LOCAL ENGLISH IMMERSION PROGRAMS: WHAT IN-SERVICE TEACHERS BELIEVE

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Abstract

The following is the description of a research project carried out at Universidad Pedagógica Nacional (Colombia). This study involved 84 in-service teachers at 42 public schools in Cundinamarca, the main objective was to analyze the in-service teachers' beliefs, regarding a local English immersion program. For the purpose of the study, a mixed research methodology was carried out into two stages. First, the survey stage, using a cross-sectional questionnaire revealed statistical differences, consistent with the teachers' beliefs, regarding the use of Spanish, the improvement of their English linguistic competence and the development of immersion programs in the towns teachers work in.

 Second, qualitative study stage by means of a semi-structured interview and a focus group evidenced a gap between teachers' expectations regarding their linguistic and pedagogical competences and the immersion reality. Besides, some teachers gave objections to foreing leaders such as their passive attitude, low qualification in EFL field and their general ignorance of the public education conditions in Colombia; however, this allowed them to value the national leaders, their colleagues and their identities as teachers, Some suggestions for next local English immersion programs comprise first, the organization of sessions in accordance with the English level teachers, sessions for secondary and high school teachers and elementary teachers in different spaces during two or three days, then one may conceivably think on general sessions promotes learning communities. All this supported by the diversity principle.

 Key words: in-service teachers, beliefs, foreign language immersion programs, professional challenges.

Resumen

A continuación, se presenta la descripción de un proyecto de investigación para optar al título de maestría en enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras realizado en la Universidad Pedagógica Nacional (Colombia). Este estudio involucró a 84 docentes en servicio de 42 colegios públicos de Cundinamarca, el objetivo principal fue analizar las creencias de los docentes en servicio acerca de un programa local de inmersión en inglés. Para efectos del estudio, se llevó a cabo una metodología de investigación mixta en dos etapas. Primero, la etapa de encuesta, mediante un cuestionario, reveló diferencias estadísticas, consistentes con las creencias de los docentes, en cuanto al uso del español, el mejoramiento de la competencia lingüística en inglés y el desarrollo de inmersiones en los municipios donde los profesores trabajan.

En segundo lugar, la etapa de estudio cualitativo a través de una entrevista semiestructurada y un grupo focal evidenció una brecha entre las expectativas de los docentes con respecto a sus competencias lingüísticas y pedagógicas y la realidad de la inmersión. Además, algunos maestros objetaron a los líderes extranjeros debido a su actitud pasiva, baja cualificación en el campo de EFL y su ignorancia general de las condiciones de la educación pública en Colombia, sin embargo, esto les permitió valorar a los líderes nacionales, a sus colegas y sus identidades como docentes. Algunas sugerencias para los próximos programas locales de inmersión en inglés incluyen la organización de sesiones de acuerdo con el nivel de inglés de los profesores, sesiones para profesores de secundaria y primaria en diferentes espacios durante dos o tres días, para en seguida pensar en sesiones generales que promuevan comunidades de aprendizaje. Todo ello sustentado en el principio de la diversidad.

Palabras clave: docentes en servicio, creencias, programas de inmersión en lengua extranjera, desafíos profesionales

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Chapter I

This chapter is a presentation of the research problem and the reasons that motivated me to explore and understand this topic. This chapter presents the overview and the background of the problem. The research question, objectives and rationale are mentioned as well.

1.1 Introduction

Research on teachers' beliefs by focusing on a wide range of topics concerning teaching and learning a second language, to our knowledge, spans more than 57 years (Oliver, 1953, as cited in Fives & Buehl, 2012) In any case, beliefs seem to have been influenced by varied research methodologies, theoretical perspectives, and in response to a number of specific situations, for instance, some studies of teachers' beliefs aim to examine the relationships between teachers' beliefs and (a) self-efficacy (Cortes et al., 2013), (b) second language teaching and learning (Cohen & Fass, 2001; Peacock, 2001) (c) assessment (Díaz et al., 2015) and (d) professional development (Castellanos, 2013). Hence, plenty of research uncovered that what is within in teachers' minds, what they know, think, believe- and the possible effects of the beliefs on their classroom practices which consequently can affect learners' learning experiences.

