which they can learn without feeling pressure or fear.

In the same way, Seedhouse (2004) argues that most of the teachers try to produce interaction between students employing not genuine conversational activities using a bunch of

complete structures that students may not face in a real life situation described as IRF; teacher initiation, learner response, teacher follow-up, this is a pattern found in most of the traditional classes. For this reason, Seedhouse proposed that classes will be successful if the environment conditions are to be found in a naturalistic or genuine acquisition prevail. Also, he affirms that teachers' labor must be to create opportunities for learners to engage in interactions of the kind experienced by children acquiring their L1.

Finally, Seedhouse introduce some characteristics that teachers may take into account in order to increase interaction in their classrooms:

1. The linguistic forms and patterns of interaction which the learners produce are subject to evaluation by the teacher in some way.
2. Language is both the vehicle and object of instruction.
3. The linguistic forms and patterns of interaction which the learners produce will be linked in some way to the pedagogical purposes which the teacher introduces. (Seedhouse (1995) p, 23)

### **3.4 Speaking Skill**

Speaking is one of the four language skills (Reading, writing, listening and speaking) and it is one of the most difficult competences learners have to face. It is the vehicle by which people interact with others through expressing their points of view, hopes, ideas, opinions. In addition, people who know a language are referred to as “speakers”. In this research, the concept of Speaking Skill is fundamental to know how it works when interacting with others. Nunan (1999) and Burkart and Sheppard (2004) argue that, based on Torkey (2006), “success in learning a language is measured in terms of the ability to carry out a conversation in the (target) language”.

Thus, the focus to measure the proficiency level of a subject must not be on the speaker's accent, but on communication. Thornbury and Slade (2006, p.17) state:

Speaking is social, in the sense that it establishes rapport and mutual agreement, maintains and modifies social identity, and involves interpersonal skills. In other words, this social element allows learners express opinions, attitudes, wishes, feelings, thoughts and judgments but those factors can cause conflict in the classroom when teaching speaking.

Nazare (2011 cited in Thornbury and Slade, 2006) assert that "Speaking is also a multi-sensory activity because it involves paralinguistic features such as eye-contact, facial expressions, body language, tempo, pauses, voice quality changes, and pitch variation which affect conversational flow".

Torky (2006 cited in Flórez, 1999, p.26) highlights the following skills underlying speaking:

- "Using grammar structures accurately;
- Assessing characteristics of the target audience, including shared knowledge, status and power relations, or differences in perspectives;
- Selecting vocabulary that is understandable and appropriate for the audience, the topic being discussed, and the setting in which the speech act occurs;
- Applying strategies to enhance comprehensibility, such as emphasizing key words, rephrasing, or checking for listener's comprehension;
- Paying attention to the success of the interaction and adjusting components of speech such as vocabulary, rate of speech, and complexity of grammar structures to maximize listener's comprehension and involvement".

It can be concluded that speaking is a multi-facets cognitive process; it is also a high complex mental activity that differs from other activities because it requires much greater effort of the central nervous system (Bygate, 1998, p. 23). Language processing involves the retrieval of words and phrases and distinct areas of planning from memory and their assembly into syntactically and propositionally appropriate sequence (Harmer, 2001, p. 271). Hence, it is accurate to say that speaking is a demanding ability to develop, but it is a social one which will allow learners to exchange knowledge, interact between them and improve their speaking skill as well.

### **3.4.1 Accent VS. Pronunciation.**

Establishing a difference between accent and pronunciations is a finicky job, due to there are several authors who define them very similar and one depends from the other, then they are bounded. Nevertheless, it is important to make a distinction between these terms, since most people have some misconceptions about them which have caused several problems to learners when they attempt to master the L2. To start:

An accent simply refers to one's way of speaking, the way one sounds when speaking, the way one uses phonological features such as stress, rhythm, tone and intonation. Contrary to popular belief, it is not just foreigners or immigrants who speak with an accent. Everybody speaks with an accent. Non-accent is non-existent (Kumaravadivelu, 2004, p. 1).

To illustrate: In Colombia, people speak Spanish as their mother tongue they do it with an accent and it is based on the region they were brought up. Consequently, there are people who speak in a considerable variety of accents, such as: Vallunos, Paisas, Rolos, Santandereanos, Pastusos, etc. Also, the same happens when it comes to identify nationalities by accents; non-native speakers of English speak it with an accent, which can be accented to their first language. In other words, the

first language accent will be present in the oral production of the second language. That is how it is possible to identify people who speak English with an Indian accent, German accent, Hispanic accent, etc.

Pinker (2013 cited in Lippi-Green, 1998) asserts that accent is described as a “loose bundle of prosodic and segmental features distributed over geographic and/or social space” (Its segmental features include the phonological structure of vowels and consonants, in other words, pronunciation, while prosodic features are intonation, pitch, stress, and tempo). Besides, in terms of non-native speakers, accent is used to refer to the breakthrough of the phonology of the native language into the target language. However, the way people speak may present some troubles in terms of acceptance by society; a phenomenon that is present and imminent nowadays, which should change, since it reflects who individuals are, where they are from, where they live and even the social status people hold, that is to say, their cultural identity. (Derwing and Munro, 2009, p. 476) declare “accent has been blamed for all sorts of things. It has been seen as the cause of miscommunication and it has been used as a cover-up for racism and other kinds of discrimination”. The previous statement depicts how accent has been a cause of prejudices and even rejection by people; nevertheless, this study will provide to readers another different point of view by focusing on the importance of each speaker’s cultural identity and how meaningful it is to keep L1 accent in L2 oral production.

On the other hand, possessing a good pronunciation of the FL is vital in oral communication. Pronunciation is the production of significant sounds in two senses: it is part of a code of a particular language, and is used to achieve meaning in contexts of use (Dalton and

Seidlhofer, 2001, p. 3). Then, it not only allows to identify the distinguished sounds of English, Spanish, French, etc. but also, the code combines with other factors to make communication possible which refers to acts of speaking. (Adult Migrant English Program Research Centre, [AMEP], 2002, p. 1) consider that:

Pronunciation is the production of sounds that we use to make meaning. It includes attention to the particular sounds of a language (segments), aspects of speech beyond the level of the individual sound, such as intonation, phrasing, stress, timing, rhythm (suprasegmental aspects), how the voice is projected (voice quality) and, in its broadest definition, attention to gestures and expressions that are closely related to the way we speak a language.

Moreover, so many people are obsessed with trying to achieve a “native-like” pronunciation and there are some others who want to retain their L1 accent as a means of preserving their identity. Thus, some theorists have come to a crucial conclusion as it follows: “There is no reason to believe that [native-like pronunciation] is achievable in typical ESL classrooms” and that “it may do more harm than good for teachers to lead learners to believe that they will eventually achieve native pronunciation” (Derwing and Munro, 2005, p. 384). Therefore, it is fundamental people take this into account due to speaker’s identity, most of times, is going to be always present in the L2 oral production, which does not mean the learner may be non-proficient in the target language.

Regarding the definitions of the two concepts depicted above, it seems that accent and pronunciation are attached to one and other, since the definitions authors present are very similar, but it can be concluded that it exists a clear difference between these two concepts. Accent is just the way a person stresses a language, its prosodic feature which are produced based on the

geographic or regional position the individual has been familiarized with. In contrast, pronunciation is the way people pronounce and articulate sounds, and create meaning in contexts of use, it is the way the articulators are placed to create sounds.



## **4. Literature review**

The present study examines how the accent a speaker depicts in the L2 oral production is a manifestation of the subject's cultural identity. In this regard, it analyses the dynamics of the L1 accent in relation with pronunciation, speaking, and culture, as well as how all these elements harmoniously embodied in the subject's manner of speaking. This literature review will be divided into related International, National and Regional studies that provided background to the present research and that will help to clarify queries and will give light to any other idea if necessary.

### **4.1 International studies**

To start, in the international panorama the most representative discussions convenient for this study are the following. Firstly, the research conducted by Rivas (2013) presents the elements that can influence the cultural identity construction when a person has to live in between two different linguistic contexts, in this case Mexico and The United States. A qualitative approach was used which showed that there are small cultures that have emerged among the participants at a teacher education program. The purpose of this research was to discover the identity formation in students that have lived in these two contexts through narrative inquiry. The population studied belonged to the BA<sup>1</sup> in TESOL<sup>2</sup>, some of them were born in Mexico, but for many reasons they

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<sup>1</sup> BA: bachelor of Arts. Degree program that offers instruction in humanities, social sciences or liberal art. (Learn.org)

<sup>2</sup> TESOL: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages.

migrated as young children to The United States and then returned to their native country. In order to collect data, the authors used interviews, recordings and autobiographies written by the participants describing their lives in both countries. The principal finding of this research showed a complex identity struggle. When the participants migrated, they suffered discrimination by virtue of not speaking English well. At home, in order to maintain the cultural values, the given language was Spanish, not allowing them to develop neither an American nor a Mexican identity. Moreover, when the participants returned to their native country, they were also excluded because of the “strange” accent they had when speaking Spanish. As a conclusion, the authors presented some factors such as language used in public and at home, accent, spoken style, discrimination, and prohibitions which are relevant variables that shaped the studied population’s identity. Finally, they emphasized that the small cultural groups that emerged among the participants were created depending on their common previous experiences.

Accordingly, this study is very interesting because it restores all the experiences the returnees have had across the Mexican-American border, their upbringing, their schooling, the difficulties they may have had with learning both English and Spanish, discrimination and so forth. The research project has some similarities with the present study, since there is a clear discrimination because of the way Mexicans speak English revealing their native accent; therefore, they have been rejected not only by Americans but also by Mexicans. Correspondingly, this research can be applied to this study in the sense of establishing some factors that influence identity performance in the L2 production. Namely, it contributes to the description of how identity adjusts or struggles in relation to the foreign language culture and production. Nonetheless, even though the presented study was carried out with subjects that actually performed in an English-speaking

context, identity conflicts relate with those of the project. Consequently, the article acquainted the notion of two worlds; the one created by the native tongue, and the one acquire with the foreign language. In this sense, the dynamics displayed by both cultures, that is, the social stereotypes that emerge in the L2 production which is a relation between the speaker's identity depicted in L2 oral proficiency and social prejudices. In this manner, learners suffer from discriminations not just by native speakers but even more surprisingly by non-native ones. It is important to note that the vast majority social stereotypes about English accent matters, discriminations, prohibitions, spoken style, and so on, come from non-native speakers. Ultimately, this study is relevant to the research project because it depicts the central aspect of it which is the speaker's identity seen in the L2 production.

Flowingly, the research executed by Madrigal & Vargas (2012) analyzes social stereotypes and their consequences in relation to accent in second language learning. Thus, the researchers presented that attitudes toward language must be studied and taken into account in order to help students to understand accents and identify the positive aspects of them. The main objective of this study was to create effective cross-cultural communication through learning strategies that will help students in Costa Rica to establish positive attitudes toward their L2 speech, in order to compare how this process affects their native language and their target itself. The researchers took a sample of forty-eight students; twenty-four were final year students, and the others were second year students from an undergraduate program in teaching English at the National University of Costa Rica (Bachillerato en la Enseñanza del Inglés para I y II ciclos de la Universidad Nacional, UNA). In order to collect data, there were used surveys and recordings. Additionally, the results showed a tendency: Nicaraguan and Taiwanese accents are believed to be unpleasant and not very

prestigious. Brazilian and Chilean accents are considered pleasant and prestigious. The American accent is pleasant and very prestigious. The Colombian accent is neutral. The Costa Rican accent is prestigious and pleasant. Most Taiwanese people have their own business and home. Most Nicaraguans are blue-collar workers. Most Americans are students. In general, it was discovered that there are some associations in attitudes to accents, judgments about a speaker's accent are usually to be rated either as prestigious or pleasant or discredited and unpleasant, and that there are some common stereotypical associations shared among students. Finally, the researchers proposed that students need to communicate with people from different cultures in order to be aware of foreign accents without making judgments and that teachers need to work on cross cultural activities in order to avoid stereotyping people inside of the classroom.

Correspondingly, this study is pertinent to the purposes of the research since it highlights the damages stereotypes or value judgments represent to the learning process. They are mainly founded on the lack of respect and knowledge learners have about what a culture is. In this manner, it is vital to mention that in the study it is observed that some accents have more prestige than others. For instance, they stated that "... a native speaker of Spanish sound different from a native speaker of French when they both speak the same second language" (p.82). Statements of this sort are present in any second language environment since they deal with power roles, socioeconomic status and worldwide recognition as having powerful mother tongue accent. This phenomenon occurs for it responds to the cultural environment in which the speaker belongs and that leads a subject to disregard any other accent different from his speech style either in the mother tongue or in the L2. Consequently, the study helped to clarify why is that it is required from a learner to have a neutral English accent and it is because they are not fully aware of the many varieties existing

all over the world. The main point with this discussion is that most of the people are not aware of their biases when misjudging learners for the way they speak. That lack of awareness lead to think and state that learners are not competent in the language, and therefore their accents are a proof of lack of intelligibility and mispronunciation. Furthermore, the proposals suggested in this study help to promote the avoidance of stereotypes as by doing classroom discussions, critical thinking, and phonetics review help the learners to instruct themselves about all that having an accent entails not only as an individual but also as a social group.

Next, the research developed by Pullen (2011) discusses the relationship among cultural identity, the degree of accentedness, and attitudes toward pronunciation of non-native speakers of English in an EFL. In the same way, the author establishes cultural identity as one of the strongest factors that may influence the spoken production in the target language. In this correlational study it was taken a sample of 145 students studying in various departments at two large English-medium universities located in Ankara, Turkey, they were chosen from a variety of departmental backgrounds at both universities, in order to increase the chances of seeing a large degree of variation in both the pronunciation and identity factors. In order to collect data, the researcher used a cultural identity and language background questionnaire; a pronunciation elicitation form, including three different task types; and a pronunciation rating rubric to be used by the judges in assessing the speech samples for degree of accent. During the data analysis, it was found that there were some factors that may affect identity in relation to language learning such as: Residence abroad, other languages spoken in the home, pronunciation training, age of beginning English study, self-rated ability, and importance of native-like pronunciation. In the same way, although about half of those who wrote comments believed their pronunciation to be good, well over half

of the participants expressed a desire to improve their pronunciation, even if they did not directly express dissatisfaction with it. Also, he found that a native-like pronunciation was not really relevant for the participants who expressed that what mattered for them was the communication and the understandability. Additionally, the respondents accepted that their pronunciation in L2 is influenced by their native language, in this case Turkish because the sounds' articulation is quite different when comparing them. Finally, the researcher exposed that cultural identity does not directly affect pronunciation achievement. Besides, he expressed that the carryover of phonological aspects of the mother tongue is not necessarily a means of expressing one's identity.

Respectively, this study is relevant to the research project because its significance is attached to the intention of this study. To illustrate: the previous research examines how cultural identity is a factor that potentially influences the degree of foreign accent in the production of English, which enhances the idea in this study that everybody speaks with an accent. Non-accent is non-existent, which allows people to identify the origins of each individual and that cannot be seen as means of non-proficiency. Besides, this study is pertinent to the research project because it intensifies the notion depicted in the study that teachers should be aware of this phenomenon in their approach to pronunciation instruction since it represents, as it is mentioned in the presented study, the pronunciation goals of their students, and/or of their students' desire to express their identity through their accent; it also provides a suggestion to teachers that is crucial to not make feel their students somehow frustrated: if there are some learners who want to achieve a native-like accent, then teachers can give them the enough tools and help them to reach their goals, but in case there are some learners who prefer to maintain their cultural identity through their accent, teachers need to be sensitive to their learners' identity construction, and adjust pronunciation goals

accordingly. Also, the results of this study are meaningful in the sense that it established that pronunciation was not really relevant for the participants who expressed that what mattered for them was the communication and the understandability. The previous statement is important to the research since it supports the statement that success in learning a language is measured in terms of the ability to carry out a conversation in the (target) language. All in all, this study empowers the basic ideas of the research project as it has been described above.

Moreover, Marx (2002) conducted a research in which she discusses identity within a sociocultural framework. Firstly, it is presented a definition about learner identity and a differentiation between acquisition of knowledge and participation in a community of knowledge and practice. This research is a first-person account of Marx's experiences as a language learner who moved to the L2 environment as a young adult, fact that she defines as becoming a legitimate participant in the second culture (C2). The researcher's L1 is Canadian English, while the target language in which she focuses the research is German, her L2 right after French. Additionally, her analysis continues through to her return to an English environment and a similar culture in order to compare some identity issues after leaving the L2 and the C2. Marx does not focus her study on identity reflection, but she studies the appropriation of accent in the L2 and the appearance of kind of a "strange" accent in L1. The main objective of this study is to explore accent involving language acquisition in adult second language and culture acquisition, by an immigrant who has no intention of remaining in that culture. Therefore, she describes her process of learning a second language as a process of self-translation that includes language loss and language recovery, accent shift as a mirror of identity in which she takes some aspects in consideration, such as: Displacement, beginning stages of loss, towards a native speaker accent in the L2, construction of

an L2 identity and attrition of the L1, re-entry into the C1, and reconstruction or renewal of the L1. Finally, the author concludes by explaining that multiple identities are not a matter just of bilinguals, all people have multiple identities that emerge when interacting with others, but these phenomena is more evident in bilinguals who face the challenge of understanding and managing them using different strategies, such as: Remain torn between them, sitting on the border of both, or unify them without choosing one or another.

In this manner, this study is related to the research project in some aspects as it follows: It establishes a strong definition to the term “identity”, (A concept Marx defined in isolation, in contrast to “culture” defined in the present study as inseparable of that of identity). Then, it is referred as a “Stable, fixed entity within a person which controls his or her actions and understanding of the world around him or her, but which remains (At least in adulthood) for the most part unaffected by the changing outer context. Also, it asserts that identity is continuously renegotiating the self, as people do not only possess one identity when it comes to languages as they are bound to cultures and cultures shape and redefine one’s identity. The previous information is powerful to the research because it gives another point of view about the desire of achieving a native-like accent for Marx herself experienced how accent is strictly attached to culture. Likewise, she decided what accent to have in order to fit in as her German peers and society considered her as an American for the accent she had when speaking German. Then, as asserted in the present study, accents are representations of cultures and therefore identities. In this manner, identities are modified through the accent the subject decided to depict in the L2 production not only by his mere choice but also by the community surrounding him. It can be concluded that when people learn a second language, they acquire another identity as well, since as it is argued in this study,



all people have multiple identities which change in interaction with other community members. The previous statement is relevant to the research project because it demonstrates that being immersed in a second culture and even learning a second language can affect or modify the cultural identity people have acquired by nature.