Most previous studies examined pre-service teachers' beliefs, only two studies (Peacock, 2001; Cortes et al., 2013) explored in-service teachers' beliefs. In such a context, it is important to note that studying beliefs of in- service teachers of English towards immersion programs could provide insights about the processes of an immersion program

carried out in Colombia and the proximity in terms of of policy, practice and procedures to other countries. All this on the lack of studies addressing beliefs about immersions with this particular group of population at a global scale.

Possible reasons behind no research, approaching this population, at global level, may result from the semantic overlap of the definition of immersion program (Ayala, 2021) and the replication of models, disregarding the Colombian socio-cultural context, and the teachers' and students' needs (Sanchez & Obando, 2008). For instance, the concept of immersion program has evolved and has been adapted under various contexts; hence, immersion program can be related to the chemistry field and refers to chemical solutions and their reactions under different circumstances, but also an immersion program can be a program offered abroad such as internships or assistantships for doctors, nurses, and medical students, and even further the term immersion program has been used in religious communities to devote time to promote social work (Ayala, 2021). This information shows an example of the type of concepts that do exist in the academic field, and even though they are unrelated to the second language field could cause problems in its understanding and implementation in Colombia

In light with this situation, the initiative of replicating immersion programs for in-service teachers is documented in the National Program of Bilingualism (NPB) in the framework of the "Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2018-2022, Pacto por Colombia, Pacto por la Equidad" (National Plan of Development- NPoD) as one of the main pillars of the line of action "inspiring teachers". According to the MEN (2021) inspiring teachers is "a framework of continuous professional development in strengthening 8.000 teachers' and head teachers' practices, innovation and work collaboration in teaching English" (p.54)

while immersion programs are presented, in the NPoD, as immersions programs abroad that consist of "professional development programs in highly regarded universities in the UK and India". (p. 54)

Education Secretariats are in charge of supervising and monitoring at city and department level the NPB and its lines of actions, for instance, the plan of development of Cundinamarca underscores how the policy framework at a departmental level, in a similar way to the NPB, view the English as a better chance of inserting the country into the global economy, but it also seems that this policy framework judge teachers, including teachers of English "to have a deficit perspective" (Ayala, 2020, p.53) as can be seen in the following excerpt:

> "As from 11,154 teachers of the Department, in the previous four-year term, 68 teachers have pursued the specialist degree, which results in low levels of updating and training and a deficit in competencies on the part of teachers to meet the challenges of education". (PoDoC, 2016, p. 49)

Just regarding the in-service teachers' participation in the qualitative phase of this study, five out of six teachers pursued master's degrees in education and English language didactics.

In such scenario, education secretariats are the directly responsible for not only administering the educational service, but also applying the policies and guidelines, which include local English immersion programs, established by both the National Government and the local governments (MEN, 2020) .

The rationale for launching local English immersion programs under the education secretariats' perspective is to overcome the weaknesses in pedagogical actions for teaching and learning of English in educational establishments and foster the skills of teachers for the adequate teaching, which in turn could led to achieve the B1 level of proficiency in the students of Cundinamarca, which is why it is needed clarification about local English immersions programs in terms of the relation on what teachers believe about local English immersion programs and the recognition of their knowledge about language and pedagogy as important as what is merely being written and expected in the new version of NPB and the PoDoC.

In that sense, this study attempts to analyze the beliefs of the in-service teachers of public schools of Cundinamarca, regarding a local English immersion program, the analysis will shed light on the teachers' beliefs who work in elementary, secondary and high educational levels and urban and rural high schools.

In the subsequent part of this chapter, I provide an overview of the significance of the studies of teachers' beliefs about immersion programs in general and of the present study, the statement of the problem, the research question, objectives are mentioned as well. The next chapter presents a review of relevant literature in which I discuss definitions, characteristics, and functions of teachers' beliefs. A similar pattern was followed with the immersion programs construct by providing perspectives at global and local level, I end this chapter by describing what it means to be a teacher of English in the Colombian public field and providing some related research. Then, I sketched the research paradigm, study phases, participants, methods of data collection and data analysis. In chapter 4, I present the findings from the survey phase in relation to statistical significant differences in beliefs

about immersion programs, depending on the elementary or secondary and high educational level, and the rural or urban context teachers work in. I also discuss the findings obtained from the qualitative study phase regarding how a local English immersion program is characterized in accordance with the in-service teachers' beliefs through clear-cut answers to some fundamental wh - questions. Finally, I present the conclusions from the two study phases, the contributions, limitations, and implications of the study.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In Colombia, the General Education Law 115 of 1994 sets up that "one of the objectives of education should be the acquisition of speaking, reading and comprehension skills in at least one foreign language" (Sanchez & Obando, 2008, p.182), the proposition mentioned above represented a crucial point for the implementation of varied Colombian language policies such as "Colombia bilingüe" program aimed at strengthening the English teaching and learning in Colombia.

Since then, the education secretariats, in coherence with the macro-policy "Colombia bilingüe", have introduced and executed programs and projects that strengthen the educational establishments with technical assistance, permanent counseling, professional development and resources allocation; (MEN, 2020) for instance, one of the English language teaching programs that gained popularity in Colombia is the local English immersion programs that try to find professional alternatives to improve the teachers' linguistic and pedagogical competences (Ayala, 2021).

The trajectory of the immersion programs in Colombia, or at least named as such, is described by Ayala's (2020- 2021) and Díaz (2020) The program called Colombian Teachers of English was the first attempt to implement immersion programs in Colombia

The goal was to strengthen the teachers' language skills which in turn could have also benefits in the students' English competence throughout teachers programs overseas in speaking countries, such as Canada, USA, UK, or India for a certain period of time (no longer than 6 weeks).

Then, favoring ¨the permanent search of professional development¨ (NME, 2006) were executed the English immersion programs in Colombia; however, teachers were bound by conditions and constraints such as making a video explaining how the program would benefit the students and their language proficiency. As a result, many teachers were excluded, even being an open call . Finally, by 2015 under the name of immersion camps, the Ministry of education (2015) mobilized public high school students to create new settings and innovative situations, where English teaching and learning are performed in a playful and meaningful way in the framework of autonomy, assertive communication, problem solving and decision making principles. After that, other national and international immersion camps emerged, in which students went to English speaking countries or to local facilities for almost three weeks to enhance their English communicative competence. Since then, either public or private institutions have replicated or re-created their own immersion programs under the leadership of the Ministry of Education.

While the objective of the immersion programs in Colombia is to improve the English language communicative competences in teachers and students, (Secretariat of Education of Cundinamarca, 2021), the non- existence of a consensus regarding the definition, nature, features of immersion programs in foreign language field have led the implementation of what the education secretariats call "immersion days", which in turn

have become largely a matter of neglect of "the previous knowledge and experience of Colombian teachers" (Ayala, 2021, p. 56) and the current teaching and learning conditions in Colombia (Sanchez & Obando, 2008).

Moreover, Moya (2012) points out that immersion programs are intended to encourage teachers' adaptation to constant change situations. Hence, some teachers' beliefs, expectations and even fears arise before their immersion taking part, but also change and reshape during and after their participation. Considering that an "important source of origin of teacher beliefs is experiences from teacher education programs" (Vipolpubh, 1994, p.42) it can be inferred that teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning English as a foreign language may be influenced by the ideas and experiences they gain during their participation in immersion programs, which, in turn, can influence both "knowledge and judgment" (Johnson, 1994 as cited in Vipolpubh, 1994, p.36) about their classroom practices, the teacher and student roles and discourse.