Additionally, Lammons (2009) presents a report in which he studies the effect that cultural identification may have in accent acquisition. He settled that when a second language learning process takes place, the learner starts to belong to a new and shared universe of the L2 culture. In the same way, the author explained that acquiring and learning an L2 is a constant process of organizing and reorganizing one's identity and place in the world. It is asserted that sometimes listeners may judge accent as a part of cultural loyalty, and that acquiring a native-like accent represent a bunch of benefits for its speaker given by the others.

Likewise, this report is significant to the research project because it portraits that if language and the ways of communication are considered as part of ethnic group affiliation and therefore, a part of a person's social and cultural identity, then a person's accent in the L2 could be influenced by his/her identity. On the other hand, it highlights how accent has been a cause of rejection and discrimination by the L2 community, because learners' self-confidence comes, in part, from positive experiences in the L2 community members' acts of discrimination against the L2 learners could negatively affect the learners' desires to integrate with the L2 community. The previous information is meaningful to the research, because it demonstrates how people (in this case, native speakers) most of times seem not to tolerate the diversity that language has, in terms of accents, by judging people and creating stereotypes because of the way non-native speakers

perform in the target language, a fact, that affects individuals in the way they execute their L2 oral production. Thus, discrimination creates a situation in which the learner feels that he/she does not have the “right to speak,” a right which Norton Peirce defines as being a part of language competence. Furthermore, the report provides an important conclusion that enriches the research: “learners can consciously choose to change their L2 or even L1 accents in order to represent a new identity and to participate in a different community” it means that people develop several identities in different contexts, but it depends on the individual's decision to switch that identity or to mix them.

Moreover, the research study carried out by Panker (2013) talks about the role of the accent in the use of English as a foreign language (EFL). The main objective of this study is to reveal how Hungarian university teachers of English perceive their English accent and their identities as English speakers. In order to accomplish the purpose of this research, the author inquired the teachers' perceptions about their accents and the aspects they think that have influenced the way they speak English. Moreover, the researcher took a sample of seven non-native educators at the English department of a Hungarian higher educational institute. In this qualitative research, data was collected by using semi-structured interviews that in order to be sufficient needed to be gradually, common themes, additional information that emerged during the conversation. These seven people provided data that was multifaceted enough to create an interesting panorama of the diversity of the topic at hand. The author presented the results dividing them in two themes. Firstly, he found out that when the teachers were asked to describe their accent, they were very modest because they identified a Hungarian in their own, but as English teachers with a high proficiency level they were tolerant toward native accent in speech. Secondly, it was found a dominating role

of the native accent because of the participants' interest on the international spread of English that allow them to maintain a native-base target in their own speech. Thirdly, in relation to the teachers' identity, they turned to be dynamic, multiple and often conflicting. Finally, it was discussed the teachers' negotiable identities. For example, they were aware of their identities as teachers and users of English that is why they adopted their L2 depending on the person they were addressing; a native or a non-native speaker.

Hence, this research study is quite enriching and similar to the present work since it is focused on most of the premises the present study strives to solve. Like this, the findings presented by Panker are relevant to the purposes of this research as he points out that English has become a global language and that means that the vast majority of speakers are non-native ones. This diversity of speakers brings with it a wide variety of accents which in turn are manifestations of cultures and backgrounds. On the other hand, the study is also important because it emphasizes that accent-free in the L2 is related with the Critical Period Hypothesis. Accordingly, even though if a subject chooses to learn a second language after puberty when the brain is mature, he can be proficient in the language despite the accent depicted on it. Then, the accent-pronunciation misjudgments are more based on social ideologies. Its findings help to the understanding of prejudices as it states that in the bilingual or multilingual community, accent in the L2 represented an obstacle in communication not for intelligibility but for "prefabricated misconceptions about the speakers' educational and social status." Finally, its major contribution to the present study is that of the similar assumption that it is a matter of power, of haves and haves not. It is an identity struggle for the more a subject identifies with a group the more he wants to be part of it. In this manner, learners and teachers may have a tendency for acquiring a native-like accent while

disregarding that what deep down what it is really needed is intelligibility or the extent to which a subject is proficient in the language.

#### **4.2 National studies**

In order to start discussing some research at the light of cultural identity and accent in the national context, it is relevant to mention that even though these have been fields of interest around the world, there are not too many studies about it in Colombia. In the first place, the study carried out by Arboleda & Castro (2012) presents the role of the accent in a foreign language and its possible influence on English teaching and learning at a University level, considering EFL Colombian and foreign students at an advanced level and Colombian and foreign teachers with different teaching experiences. The purpose of this research was to implement actions to serve students' needs and help teachers to improve their language skills. The researchers collected data by applying a semi-structured five-scale questionnaire in which they inquired the perceptions that EFL students and teachers have of non-native or accented EFL teachers and constraints that these teachers experience because of their foreign accent. In this quantitative research, the analysis of the data was separated into two categories: The teachers' and the students' answers. The teachers' answers indicated that a native or native-like pronunciation is important, but not vital for being qualified to teach a language. Also, they recognized that there is more criterion: Having a good command on the target language, patience, creativity, tolerance of diversity and awareness of students' needs that affect language learning. On the other side, the students pointed out that pronunciation is a key factor in language teaching. Besides, Colombian and some foreign students felt that teachers with native or native-like accent enhance their language learning process. The authors concluded that accent is meaningful, but it does not deserve too much importance in

measuring teachers' language proficiency. Thereby, generalization cannot be made from this study, but its results can be instrumental in having educational authorities at different levels of decision-making offer non-native EFL teachers the support they need.

Additionally, one crucial characteristic of this study is that it was made in Colombia, and in an academic context which, definitely, provides a quite important background not only for the aim of the project but for the state of the art. Likewise, this study helps to unmask some stereotypes that assert that if a subject shows his identity in the L1 through the production of the L2, he or she is not competent in the target language which, certainly, is completely false. Besides, the study's subjects of analysis reveal how it has been taught that a learner must aspire to achieve a native-like accent in order to reflect a successful learning-teaching process. Finally, this study will help to clarify the difference between good pronunciation and accent, which people tend to confuse by alleging that if a subject presents his native accent in the L2, he or she does not have a good pronunciation.

Then, in the research presented by Gómez (2010), there are new ways of interaction that usually takes place in the classroom. It establishes that peers are active agents in the learning process, and the importance that arrangement has in order to develop students' skills in a context in which English is not the center. This research is focused on undergraduate students at a private University in Bogotá Colombia (Libre University), in which English is an official and mandatory subject in all the curriculums from all the programs. The principal aspect taken into account in this research is

The importance of new dynamics of interaction among students as a result of a process of meaning negotiation upon the language that is being learned in class, and what the product is of the interactions with other students that are supposed to deal with the same language level (Ibid).

Also, the researcher tried to identify the principal needs students have in their classroom, such as the development of speaking activities in order to use the target language to talk about their major. In the same way, this is a *qualitative* research in which data was collected by observations, field diaries task based activities, and surveys in order to establish the lack of relationship between the English classes content, the major itself, and the low level of motivation, but the most important finding is the peer interaction that is related to the way how the dynamics of interaction have an impact in the individual performances of the students. Thereby, this is an innovate research because of the field it is being studied through it and the use of media, familiar topics and social activities to teach the lessons. As a conclusion, the author explained that everything that is done for the students' benefit, which has a huge influence in their perception regarding to the second language learning process. Besides, students' motivation increased, they made negotiations to communicate using both languages in class, they found significant the topics taught and their majors, and they increased their interaction to complement their knowledge and their social level to enrich the teaching and the learning process.

In this manner, this study is very interesting because it proposes a more familiar, pressure-free and comfortable method for students and teachers to practice the language and construct knowledge regardless of their accents. It focuses on the information conveyed by the language and as doing so, students grow confident on the knowledge they have acquired in the classroom. This negotiation of meaning leads the learners to see the target language as a vehicle that they, as human

beings, can use to talk about the world. Likewise, this method helps to overthrow coercive behaviors in the classroom, stereotypes, and misconceptions about pronunciation and intelligibility as it guides learners to get to know their peers and see them as their equals. It also helps to construct confidence, respect for the others, and most importantly it reinforces the speaking ability. On the other hand, this study is pertinent to the research project because it is aimed at the same population; college students. Despite the fact that the kind of English in both studies is quite different, it merges two central things to both studies: language and society. These two concepts are tightly bound up since one cannot stand without the other, they create what is known as cultural identity. Then, those two concepts represent the common; culture, ideas and beliefs held by the society around the learner, and identity, specific speaker traits that in turn are shaped by the culture to which he belongs. Furthermore, it provides to the research project a different point of view, due to it conceivably changes students' perceptions of English as an important subject for the present and future, because, as it is concluded in the study, students found the opinions, ideas and thoughts of their peers very accurate which would improve their own learning process. Thus, it would be very relevant to mention it in the research, since it emphasizes on the concept of interaction without prejudices which is crucial when it comes to learn a second language.

Also, Viáfara (2016) addresses the interrelation of pervasive non-native language ideologies associated to their self-image as Spanish users and their self-perception as speakers of English. With this research, the author sought to expand the research on non-native speaking English teachers on Latin America because there, that kind of studies is scant. In this qualitative research, data was collected by using the traditional methods; interviews and surveys. Furthermore, the population studied was integrated by two groups from two public universities. The first

University; (University A) was located in a small country in Colombia characterized by a semi-rural environment; there it is offered a five-year modern languages program. Usually, every year there arrived two or three teachers (American, English or Jamaican) to support English classes. The first group from University A was made of twenty-one third year student-teachers; thirteen women and eight men, the majority of them lived in the city where the university was located, the others lived at the surrounding small town. In relation to the English process of those students, the author mentioned that they had had their first contact with the L2 in preschool, primary school or secondary school, none of them had travelled to an English speaking country and some of them had had contact with native speakers. Then, the second group from University B is integrated by students from a Bachelor in Education at a University in Bogotá, there were twenty participants registered in a third English level course. That group had more or less the same conditions that the other group in relation to their first contact with L2 at preschool, primary school, and secondary school, but some of them had studied English in independent courses before entering to the program, just one participant had been in an English speaking country and the majority had had contact with native speakers. Another aspect that the researcher took into account in order to collect data was the curriculum from both programs that provided information that led the author understand the educational era in which the study took place. In order to analyze data, it was used a software that helped to organize it, explore it, code it, and visualize it correctly. The more relevant findings of this research were: the majority of the prospective teachers considered themselves as native Spanish speaker because they considered native-speakership as something conferred at birth, participants established language limitations as the center of their self-image in relation to L2, using the sentence “I feel as if I were missing something” rating their level usually with three



out of five, and the majority of the prospective teachers were conscious that they still had time to increase their proficiency skills, abilities and opportunities.

Respectively, the findings and assertions presented in this study are suitable for the present research for its population are native Spanish speakers (Shared traits with the target population) and for it highlights the damage non-accent ideology represents for L2 speakers. In this respect, the study showed how Spanish native speakers have some “intelligibility problems” for their regional accent when they move from town to town. This is a clear example of how cultural identity is seen in the manner of speaking a subject has. Hence, in the case of Colombian Spanish the accent considered as neutral or standard is that from Bogotá and enjoys high prestige. As it is seen, Colombian accents follow social conventions that categorize them into acceptable and unacceptable (minorities), imposing standard frames which in turn, eliminates diversity. Consequently, this transfers to the L2 since standard English is also a social convention in which certain English speaking societies have some status (American Standard English, British Standard English) which make them desirable and worthy of acquisition. Once again, speakers are advised that having an accent makes their English inappropriate, incomprehensible, and non-standard and quite far from the native-like accent they should aim to have. Ultimately, the non-accent ideology second language teachers hold is problematic because this makes them subjective when it comes to pronunciation. As a result, they demand their students to neutralize their accents and acquire a native-like accent which arises in the learners’ feelings of fear, insecurity and frustration that drag out the teaching-learning process.

Lastly, in the national scenery it was found the research carried out by Vanegas, Fernández, González, Jaramillo, Muñoz, & Ríos (2016) which describes the impact that linguistic discrimination has in relation to students' academic performance at an English teaching program from the Fundación Universitaria Luis Amigó. This study used a descriptive approach with a qualitative methodology in order to explore humans' experiences through the study of certain fields in English such as: Morphology, phonology, syntax, learning material, and teaching methodologies. The researchers observed, analyzed, and described a group of 104 students and 5 teachers. The students were from first to tenth semester with an average age of 20 to 35 years old. This sample is taken into account because of the linguistic diversity found on it. Thus, classes at that bachelor program are linguistically heterogeneous; students with different levels of proficiency because there were found native speakers of English and immigrants raised at the United States, but currently studying at that English Teaching Program. The approach used during the classes were the communicative approach and task-based learning in order to present English as tool to fight against problems that affect society every day. Besides, data was collected through observations, class journals, and interviews. In relation to students' interaction, it was seen that during group work it emerged an environment of competition between students, and that skillful students were usually praised when giving oral presentation because they better performed during classes, while students with a low proficiency level panicked and were reluctant to talk in public. The researchers summed up by dividing the results obtained into six categories: "Standard language idealization, native speaker idealization, professor pressure, disesteeming one's own language level, discriminatory attitudes, and finally linguistic segregation." (Ibid. p)

The presented study is not only relevant but also enriching for the research project since it enlightens concepts and new focuses that this research had not considered. In this manner, one key concept new to the research is that of ‘Linguistic discrimination’ which refers to “an imposition by entities or persons regarding language usage, which equates to a social division of power within a speech community” (Ibid. Pg 136). This is important for the purposes of the research since it provides understanding for the accent discrimination and therefore, stereotypes present in the EFL population. On the other hand, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of accentedness seen in the speaker’s L2 interaction for the reason that it states that English’s neutrality is a fallacy (Ibid. Pg 137). That is, native English speakers as well as native Spanish speakers, depict an accent which has been acquire throughout their lives and that, in turn, represents their cultural heritage. Hence, the study supports the proposition that when a speaker is told to neutralize his accent, he is being restricted to show his identity and, therefore, his cultural values seen in the form of the accent. In addition, the study highlights the confusion between accent and intelligibility, both terms crucial to the research, as it asserts that English learners tend to believe that by neutralizing their accent, they will be accepted within the EFL community, instead of focusing on their intelligibility in the language (Ibid. Pg 144). Besides, this study reinforces the fact that by neutralizing the accent is way of inequality, discrimination, sexism, and racism; it is mentioned that in Colombia, English teaching through the communicative approach has been polemical because of its neutrality. Likewise, Guerrero and Quintero (2009) mention that in accordance with Vanegas et al. (2016), the communicative approach is a prescriptive teaching method, that “presents a language which does not have real speakers and, therefore, no conflicts of any sort”. Otherwise, this study is meaningful to the research project since it proposes different facts by which some students may feel afraid or shy when it comes to speak in public and that is due to the diversity that exists in the

classrooms; there is mixed proficiency, that is, it is found low intermediate, and high linguistic proficiency students in the same class. Therefore, when they are working in groups, students act more competitive rather than cooperative, so professors use to praise the language-skillful students, gaining their attention and the others feel frustrated and it blocks their speech. Consequently, it leads to mention the concept of Democracy which refers to

... a social process dependent upon three democratic dispositions: all citizens are moral equals capable of intelligent judgment and actions, focused on reflection, and with a need to decide on their own what to believe. Likewise, all citizens are able to work together on a day-to-day basis to settle conflicts and solve problems. (Ibid. Pg.136).

Thus, McAninch's (1999 cited in MacMath, 2008, Vanegas et al, 2015) affirms that people cannot talk about democracy in the classroom if only a few students take part in classroom activities and interactions. The previous statement is crucial to mention in the research, since teachers have a considerable impact on students' performance and there may be some who are not aware of it, so they do it unconsciously. To this extent, the idea is to promote the equality in classrooms and the interaction between the diverse populations.

### **4.3 Regional studies**

It can be concluded that there were not found studies about the topic in the regional context. Therefore, more studies about cultural identity, accent and the relationship of both concepts are needed in order to give more credit to this field in the regional setting.

## 5. Methodology

The previous chapters demonstrated that accent is strictly bound up with cultural identity as it is a tale-tell of who the speakers are. It was also established, that depicting an accent in the L2 production and interaction is not a sign of low proficiency level but that it has to be with social stereotypes. In this vein, the study attempts to analyze and show that the accent seen the L2 interaction is a mark of the speakers' cultural identity, and that it must not be confused with intelligibility or language level. To meet these objectives, this study is guided by the following questions:

How does the L1 accent act as part of the speaker's cultural identity when interacting in the second language?

- To what extent does accent in L1 interfere in the interaction in L2?
- To what extent does L1 accent influence oral proficiency in L2?
- What perception do students and teachers have about their cultural identity and its interaction with L2?
- How do social stereotypes about accent influence the L2 speaker's performance?

In this respect, the participants of this study are a group of FL students and professors from a languages program at the Quindío University. Thereby, this study positions itself within the scope of a descriptive approach with a qualitative methodology. Its design corresponds to that of micro-ethnography and case study. This chapter consists of six main sections: approach, contextual aspects, instruments, ethical and bioethical aspects, schedule and budget.

## **5.1 Approach**

As stated before, this research study follows a descriptive approach with a qualitative methodology. Then, this type of study is used to understand motives for a certain event to happen. It provides the researcher with insights to the problem. This is supported by Gamboa (2011) when he says:

The qualitative methods are used to explore the human experience, where there is no interference in the scenario to be investigated or control of external influences or in the experiments designs. The data collected from this type of research come from a "deep" study of a certain phenomenon with the purpose of describing it, giving a meaning or identifying a process (p.54).