In addition to what immersion programs have brought, it is worth mentioning that teachers can hold individual and varied beliefs   before, during and after immersion programs on the basis of the educational levels and contexts they work . If one considers the educational level and the context in the framework of Colombian education system, public high schools count preschool education with one grade , basic education that counts on five grades of elementary and four grades of secondary to end with two grades for high school education (NME, 2015) and they are located in rural or urban settings.

Both educational level and context can affect teachers' beliefs about immersion programs and how they can make profit from them in enhancing English in their students. In other words, the combination of teachers' pedagogical decisions, the interaction with

students and the relationships they fosterwith the teacher, among the students and educational communities in relation to educational level they work, together with the social realities, conditions and needs of their urban or rural contexts have important consequences for both development and changes of beliefs in relation to immersion programs and their influence in learning and teaching English.

A critical aspect, at this point, is that the immersion programs tend to show a preference for the English culture and promote the idea that native speakers are "considered to be the best models and type of language teachers for non-native speakers to follow" (Shibata, 2010, p. 125). The attention to foreignness has brough with it, first, the fallacy that English teachers have neither a good command of English, nor pedagogical skills, second, the disregard for Colombian learning conditions, local and individual goals (Cook, 2001, as cited in Sanchez & Obando, 2008)   that are needed for the learning of a new language.

In line with the previous information, I propose the following research question and objectives.

1.3 Research Question

What beliefs about a local English immersion program do in-service teachers from public schools of Cundinamarca hold behind their participation?

1.4 Research Objectives

1.4.1 General Objective

To analyze the beliefs of the in-service teachers from public schools of Cundinamarca regarding a local English immersion program.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

To examine significant differences in the in-service teachers' beliefs about a local English immersion program, depending on the sociocultural context and educational level

To examine how the beliefs of the in-service teachers from public schools about a local English immersion program differ depending on the educational level and context they work in

To characterize a local English immersion program in accordance with the in-service teachers' beliefs through clear-cut answers to some fundamental wh - questions

1. What is an immersion program?
2. Where is the best place or environment to develop an immersion program?
3. Who are the other key actors who are involved in the immersion programs?
4. Why do in-service teachers participate in immersion programs?
5. How do the professional alternatives for in-service teachers are enhanced?

1.5 Rationale

A number of reasons underpin the rationale for developing this study, first, even though the topic of immersion is not new in the fields of language teaching and learning (Ayala, 2020, p. 24), research about immersion programs in bilingual education remains unexplored in Colombia. So that, the current research will convey valuable information for future research.

Second, it could be noted the importance of the population representation, this study encompasses not only secondary and high school teachers and urban contexts, but also elementary teachers and rural areas. It would be relevant this analysis to learn how teachers -participants conceive the immersion programs in regards to their pedagogical and linguistic needs and their particular school realities, taking into account that some public elementary and rural institutions with respect to English teaching reality have particular characteristics such as one hour or no assigned time a week devoted to English teaching (the Basic Foreign Language Competence Standards: English, 2006), no specialized teachers in foreign languages, and the different sociocultural and economic contexts from urban centered high schools.

Furthermore, as the objective of immersion programs is to improve the teachers' English communicative competence, which in turn will benefit the students' English level, this research can contribute to an understanding of whether the objectives of immersion programs in Colombia are coherent with the individual and local teachers' aims and realities, understanding that it is a priority to establish open and friendly ways of communication to hear the teachers.

In this regard, it is hoped this research could bring valuable insights into the Colombian language teaching policies. Policy makers can become more sensitive to current English language conditions and more willing to implement immersion programs under the recognition and acceptance of teachers' knowledge and experience.

1.6 Contextualization

The government of Cundinamarca formulated the document "Fortalecimiento de las competencias comunicativas en inglés de los estudiantes de los establecimientos educativos

oficiales del departamento de Cundinamarca" as a requirement for the project funding through investment resources from the general budget of the Department of Cundinamarca.

The review of the project is important as it launched the local English immersion program, in which the participants of this study took part and can offer a general overview of the context.

The document was structured into six main parts: (a) characterization of the areas of influence, (b) contribution of the project to public policy, (c) identification and analysis of the problem, objectives, participants, and alternatives of solution, (d) study of needs and budget, (e) analysis risk and (f) logical framework matrix

Regarding the first substantive theoretical construct, the review of this document covers the excerpts concerning the central tenets of the project in relation to professional head teachers' and teachers' development. Based on the review of the first part, the project expects to impact the 51 municipalities of Cundinamarca with 100 focused public high schools. The focus meets the following criteria: Saber Once test analysis, geographical location, high schools linked to the strategy "Schools Friends of Tourism", normal schools at the higher education level and schools implementing full school day strategy.

In the second part, it is suggested that the project will contribute to four policies that span the micro level up to the macro level listed in the table 4 as follows

Table 1

Preliminary project impact in regard to the implementation of Colombian plans

Impacted plan of development	Program and/or subprogram	Output target

National Development Plan: "Pact for Colombia, Pact for Equity 2018-2022" NDP	Pact for Equity: modern social policy focused in the family: efficient, qualified and connected to markets families	*D/S
Cundinamarca, Region that progresses! 2020 – 2024	A lifetime with you Building future	Implement bilingualism strategies in the 275 high schools of the non-certified municipalities of the department of Cundinamarca
Plans of development of some municipalities of Cundinamarca	*D/S	*D/S

Note. *D/S: does not say. Data collected by author on the 13th of September of 2022.

Based on the third section of identification and analysis of the problem, the document assumes that there are three direct causes of the classification in English performance level in -A and A1 in the 75% of students of high schools of the non-certified municipalities of Cundinamarca in 2019. Weakness in pedagogical actions for teaching and learning of English in educational establishments, low skills of teachers for the adequate teaching and low exposure to interaction in English in real contexts of communication make difficult to achieve B1 level of proficiency in the students of Cundinamarca.

The objective of the project consists in "strengthening the English communicative competences in children, adolescents and young people who attend to the public educational establishments in Cundinamarca" (GoC, 2020, p.50). In that sense, the building of the teaching and learning of English in public educational establishments through teachers' professional development, immersion programs, entrance, follow up and

exit English level tests, pedagogical support and supply of materials are proposed as an effective solution to achieve it.

Finally, it is important to mention that the execution of the project will take 26 months and budget of $15,011,999,229 COP will be allocated from the General System of Royalties.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In chapter 2, I introduce the theoretical underpinnings that help illuminate this research. First, I present the conceptualization and characterization of beliefs, how beliefs function and change are also included. Second, I expose the teachers' competences and challenges that come to bear in configuring teachers' identities as professionals, special attention is given to the challenges teachers of elementary education and rural areas face while teaching English. Third, I provide a general overview of English immersion programs and how they are defined and implemented in Colombia. Fourth, I review related research in accordance with the constructs: teachers' beliefs, teachers of English and language immersion programs.

2.1 Teachers' Beliefs

Beliefs influence how individuals characterize phenomena, make sense of the world, and estimate covariation (Pajares,1992, p. 310). Relevant literature on foreign and second language teachers' beliefs, and research done in educational psychology, have clearly demonstrated that "beliefs play an important role in many aspects of teaching, as well as in life" (Borg, 2001, p.186). Hence, this section attempts to explain the complex nature of teachers' beliefs, change processes and their functions, examining the mainstream L2 teaching/learning theories, but also the educational psychology direction.

2.1.1 Defining Beliefs in education

Defining beliefs, especially the ones of the main actors of learning and teaching a foreign language, teachers and students, has been a daunting task; nevertheless, "there is a yet no consensus on meaning" (Borg,2001, p. 186). Actually, even Pajares (1992), one of the pioneer researchers of the studies on teachers' beliefs, did not give an operational definition. He provides an extensive array of terms that have been used to define beliefs in research papers in education science:

 "[…] attitudes, values, judgments, axioms, opinions, ideology, perceptions, conceptions, conceptual systems, preconceptions, dispositions, implicit theories, explicit theories, personal theories, internal mental processes, action strategies, rules of practice, practical principles, perspectives, repertoires of understanding, and social strategy" (p.309).