On the other hand, Burns and Grove (2007: 201) state that a descriptive research “is designed to provide a picture of a situation as it naturally happens.” Thus, for the purposes of this study it helps to obtain the students and professions’ perceptions about their cultural identity and their relationship with L2.

### **5.1.1 Design.**

The depicted research demands to study, to interpret the accent as part of cultural identity of a speaker that is reflected in the L2 oral production. In this manner, this research is a micro-ethnographic study as Creswell (2005) asserts that, based on Hernández-Sampieri & Mendoza (2008), micro-ethnographic studies centers on a specific aspect of the culture to study. Moreover, McDermott, Gospodinoff and Aron (1978), and Erickson (1992) mention that according to Garcéz (1997), micro ethnographers typically work with audiovisual machine recordings of naturally occurring social encounters to investigate in minute detail what participants

do in real time as they co-construct talk-in-interaction in everyday life. As such, micro ethnography offers a methodology for the investigation of face-to-face interaction and a particular point of view on language in use in complex modern societies.

### **5.1.2 Type.**

Given the fact that this is a qualitative research and its main objective is to analyze the level of interaction in L2 that may be English or French among students of fourth and sixth semester and professors from a languages program, this is a case study. According to Mitchell (1983) “A case study research is a detailed examination of an event (or series of related events) which the analyst believes exhibits (or exhibit) the operation of some identified general theoretical principles”. As it follows, the event that is examined in the present study is the interaction between the target and the native language. In the same way, Yin (1994) defined a case study as “An empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident...[and] relies on multiple sources of evidence” (p. 13) as it is pretended to be done in the present research.

### **5.2 Contextual Aspects**

In this study, the participants were selected from a local mid-sized university in the western part of Colombia. The participants were selected with two criteria: English or French was not their first language, their local communities in their home countries did not typically use English or French for communication on a daily basis.

### **5.2.1 Context.**

Therefore, it was necessary to analyze the hierarchical system within the university to have a better understanding of the participants and their educational milieu. Then, it is pertinent to briefly describe the PEU, PEF, and PEP as it follows.

#### ***5.2.1.1 Proyecto Educativo Uniquindiano (PEU).***

To start, the PEU corresponds to the Proyecto Educativo Uniquindiano from the University of Quindío. In this sense, this document contains the parameters under which the university, as a local social changing element, works. This document dictates all the aspects, norms, and conducts that must be carried out in order to have an excellent quality in education that not only serves the individual but the local, national, and international community as a whole. The Quindío University has 7 faculties and 34 BA programs, and 11 postgraduate programs. These programs work in face-to-face, distance and virtual mode. Its missionary principles are that of transforming the society by forming individuals who are critical thinkers and who change their environment according to the immediate social context. In terms of quality policies, the university promotes efficiency and effectiveness in all its process rather they are administrative or educative. It is relevant, creative, and inclusive for it aims to protect and promote diversity in all forms as a social tool to overcome post-conflict time in the country, and develops and drives the skills of all its individuals. The university also offers the expansion of mental borders through research, cultural programs inside and outside the University, as well as the possibility of international exchanges. In terms of its pedagogical principles, it follows a pedagogical approach which is Integrative – socio-cognitive - experiential. It assumes as its main center of interest the student and his formative experience. In



this way, humanistic beings are formed, concerned about the constant improvement of society, responding to the demands made by Ministry of National Education (MEN).

### ***5.2.1.2 Proyecto Educativo De Facultad (PEF).***

Before starting to explain the Proyecto Educativo de Facultad (PEF), it is important to mention that it portrays how teachers are formed, based on the criteria established by the Colombian Ministry of National Education. It not only allows teachers to be qualified in pedagogical and didactic aspects but also, to respond to challenges of a globalized world and to be aware of Colombian socio-cultural educational milieu. In this manner, teachers are aware of students' culture which must be accepted and respected in the sense of learning a second language, especially regarding the accent, which reflects the cultural identity of every speaker, as it has been remarked before.

To start, the School of Education at the University of Quindío, created under the agreement No. 03, 18<sup>th</sup> of February in 1999 of the Superior Council, is a managed academic unit, based on the participatory model, whose social, regional and national context is framed by a post-conflict situation and building peace. Throughout time, has recognized teaching as a profession, according to the Law No. 30/1992, the General Education Law (Law No. 115/1994) and the city's educative and regional development. Also, the university offers programs for teachers' development, with the purpose of training teachers with values, knowledge and professional competences in levels of education which are already established, as it is determined by the Colombian Ministry of National Education, Resolution No. 02041, 3<sup>rd</sup> of February in 2016. Therefore, teacher training involves formation in pedagogy, didactic scholastic knowledge, and investigation that will allow graduate

teachers with basic and fundamental competences to his professional context development, such as: teaching, forming and assessing. Accordingly, the mission of the university is focused on the graduates' formation of high quality, which implies its academic programs accomplish the processes of quality assurance of higher education, especially, Qualified Registered and High Quality Accreditation. Additionally, the academic BA programs foster the strengthening of the teacher's capacities in order to assure his professional performance in terms of pedagogical knowledge, disciplinary, didactic, evaluative and investigative in the teaching field.

### ***5.2.1.3 Proyecto Educativo Del Programa (PEP).***

Initially, it is relevant to mention that PEP corresponds to Proyecto educativo Del Programa, in this case: Bachelor's Degree in Modern Languages at the University of Quindío. This program started its teaching activities in 1967, and its mission is to train integral professionals in the field of teaching foreign languages; English or French, with abilities to research and carry out social projection projects and work on the evaluation, review and improvement of its curriculum. Additionally, this program aims at educating future teachers who will be able to participate and elaborate projects that will support postgraduates in order to solve this society needs.

Furthermore, the vision is to be a high quality academic unit on its projects of teachers training, research and social projection projects that will help to solve social problems related with foreign languages and its application through a process of evaluation with the participation of all the actors committed to the development of the region and the country.

#### **5.2.1.3.1 Curriculum.**

The Bachelor's Degree in Modern Languages at the University of Quindío is composed by 160 credits distributed in 46 subjects. Spanish is studied from first to third semester, and students are taught to write different types of essays. Thereby, English is taught during the first four semesters and it is divided into three branches: grammar, audio-oral and reading-writing, each one of them have an hourly intensity of 5 hours per week. At fourth semester, students are asked to present the Michigan exam in order to grade their English proficiency, and they are required to have a score of at least 75 points on it to pass to fifth semester. From fifth semester to tenth, English is not studied as a subject, but students still have classes completely taught in this language such as: General linguistics, Phonetics, Morphosyntax, Semantics, Reading and writing I and II (In which students carry out a research project), Methodology I, II and III, Culture seminar, Pedagogical practice, Professional practice I (That may be in English or French) and II, and Seminar on Research in a Foreign Language I, II and III (In which students present their graduation project).

In the same way, at fifth semester, students start studying French 5 hours per week during a period of three semesters. Then, right after finishing seventh semester, students can choose one professional elective academic activity that may be: Translation, French or Bilingualism that is studied the last three semesters of the Bachelor degree with an hourly intensity of 4 hours per week. Also, students study some subjects in Spanish; some of them are obligatory by law, such as: Ethics, Political constitution, Training sports, Environment and Business creativity, and some others are established by the program, like: Human development process, Information processing and educational Software, Seminar on the history of pedagogy and Educational policies. The

majority of the subjects have prerequisites, which means that if a student fail a subject, he cannot continue with the subject that follows. For instance, in order to course General linguistics, the students must have passed English III and Spanish III.

### **5.2.2 Population.**

This study was carried out among two groups of fourth and sixth semester students, and professors from a languages program at the University of Quindío. In terms of the first focus group, it was decided to select students from fourth semester because they are about to finish their English learning in terms of grammar, listening and writing, so they are getting prepared to present the Michigan test. Then, as students have grasped most of the target language, it is pertinent to the depicted research because they will explain and show how they have reflected their cultural identity through their mother tongue accent during the long process of second language learning, especially in the L2 oral production. On the other hand, the participants are set up of 28 students to whom the survey was applied, but from which 10 students were selected for interviews.

The third focus group were the four professors, because they are the ones guiding the students throughout the process of learning the second language and because all of them portray an accent in their L2 being proficient in the language. These professors were inquired about their perceptions about accent and what they considered important for a learner to have in order to have a good speaking level. They were asked if it was necessary to achieve a native-like accent to be proficient in the language. Then, they were applied the interview in Spanish to have as much information as possible.

### **5.2.2.1 Selection Criteria.**

In order to collect meaningful data for the present study, the population studied must be: Native Spanish speakers, a current students attending the Modern Languages Program at the University of Quindío in Fourth or Sixth semester, neither a French nor an English native speakers, speakers of English or French as L2.

## **5.3 Techniques and instruments of Data Collection**

Following the principal premises of this project, the researchers will employ three instruments or techniques to collect data: Class observation, interviews and survey.

### **5.3.1 Class Observation.**

The first step to accomplish a well-structured analysis of the assumptions established by this research is doing class observation (Appendix 12.3). This contributes to a better understanding of classroom patterns, of the consideration of new aspects relevant to the study, and/or to reformulate statements. In this manner, class observation implies a deep apperception of social dynamics and an active subject constantly reflecting. It is crucial for the researcher to be attentive to all of the events and interactions in the environment since this instrument explores and describes subjects in their natural setting (Hernández et al., 2010). In this way, the observations consider the social and human environment seen in forms of organization in groups and subgroups, and patterns of interaction or linking. It points out the participants' cultural background, leadership, and frequency of interaction between 'native-like' students with 'standard' classmates (Ibid.). It gives the researcher a holistic view of the observed panorama and helps to clear up variables that lead to the analysis of affairs. Then, for the purposes of this research, eight (8) class observations were

carried out, four per group (4th and 6th semester), and two observations per week with a three days lapse between observation. This was done to see the dynamics present in an FLT environment in terms of stereotypes, interaction, and language use.

### **5.3.2 Survey.**

In order to identify students' perceptions about accent in interaction, the present research implements a Likert scale survey (Appendix 12.4). Likert (1932), an American social psychologist, developed a rating scale to measure attitudes or opinions by asking people to respond to a sort of statements in terms of their agreement, frequency, importance, and likelihood with them, allowing the pollster to determine certain cognitive and affective components towards the topics (McLeod, 2008). Additionally, Likert scales accept degrees of opinions and even no opinions at all. That is why the data obtained is analyzed through a quantitative approach making the researchers' labor easier when analyzing data. In this research, it was implemented an 8-statement scale which was designed to analyze the participant's perceptions, ideas and stereotypes towards accent in the L2 production. In order to collect meaningful data for this study, we had the participation of fifteen students per group and four teachers.

### **5.3.3 Interview.**

The presented research employs qualitative interviews in order to gather more detailed information from the participants about the L1 accent interference in L2 oral production (Appendix 12.5). Likewise, King and Horrocks (2009, in Hernández et al., 2010) declare that qualitative interviews are characterized by being more intimate, flexible and open. Besides, McNamara (1999) argue that interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind a participant's experience; thus, the interviewer can pursue in depth information around the topic. Furthermore, the research

is based on semi-structured interviews. Hence, Hernández et al. (2010) state that semi-structured interviews are based on a set of situations and questions which allow the interviewer to feel free for introducing additional questions to precise on some concepts and to collect more data about the desired topic. To analyze the premises that have been discussed, 10 students from each group and 4 professors were interviewed, and their answers were recorded with their previous consent. The 6-point questionnaire was done in Spanish to allow participants to freely express their answers. This was done in order to gather as much information as possible about the participants' perceptions for their English and French accented speech. Also, the interviews were carried out after class observation.

#### **5.3.4 Piloting Instruments.**

The instruments used in this study were submitted to piloting to get feedback for possible mistakes or improvements in each of them. The piloting was made by two professors from the BA program who read the three instruments and analyzed if they responded to the objectives of the research. After doing so, they sent the feedback with some corrections in terms of phrases collocations and some missing aspects.

#### **5.4 Ethical And Bioethical Aspects**

Before starting to explain the written form consent that was shared with the subjects of the depicted study, it is important to define the term of "Ethics", as Kovacs (1985) Blumberg et al. (2005) assert that, Ethics is a branch of philosophy that deals with the conduct of people and guides the norms or standards of behavior of people and relationships with each other. Therefore, as researchers are professionals it is fundamental they follow rules and guidelines of research ethics that allow the research to have veracity based on norms that have been already established. In this

manner, Fouka & Mantzorou (2011) claim that, research ethics is important in daily life research milieu, since requires that researchers should protect the dignity of their subjects and publish well the information that is researched.

Selected participants who took part of this study approved their participations through an informed consent (Appendix 12.2) to secure their permission in order to use the information provided for the development of the study, only for scholar purposes. This helps the participants to understand the intention of the research and to make decisions of participation or non-participation. Consent forms were read aloud, and research ethics were explained in Spanish to avoid misunderstandings before conducting surveys, observations and interviews. The access to the full version of the study was offered for all the participants to meet the debriefing criteria. Also, no deception was held to the participants. The participants were told they could reject their participation in the study at any moment.



### 5.5 Timetable

ACTIVITY	WEEK															
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	15	15	16
Request informed consent	X															
Survey	X	X														
Class observation			X	X	X	X										
Interviews							X	X								
Data analysis									X	X	X	X				
Conclusions													X	X	X	

*Table 1 Timetable*

### 5.6 Budget

ACTIVITY	COST
Transport	\$50.000
Photocopies	\$10.000
Printing	\$15.000
Materials	\$30.000

*Table 2 Budget*

## **6. Data analysis**

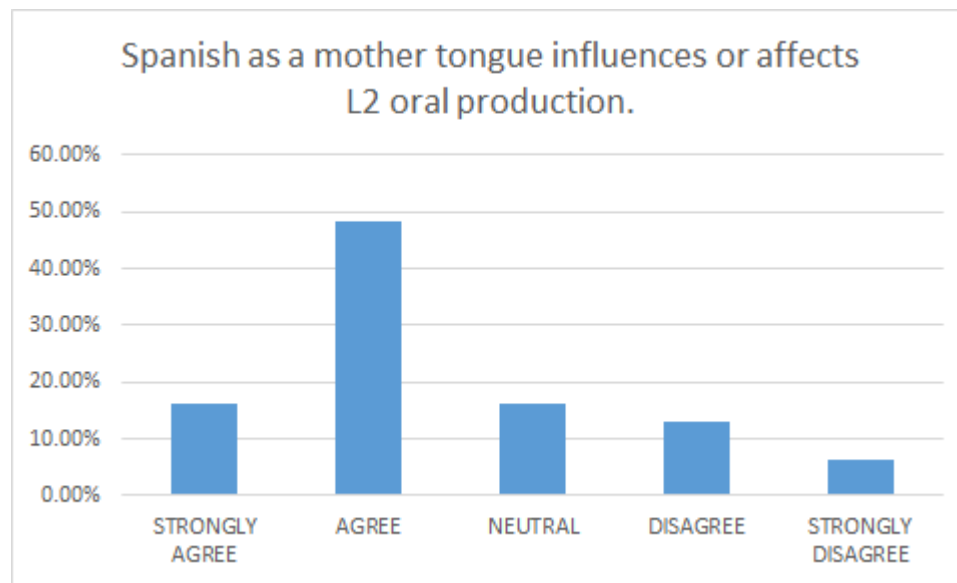
The purpose of the following chapter it is to present the categories and subcategories that arose through a detailed analysis of the qualitative data, which were gathered by means of techniques and instruments of data collection, such as: Class observations (Appendix 12.3), surveys (Appendix 12.4), and interviews (Appendixes 12.5).

### **6.1 Survey Analysis**

The analysis of the data gathered throughout the research is presented below. The main results are displayed in graphs portraying the most relevant findings for this project. This brief summary of the findings shows students' perceptions about accent in interaction. In addition, the following tendencies were observed:

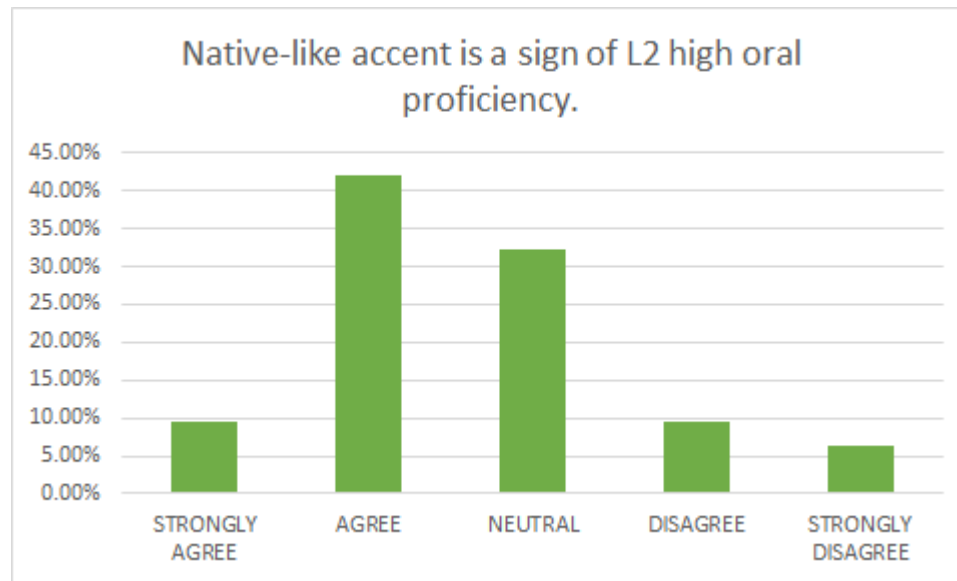
- Spanish as a mother tongue influences or affects L2 oral production
- Native-like accent is a sign of L2 high oral proficiency.
- Accent is a representation of an individual's identity.
- It is necessary to neutralize the mother tongue accent in L2 oral proficiency.
- People are neutral regarding with always thinking in English / French.
- People prefer English / French TV and/or radio shows and music.
- People feel comfortable speaking English / French around Colombian people.
- There are people who agree and who are neutral regarding with feeling more comfortable with people that share the same cultural values.
- People disagree with the importance of having a native like accent in L2 because it would not make them feel cooler.