Other considerations are also relevant to note, for example, Richards & Lockhart (1996) define beliefs as "the psychologically held understandings, premises, or propositions about the world that are felt to be true" (p. 103). In words of Díaz et al. (2015) beliefs are socially defined as "interpretations of experience and as mental and affective constructions of experience are integrated into schemata" (p.172).

In the present study, I define teachers' beliefs as personal knowledge and personal judgements. On the one hand, Clandinin & Connelly (1987) use the term personal knowledge to refer to:

"Knowledge that reflects the individual's prior knowledge and acknowledges the contextual nature of that teacher's knowledge. It is a kind of knowledge carved out of, and shaped by, situations; knowledge that is constructed and reconstructed as we

live out our stories and retell and relive them through processes of reflection"
(Clandinin & Connelly, 1987, p. 125).

Clandinin & Connelly's (1987) assertion involves, in the case of local English immersion programs, that the teachers can characterize a local English immersion program in accordance with their education, previous experiences, other teachers' stories, and their secretariats and school policies and norms, but also their immersion characterization may be subject to the influence of teachers' exploration and examination of these previous beliefs, attributes, experiences and actions in relation to immersion programs. Hence, teachers are constantly questioning and challenging their beliefs about immersion programs.

On the other hand, I consider teachers' beliefs also enclose personal judgements, in other words, beliefs are also assumptions teachers hold and think that they are true, which may be different from the actual information received; to further illustrate this feature of beliefs, it may be worth supposing I am answering the first question of the third specific objective concerning what an immersion program is. Through the results analysis, I found teachers provided an array of definitions and constructs to define a local English immersion program, among them were a trip, national budget expenses loss, conference, space, course, and so on. It can be concluded that some terms can have roots on teachers' personal knowledge; nevertheless, some concepts can be categorized as personal judgements in the sense that teachers hold the definition belief towards an immersion program, even without any substantial evidence to support it.

2.1.2 Contrasting Aspects of L2 teacher Beliefs

In this section, I sketch how this construct is characterized by relevant educational and foreign language literature. The characteristics cited below could provide a better understanding of teachers' beliefs.

Beliefs are considered to have both "an affective and evaluative loading, and episodic structure" (Nespor, 1987, p.20-22). On the first point, Borg (2001) affirms that "beliefs colours memories with their evaluation and judgement and serve to frame our understanding of events". (p.187) that is why they may determine and dispose individuals' thinking and behavior (Pajares, 1992). On the second point, Nespor (1987) asserts that the beliefs reside in episodic memory, hence, they play a key role in people's thinking and action because there is a conscious recollection of events as they were previously experienced.

Regarding this standpoint, beliefs are expected to influence tasks definitions and selection of the cognitive tools with which to interpret, plan, and make decisions regarding such tasks (Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992) in the case of teaching a foreign language, teachers' beliefs can have a greater effect on what they accomplish in their classroom, their attitudes, and their learners' beliefs (Richards & Lockhart, 1996).

Borg (2001) adds to the understanding of beliefs that they are imbued with (un)conscious components. The (un)consciousness criterion has been topic of disagreement among academics. On the one hand, implicit beliefs involve that teachers are generally unaware of their beliefs, so that, they are beyond the control of the teachers (Nespor, 1987) and cannot be influenced through personal reflective practice (Fives & Buehl, 2012). whereas explicit beliefs are clearly acknowledged and evaluated by teachers, what implies there is a need to justify their beliefs to be maintained (Fives & Buehl, 2012, p.474).

In the same line of thought, attention has been accorded to the teachers' beliefs (un)stability, understood as the fact that central beliefs have a stronger resistance to change than the newly formed beliefs, there is reliable research evidence to support both stable and dynamic beliefs. In words of Rokeach (1968, as cited in Pajares,1992) "beliefs vary along a central-peripheral dimension; and, the more central a belief, the more it will resist change" (p.318). In contrast, other scholars Clandinin (1989; Cabaroglu & Roberts, 2000, as cited in Gabillon, 2012) have found that teachers ' beliefs are subject to change over time.