- ❑ People agree with the fact that the cultural background as Spanish speaker has an influence on the L2 oral production.



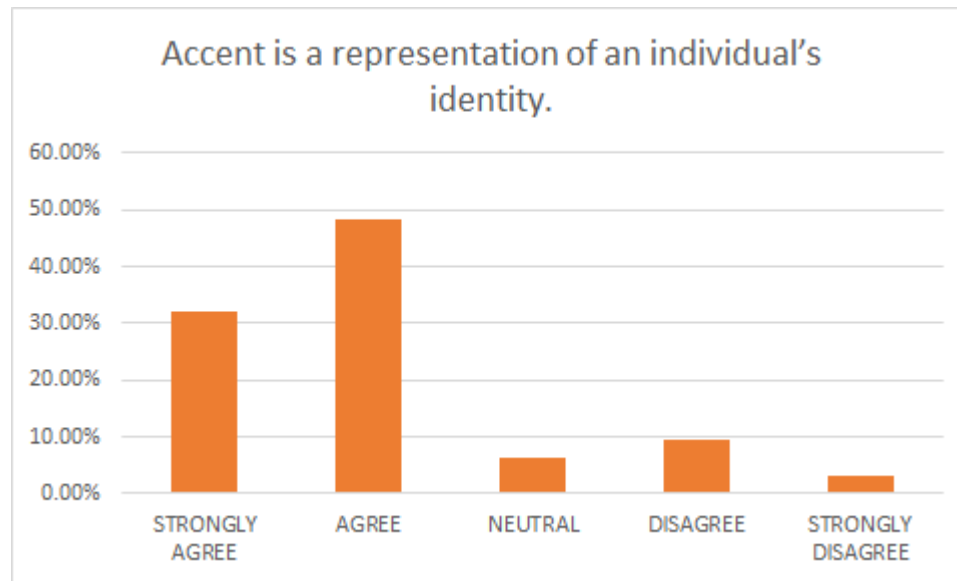
*Figure 1* Ratings of the influence of Spanish as a mother tongue in L2 oral production.

Question 1 is about the influence of Spanish as a mother tongue in L2 oral production. The results show that 16.1% of the subjects strongly agree that Spanish as a mother tongue influences or affects L2 oral production, 48.3% agree that Spanish as a mother tongue influences or affects L2 oral production, 16.1% are neutral regarding that Spanish as a mother tongue influences or affects L2 oral production, 12.9% disagree that Spanish as a mother tongue influences or affects L2 oral production, and 6.4% strongly disagree that Spanish as a mother tongue influences or affects L2 oral production. (Figure 1).



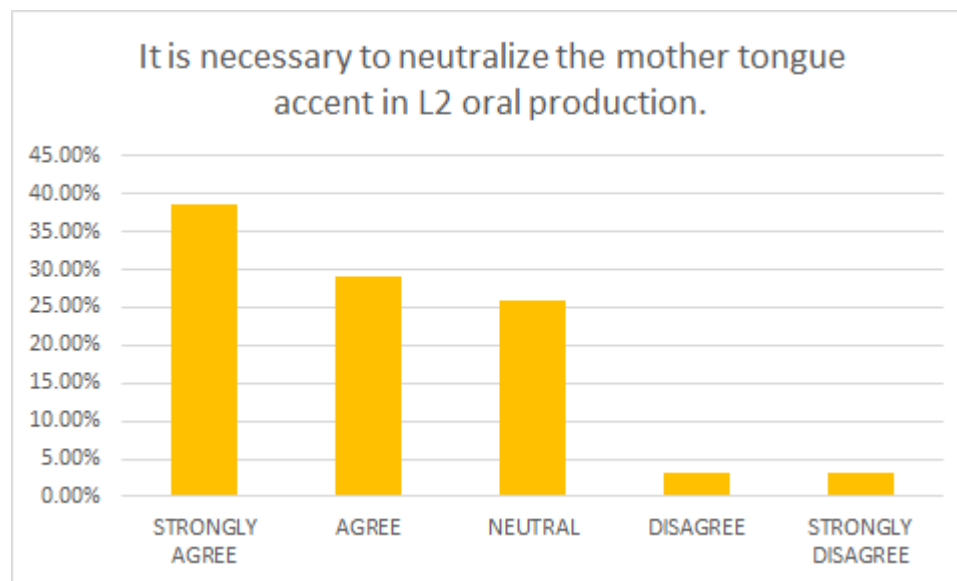
*Figure 2 Ratings of feeling that native like accent is a sign of L2 high oral proficiency.*

In question 2, students and teachers were asked to rate if native-like accent is a sign of L2 high oral proficiency. As shown in figure 2, 9.6% strongly agree that native-like accent is a sign of L2 high oral proficiency, 41.9% agree that native-like accent is a sign of L2 high oral proficiency, 32.2% are neutral regarding that native-like accent is a sign of L2 high oral proficiency, 9.6% disagree that native-like accent is a sign of L2 high oral proficiency, and 6.4% strongly agree that native-like accent is a sign of L2 high oral proficiency.



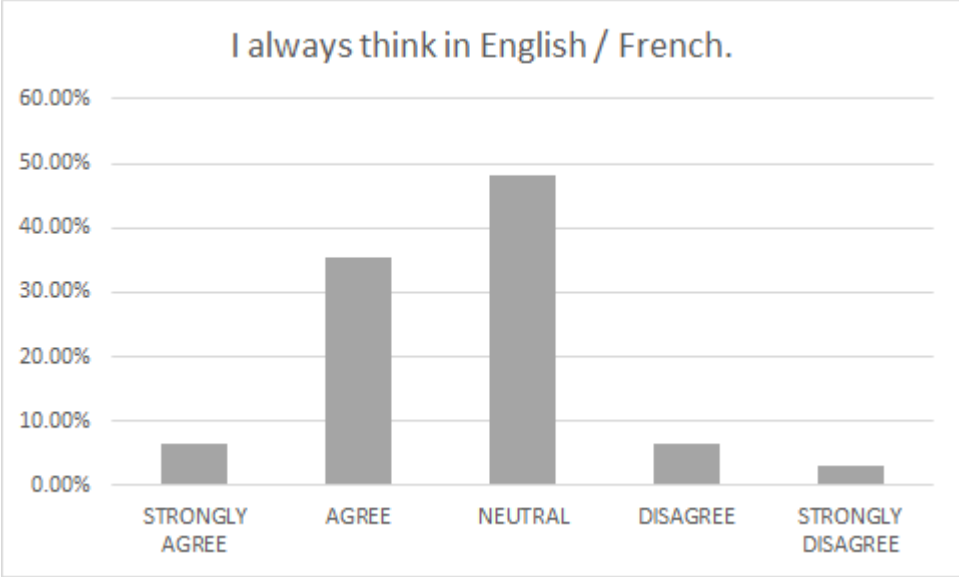
*Figure 3 Ratings about accent as a representation of an individual's identity.*

Question 3 is about accent as a representation of an individual's identity. The results demonstrate that 32.2% of the individuals strongly agree that accent is a representation of an individual's identity, 48.3% agree that accent is a representation of an individual's identity, 6.4% are neutral regarding that accent is a representation of an individual's identity, 9.6% disagree that accent is a representation of an individual's identity, and 3.2% strongly disagree that accent is a representation of an individual's identity. (Figure 3).



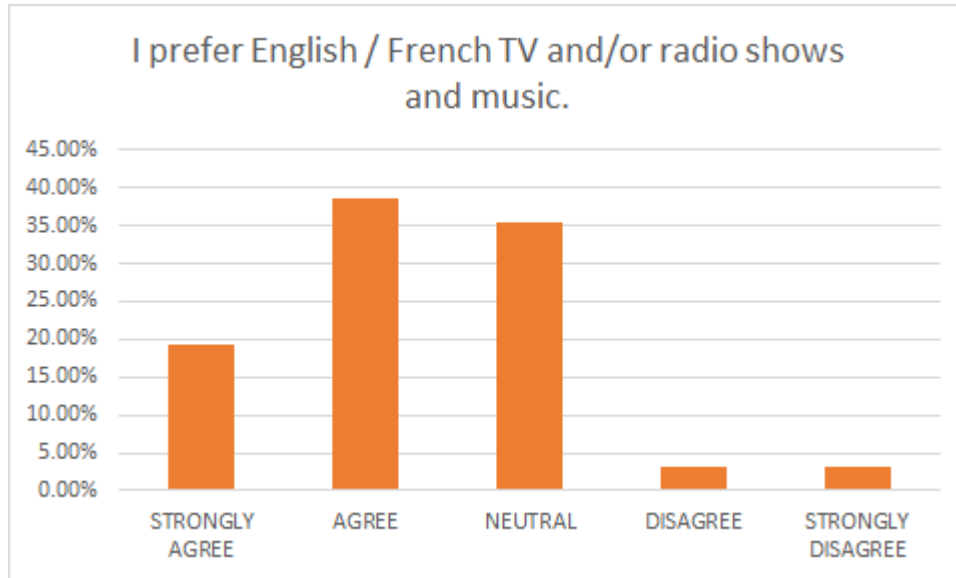
*Figure 4 Ratings about the need of neutralizing the mother tongue accent in L2 oral production.*

In question 4, students and teachers were asked about the need of neutralizing the mother tongue accent in L2 oral production. Figure 4 shows that 38.7% of the subjects strongly agree with the need of neutralizing the mother tongue accent in L2 oral proficiency, another 29.03% agree with the need of neutralizing the mother tongue accent in L2 oral proficiency, 25.8% are neutral regarding with the need of neutralizing the mother tongue accent in L2 oral proficiency, 3.2% disagree with the need of neutralizing the mother tongue accent in L2 oral proficiency, and 3.2% strongly disagree with the need of neutralizing the mother tongue accent in L2 oral proficiency.



*Figure 5 Ratings about always thinking in English / French.*

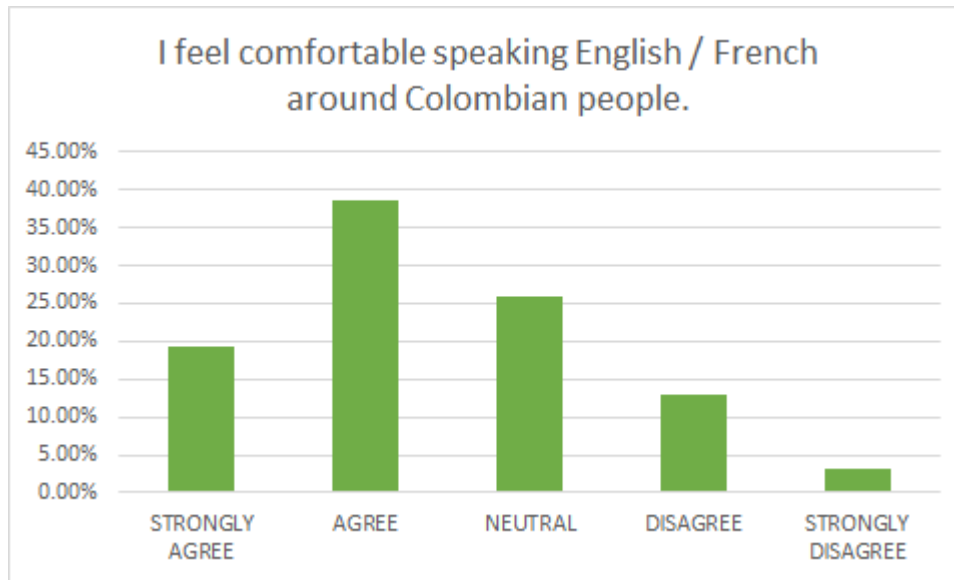
Question 5 is about always thinking in English / French. The results prove that 6.4% of the subjects strongly agree that always think in English / French, another 35.4% agree that always think in English / French, 48.3% are neutral regarding with always thinking in English / French, 6.4% disagree that always think in English / French, and 3.2% strongly disagree that always think in English / French. (Figure 5)



*Figure 6 Ratings about preferring English / French TV and/or radio shows and music.*

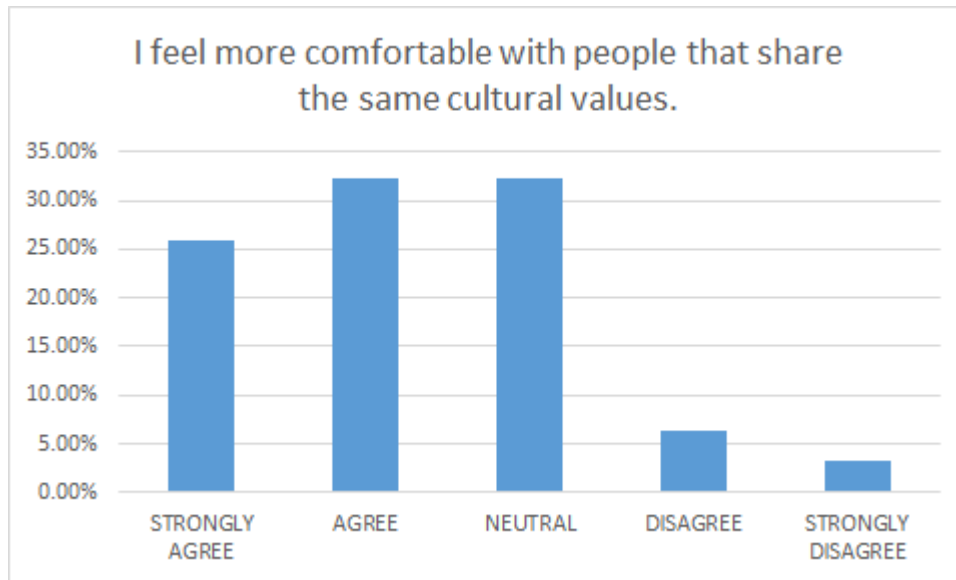
Question 6 is about preferring English / French TV and/or radio shows and music. As illustrated in figure 6, 19.3% of the surveyed people strongly agree with preferring English / French TV and/or radio shows and music, 38.7% agree with preferring English / French TV and/or radio shows and music, 35.4% are neutral with preferring English / French TV and/or radio shows and music, 3.2% disagree with preferring English / French TV and/or radio shows and music, and 3.2% strongly disagree with preferring English / French TV and/or radio shows and music.





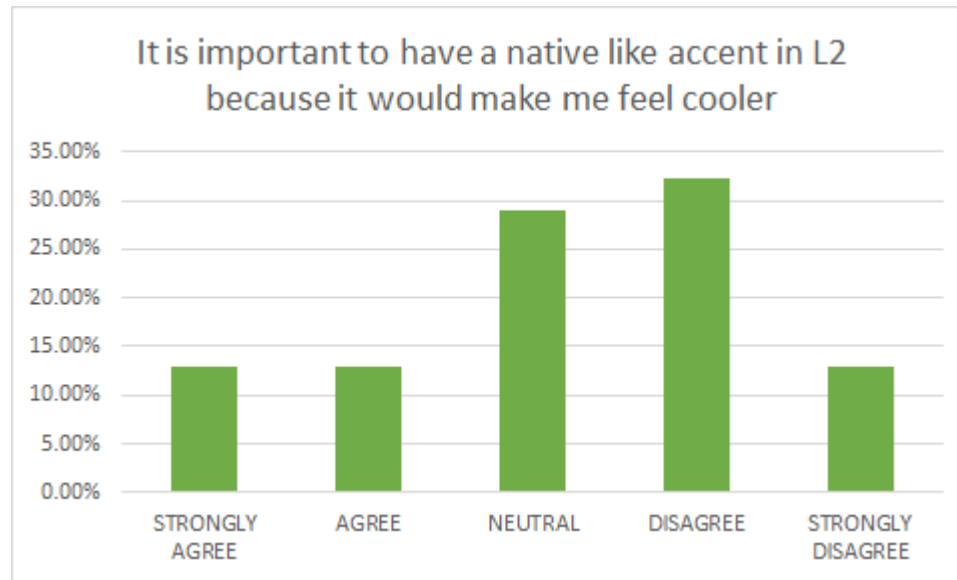
**Figure 7** Ratings about feeling comfortable speaking English / French around Colombian people.

In question 7, students and teachers were asked to rate about feeling comfortable speaking English / French around Colombian people. The results show that 19.3% of the individuals strongly agree with feeling comfortable speaking English / French around Colombian people, another 38.7% agree with feeling comfortable speaking English / French around Colombian people, 25.8% are neutral with feeling comfortable speaking English / French around Colombian people, 12.9% disagree with feeling comfortable speaking English / French around Colombian people, and 3.2% strongly disagree with feeling comfortable speaking English / French around Colombian people. (Figure 7)



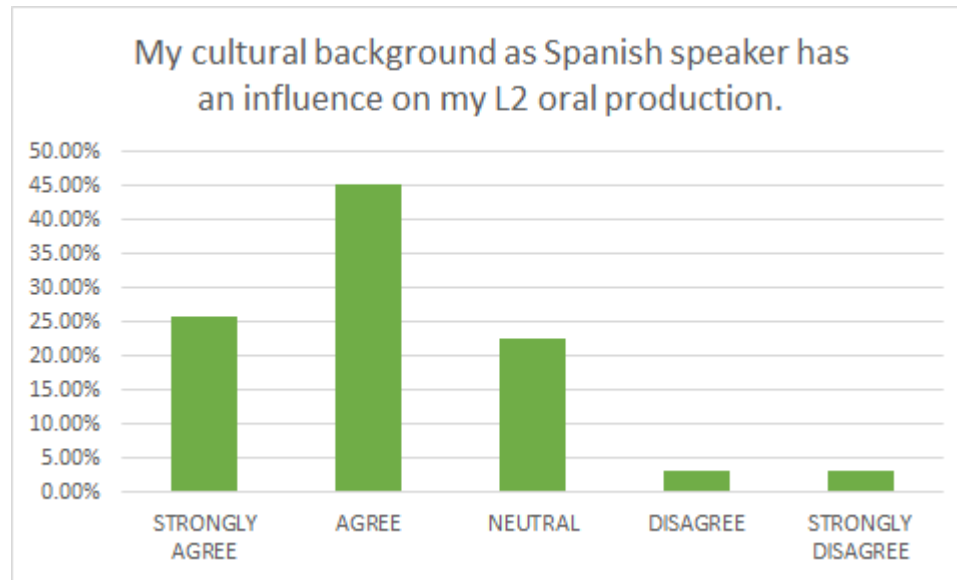
**Figure 8** Ratings about feeling more comfortable with people that share the same cultural values.

In question 8, students and teachers were requested to rate about feeling more comfortable with people that share the same cultural values. As portrayed in figure 8, 25.8% of the subjects strongly agree with feeling more comfortable with people that share the same cultural values, 32.2% agree with feeling more comfortable with people that share the same cultural values, 25.5% are neutral with feeling more comfortable with people that share the same cultural values, 6.4% disagree with feeling more comfortable with people that share the same cultural values, and 3.2% strongly disagree with feeling more comfortable with people that share the same cultural values.



*Figure 9* Ratings about the importance of having a native like accent in L2 because it would make me feel cooler.

Question 9 is about the importance of having a native like accent in L2 because it would make feel the person cooler. The results demonstrate that 12.9% of the surveyed people strongly agree with the importance of having a native like accent in L2 because it would make him feel cooler, 12.9% agree with the importance of having a native like accent in L2 because it would make him feel cooler, another 29.03% are neutral with the importance of having a native like accent in L2 because it would make him feel cooler, 32.2% disagree with the importance of having a native like accent in L2 because it would make him feel cooler, and 12.9% strongly disagree with the importance of having a native like accent in L2 because it would make him feel cooler. (Figure 9).



*Figure 10 Ratings about the cultural background influence on the L2 oral production as Spanish speaker*

Question 10 is about knowing if the cultural background influence on the L2 oral production as Spanish speaker. The outcomes show that 25.8% of the subjects strongly agree with the fact that the cultural background as Spanish speaker has an influence on the L2 oral production, 45.1% agree with the fact that the cultural background as Spanish speaker has an influence on the L2 oral production, 22.5% are neutral regarding with the fact that the cultural background as Spanish speaker has an influence on the L2 oral production, 3.2% disagree with the fact that the cultural background as Spanish speaker has an influence on the L2 oral production, and 3.2% strongly disagree with the fact that the cultural background as Spanish speaker has an influence on the L2 oral production. (Figure 10).

Following, are introduced the categories and subcategories the researchers found during the data collection analysis, considering the questions and objectives of the study.

### CATEGORIES

### SUBCATEGORIES

Accent and stereotypes: The never ending dilemma

Negative stereotypes related to the accent of the L1 when interacting in L2

Assumptions about the difference between accent and pronunciation

2. Perceptions students and teachers have regarding accent in bilingual interaction

3. Accent and cultural identity

Accent as a vehicle for culture and the role of the mother tongue and code switching

4. Intelligibility: Communication as the core

5. The importance of phonetics and phonology to develop speaking skills

Pronunciation emphasis

6. Teachers' feedback and its impact on students' oral production

Next, the categories and subcategories that were generated through qualitative techniques and instruments of data collection are described, analyzed and discussed under the depicted concepts that strengthen the Theoretical Framework of the research.

**6.1.1 Negative stereotypes related to the accent of the L1 when interacting in L2.**

One key aspect to analyze this category is attached to the different stereotypes teachers and students have, related to the accent of the L1 when interacting in L2. Thus, researchers found pertinent to know more about the diverse conceptions individuals have regarding this topic. Subsequent, some interviews fragments will be presented, which were applied to teachers and students, who answered to the following questions: Have you ever heard Alvaro Uribe or Sofia Vergara speaking in English? What do you think about it? Do you consider that there are stereotypes related to L2 oral production? For example, I really need to have a native like accent because I want to be seen as “cool” or I have to reduce my accent because people will laugh at me or something... These were some of their opinions:

**English teacher:** *“Hideous! It’s hideous actually. It’s, well, he is not supposed to be a very proficient English speaker, nevertheless as a politician, a man of power he is supposed to, he should be supposed to have a decent accuracy in a speaking sense. But he’s not he’s not accurate, he sounds really horrendous and preposterous.... ah, his mother tongue’s accent intervenes greatly in his oral production”.*

**Student from 6th semester:** *“I think it’s true, but it depends on the culture and the place where you are, yes? Because in some parts of America, people used to be very racist, racist. So if*

*you speak them in English, if you don't do it in a correct way, sounding like a native speaker they are going to treat you bad or something like that. So, I think that... if you want to travel to another country, you must have a good level of English" ...*

**Student from 4th semester:** *"Of course, they say my British accent is stupid and sounds so funny and it doesn't affect me, because I'm learning it".*

**French teacher from 6th semester:** *"El acento, sí, claro. El acento muchas veces porque repito, yo estudié en un contexto diferente ehh en Francia, yo estudié en Bélgica, en Bélgica y Francia más que aprender el idioma usted tiene que aprender el acento ehh de hecho ellos dicen, ¡Ay! No tiene acento, ese no tiene acento es algo positivo para ellos, cuando usted vaya a Francia y le digan y le dicen no tiene acento aunque le estén diciendo que no tiene acento, quiere decir que no tiene acento en su lengua materna, o sea que es bien visto. Ehh además si uno va a París si usted no habla un francés con un acento muy cercano al francés ehh no hacen esfuerzos por entenderle, simplemente dicen que no entienden, entonces allá en mi academia, en mi colegio de lenguas ehh hacían una gran influencia paradójicamente por el francés de Bélgica, que yo me acerco un poquito al francés de Francia porque la familia con la cual yo convivía era francesa, no era belga".*

Based on the discussed category, it can be analyzed that nowadays people still have some negative stereotypes about accent, which not only affects the conversational flow, the inner self of a subject, but also "measures" the proficiency level the individual has, a fact that has been a cause of prejudices and rejection by people who belong to the same environment or context and who share the same cultural values and beliefs. The previous statement is bound up with the following declaration, according to Derwing and Munro (2009), when he affirms that "accent has been blamed for all sorts of things. It has been seen as the cause of miscommunication and it has been used as a cover-up for racism and other kinds of discrimination". In the answers given by the

students from fourth and sixth semester, it is evident how one emphasizes on discrimination, more specific on racism, an opinion that is supported on the American history and highlights the importance of sounding like a native speaker, otherwise you will not be heard or people will be disrespectful with the subject. Similarly, the other student indicates how his partners have laughed at him and even have said extreme words referring to his accent, in spite of he does not speak with a local accent, because he has adopted a British accent, his classmates are not kind with him, since his accent is a cause of joy and entertainment with negative intentions; nevertheless, he does not care at all, and affirms that he is just learning. In this sense, 12.9% of the surveyed people strongly agree that it is important to have a native like accent in L2 because it would feel cooler; it means that people try to adopt accent to acquire a kind of status in society, a conception that is caused by social stereotypes. On the other hand, in other parts of the world sounding with non-accent, which means the complete eradication of L1 accent, is a positive fact and the best option to be accepted within a determined community, as it is expressed in the answer provided by the French teacher from sixth semester. The preceding argument is related with the affirmations made by Kumaravadivelu (2004), when she asserts that “an accent simply refers to one’s way of speaking, the way one sounds when speaking, the way one uses phonological features such as stress, rhythm, tone and intonation. Contrary to popular belief, it is not just foreigners or immigrants who speak with an accent. Everybody speaks with an accent. Non-accent is non-existent”. It means that everyone acquires an accent, which represents where the subject comes from, his origin and the cultural identity that is represented by the accent, a fact that will be explained in the following analyzes.



### 6.1.2 Assumptions about the difference between accent and pronunciation.

Another fundamental aspect to analyze this category is related with the conceptions teachers and students have about the difference between accent and pronunciation. Next, some of their assumptions will be portrayed based on the following question: Do you know the difference between accent and pronunciation, or they both are the same?

**Teacher:** *“Mmmm, pronunciation is part of language learning and accent is something people need to adopt, yes?”*

**Student from 6th semester:** *“Pronunciation well, accent is the rhythm maybe, I don't know, pronunciation is the correct way to say a word something like that...”*

**Student from 6th semester:** *“Well, accent can be something more related with your culture and it has to do with your L1, your first language. Because if you're talking Spanish and you have the Paisa accent or the Costeño accent, you are going to produce certain sounds that following that, those patterns of your accent. But pronunciation has to do more with grammar and the way words actually need to be pronounced”.*

**Student from 4th semester:** *“I think maybe we can pronounce very well the words in English but it is also a way to improve our accent in English like English speakers, if we try to learn the accent of American people, but I think the accent is very related with the English that we speak, so for example Australian people speak an English totally different from American people, so it's kind of related”*

According to the previous answers given by two students who belong to sixth semester and other fourth semester student, it can be inferred that one student may have a close definition than the other one to the terms they were asked to define, since he asserts that pronunciation indicates the correct way to say a word. Conversely, he declares that accent is related with the rhythm. However, the following student refers to Pronunciation as a grammar aspect, but states that accent deals with the L1 culture. In this regard, the other fourth semester student affirms that

pronunciation helps to improve the accent in English, to sound like an English speaker and highlights that Australian people speak an English totally different from the American one. In this sense, the author Panker (2013 cited in Lippi-Green, 1998) asserts that accent is described as a “loose bundle of prosodic and segmental features distributed over geographic and/or social space” (Its segmental features include the phonological structure of vowels and consonants, in other words, pronunciation, while prosodic features are intonation, pitch, stress, and tempo). Also, Dalton and Seidlhofer, (2001), argue that Pronunciation is the production of significant sounds in two senses: it is part of a code of a particular language, and is used to achieve meaning in contexts of use. Based on the previous pronunciation definition, the assumptions provided by the 4th semester teacher, is coherent to what has been explained, since he says that pronunciation is part of language learning, even though, he remarks that accent is something people need to adopt, an affirmation that has been discussed in the preceding sub category, when it is stated that everyone speaks with an accent, non-accent is nonexistent; hence, it is not something people need to adopt, because it has already been adopted since people acquire the L1. Accordingly, in general terms, these answers demonstrate the misconceptions people have regarding these two terms, due to its similarity and one depends from the other, but it is important to establish a difference, since it has been the main cause of stereotypes when a person performs his oral skills, masters a second language or even the first language.

## **6.2 Perceptions students and teacher have regarding accent in bilingual interaction**

Before talking about students’ and teachers’ perceptions regarding bilingual interaction, it is relevant to mention that Young (2008) defines interaction in second language learning as conversational and linguistic modifications that occur in discourse and that provide

with the necessary linguistic input. The previous definitions establish that interaction in language seeks to help the speaker have a better understanding of L2 based on L1. Next, some of their assumptions will be portrayed based on the following question: Some people think that for a subject to reach a high speaking level, he must possess a native-like accent. What is your position in your experience as a learner/teacher? (Appendix 12.5)

**Teacher:** *“Porque pues en estas teorías de enseñanza y aprendizaje de lengua y de las teorías del bilingüismo ya está muy revaluado esto de hablar nativo o sea eso ya es un mito o sea para ser profesor no se necesita tener una pronunciación nativa o sea porque, porque es que no somos el nativo ¿Si? Nosotros tenemos una identidad tenemos un acento entonces realmente lo que le interesa es que, para mí pues que los fonemas se acerquen a los fonemas de esa otra lengua, que yo tampoco les voy a estar hablando a ustedes moi (Mispronounced) ¿Si? O j'ai o j'ai (Mispronounced)... Entonces para mi es más importante en que yo pueda producir los sonidos de una manera no correcta, si no adecuada, porque la corrección eso no existe. ...”*

**Teacher:** *“Todos lo aprendimos de manera consecutiva entonces eso es una falacia en que nos han metido de que para que ser profesor de lengua debemos tener una pronunciación como un nativo”.*

**Teacher:** *“Bueno, mi opinión es que las personas que tienen ese pensamiento se quedaron ancladas en los métodos teóricos de los años 80, ehh las teorías en bilingüismo han avanzado, entonces uno hablar sobre el acento estaríamos hablando de nociones de bilingüismo maximalistas, porque sabemos que hay maximalistas donde el que es bilingüe es el nativo, unos minimalistas donde si usted dice “hello” ya habla inglés y unas intermedias donde lo importante es que usted pueda comunicarse en esa lengua extranjera ... Sin embargo hay muchos profesores que se quedaron ehh con los años 90, nunca se interesaron por ir... pero eso ya quedó atrás\_o sea que a mí, si estoy de acuerdo que todavía hay personas, que tienen esos postulados pero me da temor de que la educación está en manos de personas que aún están pensando así”.*

**Student from 6<sup>th</sup> semester:** *“I think that this is not... That is not possible, maybe yes, but if you acquire a language at a very early age”.*

**Student from 6<sup>th</sup> semester:** *“That’s stupid. I don’t think it works like that. I don’t think ... for me it doesn’t make any sense. Like, it’s just to speak a language, and that’s good. I don’t think it ... because you can speak another language like you, and you’re high or not!”*

**Student from 6<sup>th</sup> semester:** *“I think that in the very first moment, it is not important to have an accent, maybe you can get an accent, and maybe if you consider it is important for you, it is okay, but it is not important to learn language, I think it depends on you”.*

Based on these answers it can be concluded that most of the teachers and the students do not find necessary to have a native like accent when speaking in L2, as it was stated by Blanco (1981), who mentions that according to Cerdá Massó (1986), “Bilingualism consists of the ability of the speaker to use two languages interchangeably. By extension, it is said of the sociolinguistic condition by which a community uses two different languages to cover exactly the same collective and private communicative tasks”. For this reason, it is possible to consider that these students and teachers serve as bilingual subjects, without taking in consideration if they do have any accent in L2. Additionally, since their learning process occurs in place in which they are constantly using their L1, they are constantly using traces of their mother tongue, specially the accent. That is why in their L2 production it is evident that they are elective bilinguals Baker (2001) because they have chosen to learn the language in a classroom, in this case, at the university.

In the same way, it is pertinent to include students’ and teachers’ answers in relation to the question: Has a teacher ever corrected your accent in L2? Or you as a teacher have ever corrected accent in L2? (Appendix 12.5). In order to present that they do not find any relationship between

the speakers' proficiency and the accent.

**Student from 4<sup>th</sup> semester:** *“Ah. Not really” (Laugh)*

**Student from 4<sup>th</sup> semester:** *“No, never ever”.*

**Student from 4<sup>th</sup> semester:** *“Not really!”*

**Student from 4<sup>th</sup> semester:** *“Yes! Well, the feedback that they gave me is more like... not in pronunciation, it's more like in grammar while I'm speaking, right? They said to me that I sometimes mix the ... the terms?”*

**Student from 4<sup>th</sup> semester:** *“No, not really. All of them are respectful regarding the accent of the student. They also put audios about Australian people, British people, American people, Indian people, so they respect all accents, because they are conscious about the importance that we are in the world, right?”*

**Professor:** *“No, el acento no, yo no puedo corregir el acento”*

**Professor:** *“ahm, not my accent, my pronunciation which is why I say pronunciation and accent are different things”.*

**Professor:** *“No, no, no, yo nunca, no corrijo acento por una sola razón, es que no existe una acento valido. ¿Sí? Ehh cuando uno dice es que usted enseña francés de Francia, pero es que Francia, francés de Francia, ¿cuantas regiones? ¿Del sur? ¿Del norte? ¿O francés de Bélgica? Pero de que, de la Hainaut, no o sea es que cuando uno cuando uno corrige uno no puede corregir acento jamás. Yo corrijo pronunciación, pronunciación y eso si esa pronunciación impide la comunicación, porque creo que es un proceso que se tiene que ir dando paulatinamente no es que de la noche a la mañana el estudiante pronuncia bien, pero el acento jamás”.*

**Student from 6<sup>th</sup> semester:** *“No, no”...*

**Interviewer:** *“¿No? Never?”*

**Student from 6<sup>th</sup> semester:** *“Como que te digan, no esa no es la manera...”*

**Interviewer:** *For example, you've never been told like you have can't talk with this Paisa*

*accent... For example”...*

**Student from 6<sup>th</sup> semester:** *“Pues no es como que tú no puedes hablar en ese acento, o sea, cada estudiante tiene como, como que su propio acento sabe. Como que, yo no he visto ningún estudiante que yo me identifique con él en la forma de hablar o en la forma en que nosotros hacemos entonación o stress, o ese tipo de cosas”.*

**Student from 6<sup>th</sup> semester:** *“The accent? No. Maybe the pronunciation, but the accent no”.*

**Student from 6<sup>th</sup> semester:** *“My accent? Well, I don’t know, I don’t have a remarkable accent because I’m from Armenia, so it’s like a neutral accent but sometime, some professor told that unconsciously, I’m trying to imitate the British accent”.*

**Student from 6<sup>th</sup> semester:** *“no, they had never corrected my accent”.*

**Student from 6<sup>th</sup> semester:** *“Pues no es como que tú no puedes hablar en ese acento, o sea, cada estudiante tiene como, como que su propio acento sabe. Como que, yo no he visto ningún estudiante que yo me identifique con él en la forma de hablar o en la forma en que nosotros hacemos entonación o stress, o ese tipo de cosas”.*

**Interviewer:** *“So, you think you like that, for example, like accent or your rhythm at speaking, your accent, represents you as an, as an individual”.*

**Student from 6<sup>th</sup> semester:** *“Exacto”.*

Consequently, as (Thornbury and Slade, 2006, p.17) state, “speaking is social, in the sense that it establishes rapport and mutual agreement, maintains and modifies social identity, and involves interpersonal skills. In other words, this social element allows learners express opinions, attitudes, wishes, feelings, thoughts and judgments but those factors can cause conflict in the classroom when teaching speaking”. Thus, the focus to measure a subject’s proficiency is the intelligibility and not the accent.

### **6.3 Accent and cultural identity**

A crucial category for the project is depicted in those two concepts: accent and cultural identity. These two notions are the core of the research as they represent what the project intends to accentuate. For this reason, the analysis for this category came into existence by means of interviews and a survey to both students and professors that intended to know what the perceptions about. In this manner, this category contains the opinions and ideas that the population holds in terms of what being an ESL speaker in a Spanish world is, and how it affects their performance and their identity as Spanish native speakers.

#### **6.3.1 Accent as a vehicle for culture and the role of the mother tongue.**

In this line of thought, some aspects closely tied to the category are the ideas that ESL speakers depict their cultural background as they perform in the L2, and how they use the mother tongue to express ideas they are not able to do in the L2. This information is fundamental because there is a close bond between accent/culture and its relation with the L2 production. To gain this information, researchers applied a survey (Appendix 12.5) and an interview (Appendix 12.4) to 4 teachers and 20 students. The information gathered, answered to the question: do you consider that your accent may reflect your cultural identity? Following are shown some of the answers provided by professors:

**French Teacher:** *“Mi acento en parte refleja mi identidad cultural, claro, porque como ahora hablamos, los acentos hacen parte de grupos locales. Eh, si a mí me escuchan en una parte saben que soy paisa, los paisas tienen una cosmovisión. Uno hace parte de ese grupo entonces obviamente un acento hace parte también de esa identidad cultural. Eh, sin embargo, no se puede reducir la identidad cultural al acento, ¿sí? No puedo decir que uno es de determinada manera porque llevo un acento,*

*entonces no, la identidad está formada por múltiples variables en las cuales está esa, ¿sí?, pero no es la que define totalmente.”*

**English Teacher:** *“(...) it used to, why? Because I was very to the point with everything, if I wanted to write a business letter I did it in two lines and it reflected my identity. I don't know how to say that because I was not born in The United States, but I grew up in The United States, so I was taught a different way of thinking. I brought that way of thinking here and if somebody say would meet at four o'clock, I would be in the place fifteen minutes before and the person would arrive at 4:15 or 4:30 and then “¡Ah, es que el gringo siempre llegando temprano!” so, those are things people will see in me. But now I still have my own way of thinking from there, but I act more now from here, so I'll be late and I don't like to be late, I would say things that are normal to say here but are not in the lines of how I think.”*

As is it seen, teachers agree to the postulate that one's accent reflects their cultural identity because it is not merely a feature of the spoken language but a series of ideas, customs, and behaviors that are passed on by generations Kun (2013). In this manner, it is also true that when a subject depicts any accent in the L2 production an unacceptable difference is perceived by the population that witnesses this performance.

Likewise, some of the most notable appraisals by the part of the students are shown here:

- *“Yes because my cultural identity depends on how I talk, how I tell about myself.”*
- *“Hmm at certain degree because... (...) I'll take an example from the L1, for example when you see someone from a neighborhood and it's kind of a poor, yeah, they have a, kind of accent that you recognize immediately.”*
- *“Sí, por ejemplo, creo que estamos muy acostumbrados a... cuando vemos a una*



*persona de otro país y tiene ese acento diferente, solemos alabarlos, como que él es gringo, no se le acerque, o tratarlos diferentes como mejores personas, aunque sabemos que nuestro acento colombiano es único y nos hace parte de una cultura diferente, solemos tratar de cambiar o imitar otros acentos o culturas diferentes para sentirnos chévere. O sea, si es importante el acento y todo lo que utilizamos en la pronunciación, pero a veces cuando estamos con alguien de otra parte, tendemos a cambiar como a encajar con lo que tienen esas otras personas.”*

- *“Yes, of course, because as I said before, if you travel to other countries and you speak with your accent, people can identify if you are from Colombia, from Argentina, from Chile, from different countries, so it's like very important.”*

Accordingly, the students share the same line of thinking assuring that their accent represents who they are as individuals in a bilingual context. It is seen, that students consider that their accent is something they cannot part from but it is also noticeable the marks of the postcolonial thinking; that is, that somehow the colonized subjects do not have the prestige that the powerful colonizer gave them Tyson (2006). In part, that explains why having an accent present in the L2 is seen as something negative and which must be changed. Likewise, this information is supported by the data seen in Figure 3 where 48.3% agree that accent is a representation of an individual's identity. Moreover, this accented L2 production displays a series of behaviors, ideas, and customs that tell one EFL speaker from the other. However, it is also true that this identity can be shaped according to the speaker's desires and that these changes respond to many external factors such a stereotypes and better job opportunities if having a standard or native-like accent.

On the other side, during the data collection and analysis, researchers noticed a particular

pattern while participants were giving their appraisals. It was the **code-switching** phenomenon, constantly used when there was an idea, they were not able to present in the L2 with the same accuracy as they did in their mother tongue. This code-switching scenario, gave subjects the opportunity to connect their thoughts to the present situation as EFL speakers. Following are presented some of the cases:

- **Professor** : *“Information numéro deux: ça c'est si vous êtes professeurs, si vous êtes professeurs, maintenant vous êtes étudiants, okay? Une autre recommandation: quand vous arrivez et allez utiliser ça, c'est quoi?”*

**Student 1**: *“Silla.”*

**Professor**: *“Oui!”*

**Student 2**: *“Chair.”*

**Professor**: *“Une jupe rose !*

**Student**: *“Une jupe ! ¿Que, qué ?”*

**Professor**: *“Pas de l'espagnol!”*

**Student**: *“Corra, corra”*

- **Student**: *“Because there are some words that they can't pronounce good. So, well I don't know. Es que no sé cómo decirlo.”*

**Interviewer**: *“¿Qué?”*

**Student**: *“Pues que no se escucha como con naturalidad.”*

**Interviewer**: *“Ah, ok. O sea ¿Para ti es como forzado?”*

**Student**: *“Sí.”*

- **Student:** (Having an accent in L2) *“Because it's like a sello. Es que no sé cómo explicarlo.”*

Before giving any more insights into this aspect, it is necessary to say that as it emerged during the data collection, and was mainly seen in one group, it was not included into the theoretical framework. Due to this fact, these definitions are presented in the analysis of this category as a particularity that was not the aimed of the study. This code-switching panorama, in some cases exhibited the speaker's lack of command in English, and the speaker's inability to translate conceptions into the L2. To provide more insights into this aspect, it is important to notice that in the previous examples, speakers who changed code showed a lack of vocabulary and language ability as they were not able to express their ideas in the L2. According to Poplack (1980), the term code-switching is “the alternation of two languages within a single discourse, sentence or constituent.” Like this, when speakers code-switched, they were conscious of that change and sometimes asked how to say some things or they expressed their inability to find the concepts in their bank of knowledge. Then, when students use their L1 to express the ideas they are not able to say in the L2, the mother tongue is not but a resource they have at hand. Additionally, in figure 10 45.1% of participants agree with the fact that the cultural background as Spanish speaker has an influence on the L2 oral production. This assertion is not necessarily a negative aspect as learners can use their mother tongue as a basis for communicating in the L2. This is also expressed by Bruhlmann (2001) when she says “the L1 is one of the many resources that the students bring with them to the classroom and they can't help but think in their native language. A learner's thoughts are inherently connected with the words that the learner produce.”

#### **6.4 Intelligibility: Communication as the core.**

An important aspect to carry out the analysis of this category it is to know if students have been corrected their accents or teachers have corrected students' accents. These are some of their answers:

**Teacher:** *“Not accent but pronunciation. Acent, no, no because... Oh, I have said to them, you know, we speak paisa English naturally and if you want to change it, but you don't have to change it because the most important thing is to communicate... I always tell them the most important thing for you is to communicate correctly”. A good example is Álvaro Uribe, yes? He has very good control of his vocabulary, and he makes some small mistakes, but he communicates his ideas well and the interpretation, misinterpretation comes by through his pronunciation, but that doesn't mean he is a bad communicator, on the contrary he is a good communicator. Ah, fatherly I believe that it's not about accents it's, languages are about communication, if get to communicate ah, accurately it's going to be even better now, nevertheless, you are becoming Professionals of the language that requires you to be better and above the average you see, so... As I'm telling you it's mostly communication, the ultimate goal of language, but if you are training yourselves to be professors in the future, then, you are required to be better, you see.*

**Student from 6th semester:** *“No, and actually if you're going to learn a language you have to try to be understood and try to reduce your own accent and for that, for that purpose, for being understood in a better way”*

**Student:** *“Well, I think that if you're able to express your opinions and all the staff correctly, and they have a good pronunciation, probably the accent is not so important.”*

Taking into consideration the prior answers by teachers and students, they differ one from the other one; however, there is a specific aspect in common in both opinions, communication as

the core. In this way, the teacher explains that the main goal of language is to communicate correctly, languages are about communication and if one of his students want to change their accent, he will help him by providing exercises focused on phonetics and pronunciation, he also illustrates his opinion with Álvaro Uribe, he affirms that he makes some small mistakes in terms of pronunciation, but he is a good communicator, he communicates his ideas well. As opposed to the student's answer, in which he emphasizes on the fact of reducing L1 accent, in order to be understood. Likewise, 41.9% of the surveyed subjects agreed that native like accent is a sign of L2 oral proficiency, also, the 38.7% of people strongly agree that it is necessary to neutralize the mother tongue accent in L2 oral production, which means that some people believe that accent represents how proficient a subject is when mastering the L2 oral production. Nevertheless, Nunan (1999) and Burkart and Sheppard (2004) argue that based on Torkey (2006), "success in learning a language is measured in terms of the ability to carry out a conversation in the (target) language". Thereby, the proficiency level of a subject must not be measured by the speaker's accent, but on the capability to communicate spontaneously.

### **6.5 The importance of phonology and phonetics to develop speaking skills**

During the data collection, the importance of phonology and phonetics when developing oral skills in L2 emerged as a relevant subject for the present study. While the interviews were carried out, (Appendix 12.5), the participants declared that for them the most important elements to develop the oral proficiency in L2 were directly related with phonetics and phonology. The question was: What aspects do you consider important to develop oral skills in L2

**Teacher:** *"Oh yeah, I got everything related to phonetics and phonology, especially for*

*people who are learning English, I would say rhythmical patterns, yes? Intonation and all the features which would lead students to improve not pronunciation, but to improve fluency”.*

**Teacher:** *“Bueno, yo siempre le insisto a los estudiantes en conocer bien lo que son las claves fonéticas. Es, decir saber cómo se produce el fonema ¿Si? En el caso del francés, saber que la grafía en francés se aleja del sonido en francés porque a diferencia del español, en el cual evolucionó, o sea ambas vienen del latín no pero en el español la digamos así la fonética avanzó al mismo tiempo que avanzó la escritura, o sea la dos fueron como más o menos de la mano digamos así no exactamente pero... (A la par) A la par ¿Si? En francés avanzo la fonética pero la escritura se quedó un poco atrás, y por eso vemos que hay una gran diferencia en cómo se escribe y como se pronuncia. Por eso no decimos moi si no /mwa/ ¿Si? No decimos maison, maison, si no decimos /mèzô/ porque esos fonemas fueron avanzando en la pronunciación, pero en la escritura digamos que no evoluciono hacia el fonema /è/en vez que utilice /mèzô/ ahí debería escribirse con /è/ ¿Si? Pero no se escribe entonces para mí digamos esa parte de la fonética. En francés es muy importante el ritmo, ¿Si? El ritmo los grupos fónicos, donde uno va a detenerse ¿Si? Y es importante bueno la entonación. Saber si sube, si baja cuando uno utiliza una palabra interrogativa, si la frase final sube o baja entonces”.*

**Teacher:** *“Bueno, ehh de manera efectiva yo creo que se debe trabajar con la neurolingüística. La neurolingüística pues hace unos postulados de que para poder producir un sonido ese sonido debe estar referenciado en su mente, no estoy de acuerdo de los procesos repetitivos pues que uno tenga que repetir y repetir y repetir una palabra, pero sí considero que uno tiene que escuchar y escuchar y escuchar una palabra antes de producirla. Entonces creo que*

*una de las maneras efectivas es que el estudiante esté expuesto a muchos sonidos, a mucha input, que le llegue mucha información, que en la clase se hable mucho el idioma, que el estudiante esté escuchando para que de manera inconsciente se vayan grabando esos sonidos que en el momento que él los vaya a producir pues haya ahí una conexiones neuronales que le permitan hacer esa producción del sonido. Entonces la neurolingüística me parece importante, y también me parece importante la sociolingüística, es decir, que aparte de esta de ser conscientes de que ese idioma tiene que formarse en el cerebro pues esas palabras existen en un contexto y creo que cuando los estudiantes ehh saben ehh de lo que se está hablando ellos pueden producir más fácil un sonido que cuando es de manera aislada, cuando están repitiendo cosas que no tienen sentido, que no saben lo que significan. Entonces la parte sociolingüística es decir, las palabras no están aisladas, ellas hacen parte de un contexto y un contexto local, nacional, internacional. Cuando se les da un contexto a las palabras, los estudiantes tienen más accesibilidad a la producción de esos que sean frases, textos, o libros”.*

**Student from 4<sup>th</sup> semester:** *“I think the most important ones is grammar, because of the rules of the language in L2 and the second one for me, pronunciation, it’s really important”.*

**Student from 4<sup>th</sup> semester:** *“: Maybe to make the differences in some, in some words that ... Well, it’s. There are different words, but the pronunciation is a little bit different. So, it’s to make the correct difference”.*

**Student from 6<sup>th</sup> semester:** *“: I think that if you study phonetics that’s the best part because I heard a lot of people, you know, when I lived in the States I didn’t realize the full*

*knowledge of phonetics, and now that I studied phonetics the last semester, it was easier for me to understand how it works, and to put in practice that knowledge for going better”.*

**Student from 6<sup>th</sup> semester:** *“Well, it is important intonation because with that, it could give you a different meaning. With intonation you are going to express what you want to express or if you have a bad intonation you are going to mean something different. So, it can cause a lot of troubles. Intonation ... fluency is important also because if you have a good fluency you are going to have a better job, or know better people. I don’t know”.*

**Student from 6<sup>th</sup> semester:** *“I think that the most important is the pronunciation because in English there are some words that are so similar. So, if you don’t pronounce them good, you can commit a mistake, and you are not going to be able to express your ideas”.*

Based on the teachers’ and students’ answers, there emerged some evident tendencies:

1. Teachers agree when declaring that the most relevant issue to develop oral skills in L2 effectively is to study phonetics, to know how sounds are produced and to be able to recognize the difference between them.
2. Students from 6<sup>th</sup> semester acknowledge the importance of phonetics and phonology from the theoretical field to the practical one.
3. Students from 4<sup>th</sup> semester admit the importance of pronouncing well in L2 without having a strong theoretical referent.



### 6.5.1 Pronunciation Emphasis

In this subcategory, is it presented the relation that teachers' and students' answers have with some aspects that were evidenced in the classes' observations (Appendix 12.3). During the lessons, the teachers made a huge emphasis on the way how students should pronounce. Besides, they used different strategies that helped students to be aware of the mistakes that they were making and the way how they could improve them.

**Students:** *"Illiteracy"*

**Professor A:** *"It was illiteracy or illiteracy (Pronunciation), we can say it both ways. Yes?"...*

**Student:** *"Illiteracy?"*

**Professor A:** *"Yes"*

**Students:** *"Illiteracy – Illiteracy – Illiteracy"*

**Professor A:** *"Yeah! You can say it both ways illiteracy or illiteracy or Illiteracy"*

**Professor A:** *"Ok. Man-made climate change, deforestation and overfishing. The last word of the question number nine. How do you pronounce it? How do you pronounce the last question, the last word?"*

**Students:** *"Decline, decline" (Pronunciation)*

**Professor A:** *"Decline, yes?"*

**Students:** *"Decline, decline" (Pronunciation)*

**Professor A:** *"Decline, good".*

**Student:** *"How can world's leaders and people in general improve the world? Eh, leaders*

*and people in general can improve the world with communication and financials” ...*

**Professor A:** *“Ok. So, through communication and” ...*

**Students:** *“Financial support” (Mispronounced in financial)*

**Professor A:** *“Say financial (Well pronounced – students repeat), and financial support, yes”*

**Student:** *“We consider that that is a problem and a possible solution could be that the government use different resources (Mispronounced), resources”*

**Professor A:** *“Resources, yes”*

**Student:** *“If we didn’t have such a big lake of education” ...*

**Professor A:** *“Lack, lack of education”*

**Student:** *“Lack of education.”*

**Student:** - *“Bonjour! Aujourd’hui je vais vous parler d’un film américain. Le film est basé sur une histoire vraie, celle de Ken Carter, l’entraîneur de basket-ball au lycée des Etats unis. Un entraîneur noir américain est embauché comme coach”* (Teacher corrected the pronunciation of the word coach, since the student pronounced it in English).

**Student:** *« Une ceinture? »*

**Student:** *« No es ceinture? » (Pronunciation)*

**Professor B:** *« Une ceinture noire. Attention à la prononciation ! »*

**Student:** *« Une T-shirt blanc ? »*

**Professor B:** « *Ok, une T-shirt blanche !* »

**Professor B:** « *Attention ici, à partir d'aujourd'hui vous devez bien prononcer ce mot. Ok ? /fam/ Ça va être nasal /san/ /san/ sympathique. Comment se prononce au ?* »

**Student:** “/o//o//o//o//o/”

**Professor B:** « *C'est pour ça qu'on prononce /osi/ La classe vous allez faire attention au nasal. Oui ? Attention vous allez éliminer de pens, vous allez le faire plus nasal. Oui?* »

In addition, teachers did these kind of comments giving the students the possible pronunciation, for them to realize which one they found more accurate. (Dalton and Seidlhofer, 2001, p. 3) illustrate that pronunciation is the production of significant sounds in two senses: It is part of a code of a particular language, and is used to achieve meaning in contexts of use. For this reason, it can be asserted that students' and teachers' answers are not inadequate when identifying the importance of a correct pronunciation and all the components that belong to it while developing oral skills in L2 effectively. Also, it was evident that teachers never corrected accent, their only focus was pronunciation, enhancing students' oral proficiency. Furthermore, (Adult Migrant English Program Research Centre, [AMEP], 2002, p. 1) asserted that:

“Pronunciation is the production of sounds that we use to make meaning. It includes attention to the particular sounds of a language (segments), aspects of speech beyond the level of the individual sound, such as intonation, phrasing, stress, timing, rhythm (suprasegmental aspects), how the voice is projected (voice quality) and, in its broadest definition, attention to gestures and expressions that are closely related to the way we speak a language”.

Referring to this given definition of pronunciation, it is noticeable the relevant role that pronunciation has in oral skills development. Thus, participants never mentioned accent as a necessary issue for being orally proficient in L2. For this reason, it is supported the idea that accent differs from oral competence.

### **6.6 Teacher's feedback and its impact on student's oral production**

During the data collection process this aspect was looked upon with careful attention for it was intended to see if teachers played a role into the existing stereotypes related to L2 accented speech. In order to do this, an interview was applied to both teachers and students, and class observations were carried with the purpose of witnessing any signs of accent correction. During the class observations, researchers observed that teachers did not correct accent, they focused in the accurate pronunciation of the words by explaining students the importance of good pronunciation to avoid misunderstandings in meaning. The next extract illustrates the importance of feedback for accurate pronunciation:

**Student:** *“Bonjour! Aujourd’hui je vais vous parler d’un film américain. Le film est basé sur une histoire vraie, celle de Ken Carter, l’entraîneur de basketball au lycée des Etats unis. Un entraîneur noir américain est embauché comme coach (T corrected the pronunciation of the word coach, since the student pronounced it in English).”*

**Student:** *“Une ceinture?”*

**Student:** *“¿No es ceinture?”* (Pronunciation)

**Teacher:** *“Une ceinture noire. Attention à la prononciation!”*

**Student:** *“Une T-shirt blanc?”*

**Teacher:** *“Ok, une T-shirt blanche!”*

The previous extract showed how the teachers focused more on how to accurately pronounce the words than if they were accented. This revealed that what was important for the teacher was intelligibility. In the same manner, the population was asked if they as students or teachers were corrected or ever corrected speech in terms of accent. Most of the population answered negatively to the question but they asserted that the teacher's feedback on the oral production was essential to prove accuracy. Below are shown extracts that exemplify the population's claims:

- *“Well, it has a positive impact on me because thanks to that I can improve or change what I made wrong, and it can give me a better pronunciation.”*

- *“Ah, well, my listening and speaking teachers were so bad, but the professor XXXXX, he helped me a lot (Laugh). He helped me to feel more comfortable because at the beginning I was so shy. I was in second semester when he give me classes and he told me: “No, no, speak, speak, if you commit a mistake, well, you can improve it, but you have to speak” And I think that, that is the more helpful part.”*

- *“No, I think that it is positive because if they tell us like the way we are supposed to pronounce something, or the way we're supposed to say something, it helps you to improve. So, I think it's good.”*

The role of feedback into the classroom as reported by students is an essential part for becoming a successful speaker. In this way, feedback is a two-way interaction between teacher and learner and what generates from that is a benefit for the teaching-learning process itself. Comments teachers do on the oral production provides the learner with the necessary tools to rule their learning; it is a correcting agent comparable to a peer or a book. Similarly, Sultana (1980)

asserts that “it is very important for the learners to get feedback from their teachers, as well as, a teacher has a responsibility to provide meaningful and effective feedback in the classroom. Feedback helps a learner to encourage in their study.” Although this project was not looking for the role of feedback it is a category that exhibits, that it is pronunciation and accuracy what matters at the moment of speaking, and that accent is principally a trait of the speaker’s production. This of course supports the thesis of this research as it gives way to ascertain that accent is a fundamental part of the subject’s cultural background and that it does not mingle with pronunciation and intelligibility.

## 7. Conclusions

Drawing to the final discussions and results of this project, it is pertinent to remember that the objective of this study was to show that accent was part of the cultural identity of the subject. Accented L2 production was considered a sign of the speakers fingerprint within the milieu of a classroom. This study described the perceptions students and teachers had regarding accented speech, social stereotypes, and the difference between accent and pronunciation. Along these lines, it is concluded that accent did represent a signature of the subject and that it was commonly miss confused with pronunciation. Subjects asserted that their manner of speaking was a representation of their cultural group, and that it embodied their beliefs, customs, and behaviors. Thus, they stated that when they were speaking in their L2 they were same person, and that it was reflected in the rhythm they put into the speech. The way they stressed the words, giving more force to some that to others manifested the place where they belonged. That regional membership identified them as part of a cultural group that held specific traits, and that distinguished them from any other social group. This information was obtained from the interviews, and from the survey in which 48.3% agree that accent is a representation of an individual's identity. Nevertheless, 38.7% of subjects strongly agree that it is necessary to neutralize the mother tongue's accent in L2 oral production. These statistics displayed a contradiction between what participants claimed in the interviewed and what they answered in the survey. Following, that bundle of principles transferred into the L2 and at the moment of interacting in the L2, speakers even though proficient enough in the language, depicted those differences in the manner of speaking. Those characteristics when recognized by the part of the recipient, automatically generated value judgments that were either positive or negative. Concluding, the way in which the L1 accent acts as part of the speaker's cultural identity

goes beyond the mere trait of a specific rhythm when uttering words. It is a tell-tale of who the individual is.

In connection with the inquiry about L1 accent interference in the interaction in L2, it was observed some aspects. On the one hand, it is not an interference but a transference of sounds from L1 to L2, as it is evident in the interview, the French teacher argues that it is usual to transfer in Spanish the /s/ to French the /z/ which is a difficulty that she illustrates when pronouncing /pwazô/ (Poison in English) and /pwasô/ (Fish in English), also, she adds the sounds /v/ and /b/, in order to make the distinction between them; thus, she highlights the importance to articulate sounds correctly, taking into account the phonetics of the specific language. Further, it was observed that most of times, L1 accent will be present in the L2 oral production, which does not mean that it causes chaos when communicating, as long as there will not be semantic mistakes which make loose the sense itself.

Regarding the question that seeks about the L1 accent influence in L2 oral proficiency, it is concluded that several negative stereotypes have arisen when a subject masters the L2. As it is demonstrated in the interviews, accent has been the main cause of rejection, miscommunication and other kinds of discriminations by people, when even having non-accent (which does not exist) is the most viable alternative people need to assume, in order to be accepted by a determined community, when accent is a vehicle of teasing by classmates, which not only affects the conversational flow, the inner self of a subject, but also “measures” the proficiency level the individual has, highlighting the importance of acquiring “a decent accuracy” in a speaking sense that implies the complete eradication of the L1 accent. Similarly, according to the surveyed people, 41.9% of the subjects agreed that native-like accent is a sign of L2 high oral proficiency, which



means that, it is necessary to reduce L1 accent when mastering L2, that it is supported by statistics when 38.7% of the population, strongly agreed with the need of neutralizing the mother tongue accent in L2 oral proficiency. Eventually, people still have misconceptions about accent, a term that has been directly related when measuring the proficiency level in L2 of a subject.

In relation to the question that inquires about the students' and teachers' perceptions about their cultural identity and its interaction with L2, emerged two positions. From one side, a group of 30% of the participants declared that in order to be proficient in the L2 they must avoid as much as it is possible the L1. They said that it is necessary to think in the L2 while developing a certain task and to avoid translate literally because that can lead to terrible mistakes. Another aspect that was evident is that, there are some restrictions about having or not the L1 accent present in the L2. They asserted that languages teachers need to be as close as possible to the native like pronunciation because that is part of a teachers' job; to give all the input students may need. Additionally, they also affirmed that having the L1 accent in L2 is allowed if the person is able to communicate properly. On the other hand, 70% of the participants understand the L1 accent as an aspect that belong to their individual's identity. For this reason, they claimed that for a person it is not possible to forget what he or she is and knows when speaking in L2. In the same way, teachers cited some bilingual theories that settled that it is not necessary to sound like a native person in order to be proficient in L2. As a tendency, it was evident that the teachers do not correct accent because they are respectful with the students' choices, but they do emphasis in pronunciation as a key aspect to be competent in the L2.

In relation to the question that seeks to explore the way how social stereotypes about accent

influence the L2 speakers' performance, it was visible in the survey and the interview that there are a lot of negative stereotypes in relation to this concept. 70% of the participants did not find necessary to sound like a native speaker in order to be seen as proficient in the L2, but they accepted that it may be cool if they could reach an American or a British accent taking into consideration aspects such as: Job opportunities, better understanding, more style and status. Nevertheless, they accepted that accent is not what matters. Besides, 20% of the participants recognizes native like accent in L2 as necessary issue for languages teachers.

## 8. Limitations

Like any other research project, this presented various difficulties varying from language limitations to the national education strike. First, the interview carried on with 4<sup>th</sup> semester students was not very successful in term of useful information because the students presented various problems in terms of communication. They also had problems to give definitions to central aspects to the project such as accent and pronunciation. Besides this, only 7 of the 10 selected students from one of the groups were interviewed because the rest was not in the classroom the day researchers applied the questionnaire. Shortly after the data collection, the national educational strike started and all academic activities were interrupted for about 2 months.

Secondly, when the thesis was designed, it proposed the idea of analyzing students' interaction in 4<sup>th</sup> semester where they had not started with phonetics, and 6<sup>th</sup> semester where they have already studied phonetics. This was done with the purpose of analyzing how they perform with the phonological knowledge but it was not included into the questionnaire. It might have been useful having that information for it would have provided researchers with a closer and deeper insight into the participant's transformation in their oral abilities. The lack of phonetic analysis on their accents may have limited this study to further understanding on stereotypes and how they are created.

The last limitation for this study deals with fact that although most of the participants considered accent as a sign of their identity, an important group considered native-like accent as a synonym of a high level of proficiency. This reflects that there is a problem in the languages program for it leads learners to believe that the more native like they sound. The better they perform. Researches lacked some insights into the interests of the program.

## **9. Recommendations**

The present study focused on how the accent represented the cultural identity of the speaker, yet, it did not explore if participants understood what their accents meant as well as how their accents acted in a social milieu. Furthermore, it is suggested for further research to investigate how these identities change over time by conscious and unconscious processes. Also, it is encouraged to include a deep analysis on phonetics in terms of accents to prove a better and wider understanding on how subjects transform their accents. It is also useful to analyze the stereotypes concerning accented L2 speech from a historical perspective, more precisely, from colonialism in the region. This to be done with the purpose of providing wider understanding as why learners and society develop a conflict with accented L2 speech.

## **10. Projection**

Based on the findings and limitations on this study, some suggestions may be provided for further research. To start, to give a stronger statement, it is necessary to have a larger and more diverse population. For example, Spanish native speakers from different places in the country and from different origins. It may provide the study with vast richness in the data collection and therefore, more opportunities to achieve the purpose of the study. Also, having individuals from different socio-cultural backgrounds may prove the project with diverse insights into accents and identities. Most importantly, it will be useful to have participants living and working in different environments as it will enrich the findings. Lastly, this study is a starting point for future studies in the field. As it was seen in the literature review in the regional field do not exist similar works.

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# APPENDIXES

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### 12.1 Informed Assent.

This study is being conducted by Daniela Andrea Ibarra Díaz, Juana Valentina Villamil Echeverri, and Laura Norela Alfonso Bermúdez who are currently enrolled at the University of Quindío. The aim of this study is to analyze level of interaction in L2 that may be English or French among students of fourth and sixth semester and professors from a languages program. The participation in the study is completely voluntary and the answers will be used only for research purposes. The interview will be recorded. The recordings and recording-transcripts (or copy of notes taken) will be kept anonymous, without any reference to your identity, and your identity will be concealed in any reports written from the interviews. Thank you for your participation in the study.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, allow the group \_\_\_\_\_ that is under my tutoring, to be part of the population of the Project entitled ‘Accent as part of cultural identity: Analysis of the interaction in L2 (English and French) among students and professors of 4th and 6th semester in a languages program at the university of Quindío’ which is being produced by Daniela Andrea Ibarra Diaz, Juana Valentina Villamil Echeverri, and Laura Norela Alfonso Bermúdez at the University of Quindío. I certify that I have been told of the confidentiality of information collected for this project and the anonymity of their participation, and that I have been advised that I am free to withdraw my consent and to discontinue participation in the project or activity at any time without prejudice. I allow students to participate in one or more electronically recorded interviews, class observations and surveys for this project. I understand that such interviews and related materials will be kept completely anonymous, and that the results of this study may be published in a BA research. I agree that any information obtained from this research may be used in any way thought best for this study.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Teachers’ signature

## 12. 2 Informed Consent.

This study is being conducted by Daniela Andrea Ibarra Díaz, Juana Valentina Villamil Echeverri, and Laura Norela Alfonso Bermúdez who are currently enrolled at the University of Quindío. The aim of this study is to analyze level of interaction in L2 that may be English or French among students of fourth and sixth semester and professors from a languages program. The participation in the study is completely voluntary and the answers will be used only for research purposes. The interview will be recorded. The recordings and recording-transcripts (or copy of notes taken) will be kept anonymous, without any reference to your identity, and your identity will be concealed in any reports written from the interviews. Thank you for your participation in the study.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to be interviewed for the Project entitled ‘Accent as part of cultural identity: Analysis of the interaction in l2 (English and French) among students and professors of 4th and 6th semester in a languages program at the university of Quindío’ which is being produced by Daniela Andrea Ibarra Diaz, Juana Valentina Villamil Echeverri, and Laura Norela Alfonso Bermúdez at the University of Quindío. I certify that I have been told of the confidentiality of information collected for this project and the anonymity of my participation; that I have been given satisfactory answers to my inquiries concerning project procedures and other matters; and that I have been advised that I am free to withdraw my consent and to discontinue participation in the project or activity at any time without prejudice. I agree to participate in one or more electronically recorded interviews for this project. I understand that such interviews and related materials will be kept completely anonymous, and that the results of this study may be published in a BA research. I agree that any information obtained from this research may be used in any way thought best for this study.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Interviewee

**12.3 Class Observation Format.**

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ TIME: \_\_\_\_\_ GROUP: \_\_\_\_\_ OBSERVATION N°: \_\_\_\_\_

Focus of observation	ASPECT	FREQUENCY					COMMENTS
		5	4	3	2	1	
<b>Students</b>	Uses Spanish to talk with partners						
	Uses Spanish to talk to the professor						
	Has a dominant accent in his/her L2						
	Feels ashamed to talk in front of people with 'native-like' accent						
	Avoids oral activities						
	Makes fun of the accents portrayed by his/her peers.						
<b>Professors</b>	Has an accented L2 production						
	Reacts to the accents of the students.						
	Has any preference for a certain accent.						



	Confuses accent with pronunciation.						
	Underestimates accented students.						
OTHER							

*Table 3 Class observation format*

**12.4 Survey.**

**INSTRUCTIONS**

For each statement, please rate your answers by marking with an X if you strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree or Strongly Disagree.

<b>STATEMENT</b>	<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>	<b>AGREE</b>	<b>NEUTRAL</b>	<b>DISAGREE</b>	<b>STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>
Spanish as a mother tongue influences or affects L2 oral production.					
Native-like accent is a sign of L2 high oral proficiency.					

Accent is a representation of an individual's identity.					
It is necessary to neutralize the mother tongue accent in L2 oral production.					
I always think in English / French.					
I prefer English / French TV and/or radio shows and music.					
I feel comfortable speaking English / French around Colombian people.					
I feel more comfortable with people that share the same cultural values.					

It is important to have a native like accent in L2 because it would make me feel cooler					
My cultural background as Spanish speaker has an influence on my L2 oral production.					

*Table 4 Survey*

### **12.5 Interview.**

- ¿Conoce usted si existe alguna diferencia entre acento y pronunciación, o considera que ambos son iguales?
- Do you know if there is any difference between accent and pronunciation, or they both are the same?
- ¿Qué dificultades ha tenido durante el desarrollo de la habilidad oral en L2?
- What difficulties have you had while developing your oral skills in L2?
- ¿Qué aspectos considera importantes para desarrollar la habilidad oral en L2 de manera efectiva?
- What aspects do you consider important to develop oral skills in L2 effectively?
- ¿De qué manera la evaluación del docente con respecto a su habilidad oral en L2 ha influido en ésta?

- How has the teacher's evaluation (oral skills in L2) influenced your performance in L2?
- ¿Alguna vez algún docente le ha corregido su acento en L2?
- Has a teacher ever corrected your accent in L2?
- ¿Considera usted que su habilidad oral en español como L1 incide en su habilidad oral en L2? ¿Cómo?
- Do you consider that Spanish as your L1 interferes on your oral skills in L2? How?
- ¿Considera usted que su acento puede reflejar su identidad cultural?
- Do you consider that your accent may reflect your cultural identity? Why?
- Algunas personas consideran que para alcanzar un nivel de habla óptimo, es necesario tener un acento nativo o casi nativo. ¿Cuál es su opinión al respecto?
- Some people think that for a subject to reach a high speaking level, he must possess a native-like accent. What is your position in your experience as a learner/teacher?

## 12.6 Timetable

ACTIVITY	WEEK																
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	15	15	16	
Request informed consent	X																
Survey	X	X															
Class observation			X	X	X	X											
Interviews							X	X									
Data analysis									X	X	X	X					
Conclusions													X	X	X		

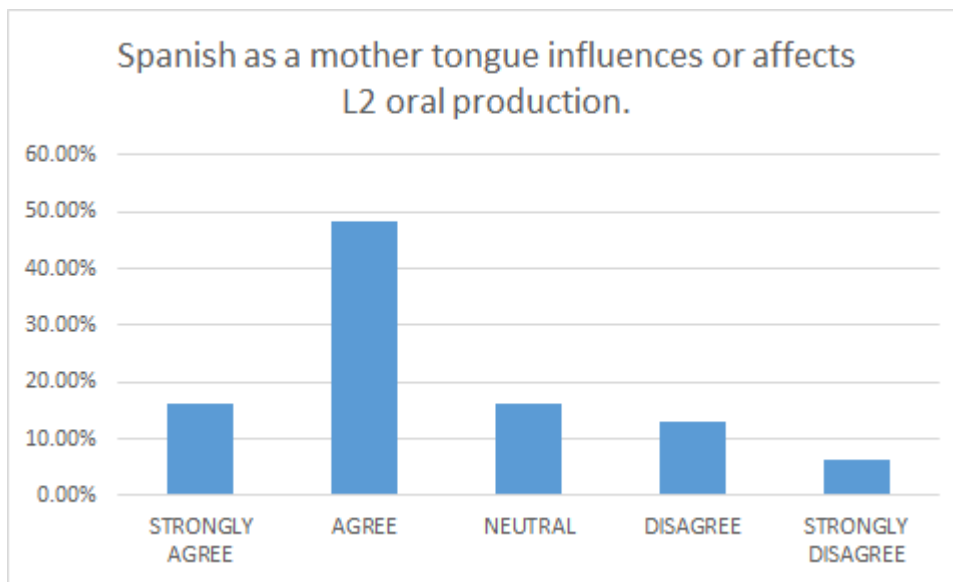
Table 5 Timetable

## 12.7 Budget

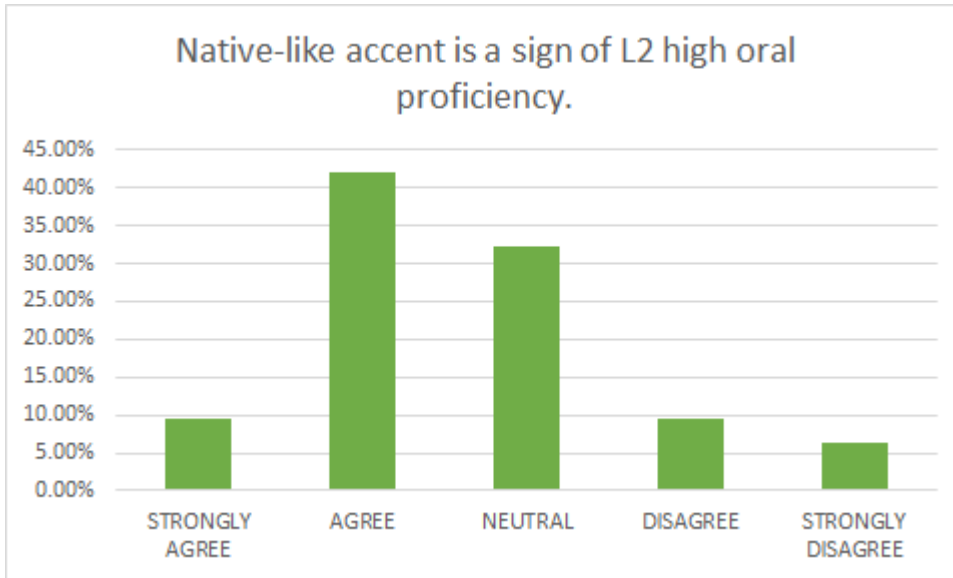
ACTIVITY	COST
Transport	\$50.000
Photocopies	\$10.000
Printing	\$15.000
Materials	\$30.000

*Table 6 Budget*

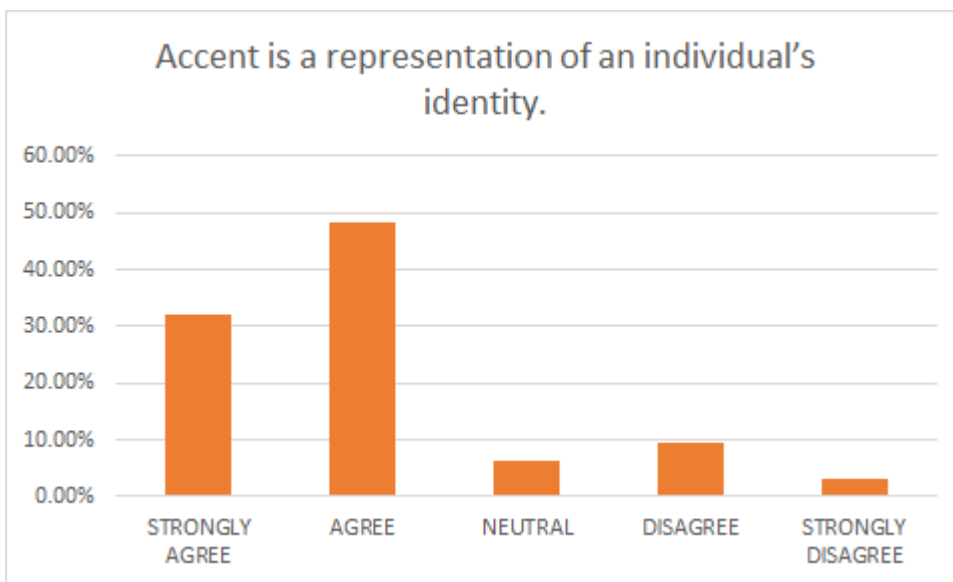
## 12.8 Survey analysis



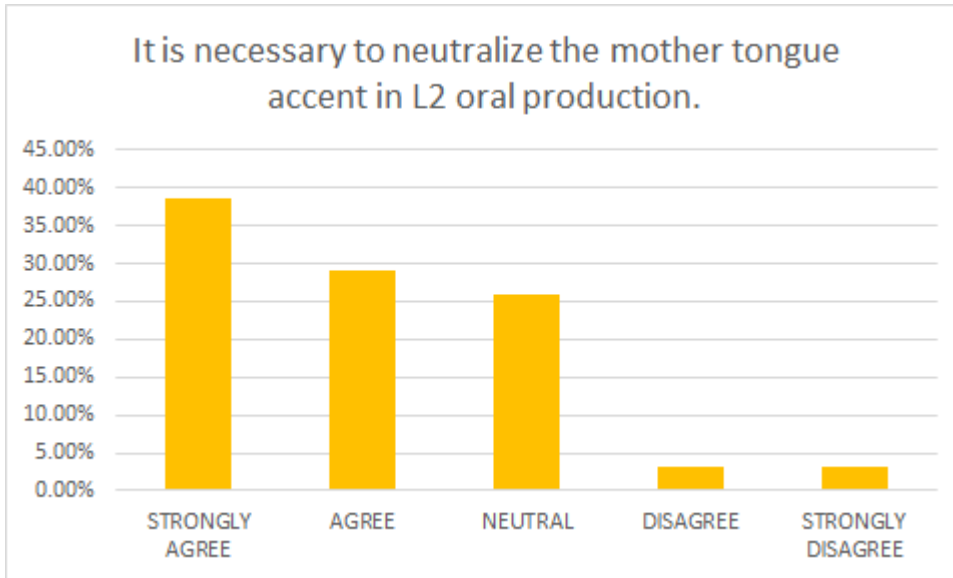
*Figure 11 Ratings of the influence of Spanish as a mother tongue in L2 oral production.*



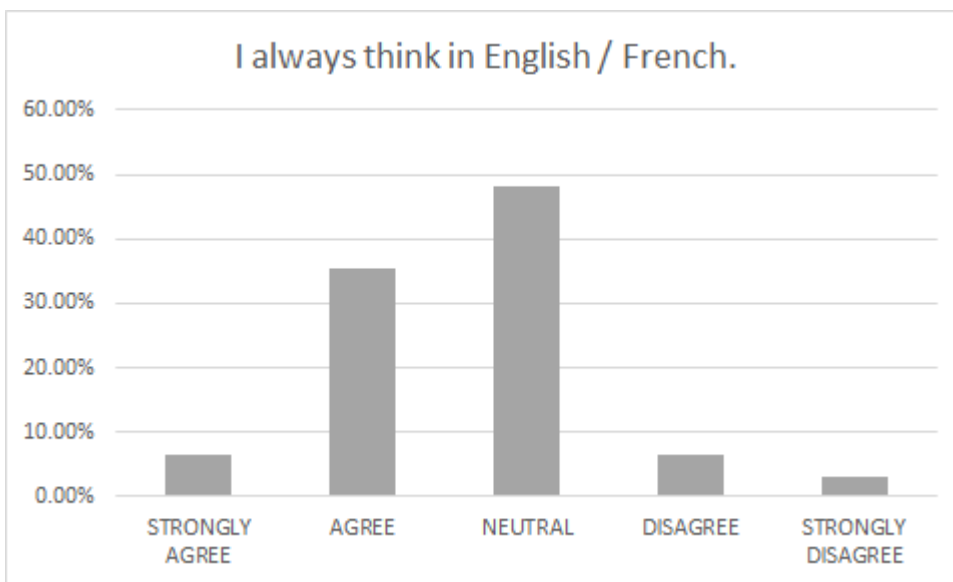
**Figure 12** Ratings of feeling that native like accent is a sign of L2 high oral proficiency.



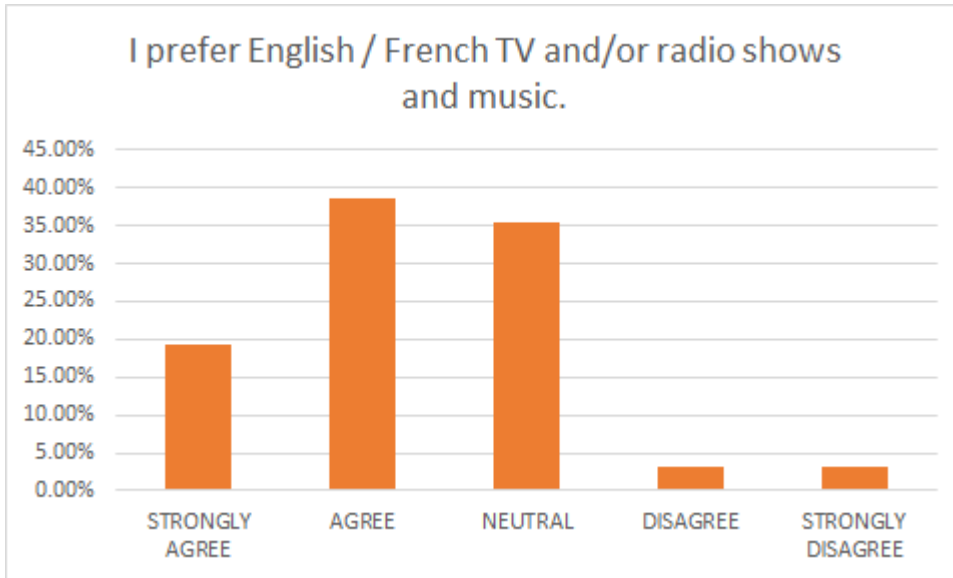
**Figure 13** Ratings about accent as a representation of an individual's identity.



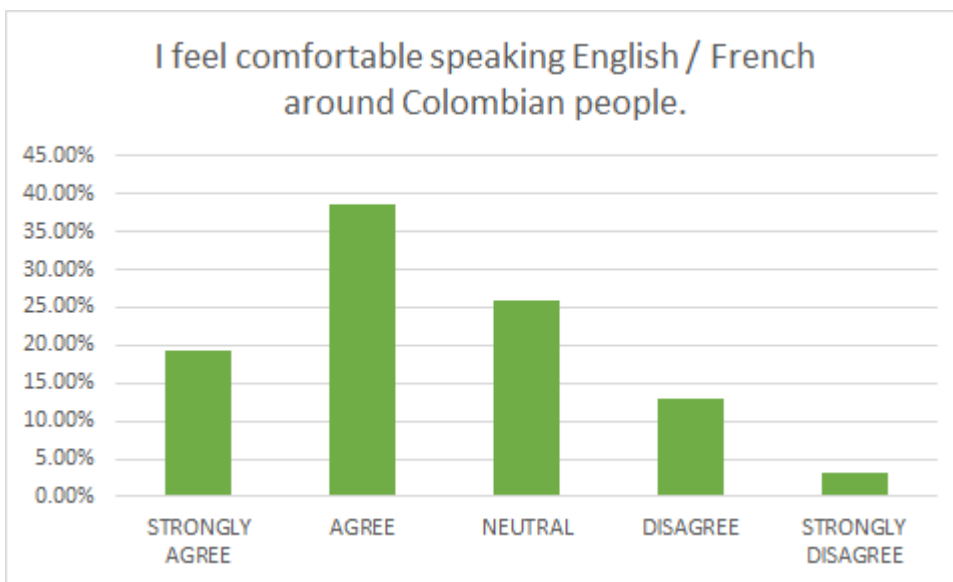
*Figure 14* Ratings about the need of neutralizing the mother tongue accent in L2 oral production.



*Figure 15* Ratings about always thinking in English / French.

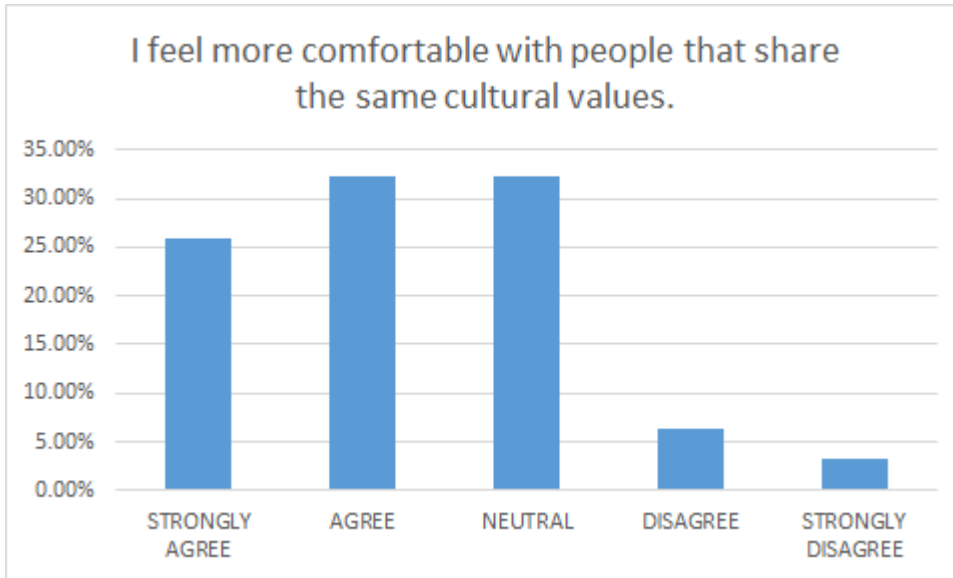


**Figure 16** Ratings about preferring English / French TV and/or radio shows and music.

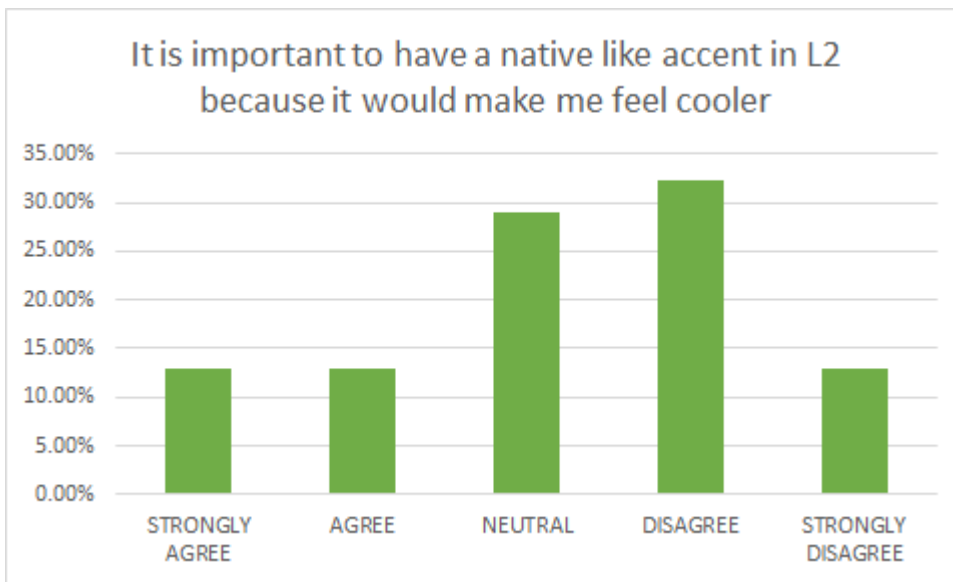


**Figure 17** Ratings about feeling comfortable speaking English / French around Colombian people.

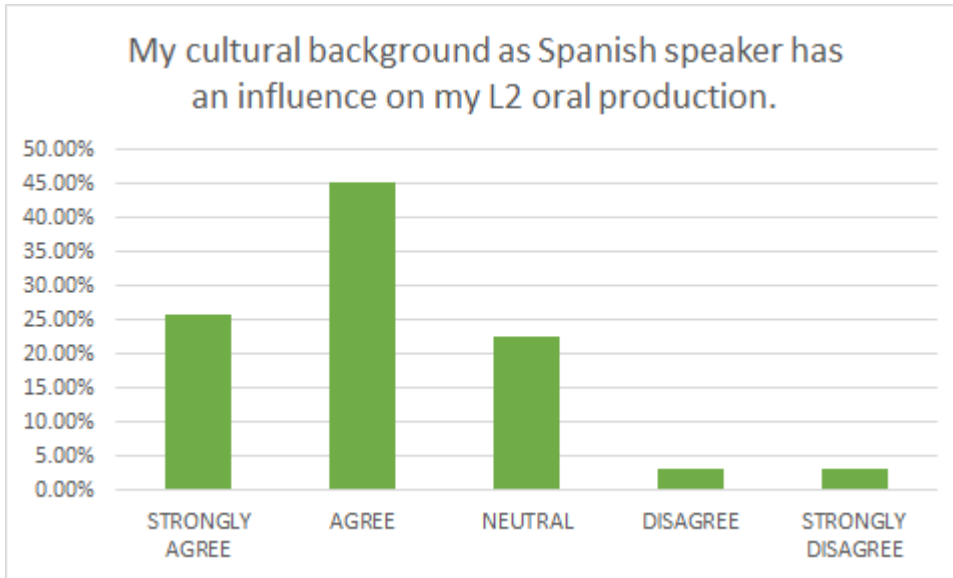




**Figure 18** Ratings about feeling more comfortable with people that share the same cultural values.



**Figure 19** Ratings about the importance of having a native like accent in L2 because it would make me feel cooler.



*Figure 20* Ratings about the cultural background influence on the L2 oral production as Spanish speaker