This contradictory aspect could be better understood with Gabilllon's (2012) state of the art paper, in which she analyzes teachers' beliefs appropriation process under the framework of Moscovi's (1984, as cited in Gabillon, 2012) social representations theory. According to Moscovici (1984, as cited in Gabillon, 2012) when "individuals are confronted with a new idea (belief) they perceive it as a threat to the sense of continuity, and this fear forces individuals to make the unfamiliar explicit" (p.196). Hence, teachers anchor the new belief to a familiar category of belief(s) transforming it into a more concrete. The course of anchoring, objectification and modification process draws a distinction of core and peripheral beliefs, the first ones express the permanence and uniformity, while the peripheral beliefs convey variability and diversity (Gabillon, 2012). Therefore, it can be concluded that "by their very nature and origin, some beliefs are more incontrovertible than others" (Pajares,1992, p.325). In other words, some beliefs can be called into question, whereas others are more likely to be hardened.

From the socio/cultural perspective, teachers beliefs come to be understood by the context, there is substantial evidence that suggest teachers' beliefs can be viewed as either

context (or situation) dependent or independent (Nespor, 1986).To better suit the research needs, Fives & Buehl (2012) suggest that if the topical area is context dependent, then beliefs need to be assessed regarding this specific situation. In contrast, if the area of interest encompasses a broad spectrum, beliefs can, therefore, be seen at a more general, context-independent level.

The introduction of beliefs in relation to the context was the cornerstone of the situativity theory. Cobb & Yackel (1996 as cited in Fives & Buehl, 2012) assert that beliefs are co-constructed and shared by group members, for example, beliefs of teachers staff of an educational establishment; however, different scholars have emphasized on personal beliefs in the sense that each teacher's understanding of his/her situation is unique (Borg, 2002; Gabillon, 2012).

The conscious (explicit) nature of beliefs results convenient for this study, as teachers hold beliefs consciously, they can state their beliefs through verbal or written communication, in doing so, make them explicit. Besides, I share Fives & Buehl's (2012) perspective that teachers' beliefs are situated in context, some are more stable than others, and they are held by each teacher.

2.1.3 How Beliefs Function for in-Service Teachers

Fives & Buehl (2012) identify three functions how beliefs operate and relate to practice: (a) filters for interpretation, (b) frames for defining problems, and (c) guides or standards for action. The manner in which teachers appraise a social situation is regulated by beliefs, as "individuals' understanding of reality is always seen through the lens of

existing beliefs" (Fives & Buehl, 2012, p.478). This mechanism prompts teachers to put different degrees of relevance to the information of the social situation and whether it is (or it is not) incorporated into teachers' explicit beliefs.

Once the filtering role of beliefs is activated, beliefs keep on playing a role on how teachers conceptualize or frame a problem or task, this process enables to define the nature of the problem and to have an idea to approach it. At the next stage, the guiding function of beliefs emerges in their motivational abilities to move teachers to action (Fives & Buehl, 2012 p. 480). With this, it is important to mention that Fives & Buehl (2012) remark that "different types of beliefs may serve different functions in different situations" (p.480).

The issue that beliefs guide teachers' action has long been a controversial topic in belief studies due to the (in)congruence of belief and practice. The examination of the three functions of beliefs can cope constructively with this issue, for instance, "beliefs that serve as filters or frames may appear less congruent with practice because of the influence of beliefs that function as guides" (Fives & Buehl, 2012, p.481). This standpoint, together with some internal and external factors, the degree of specificity at which beliefs and practices are researched, and the stage of beliefs formation or transition suppose the apparent lack of consistency between teachers' beliefs and practice.

Next, I discuss how beliefs can change when teachers participate in professional development programs, it is worth stressing that professional development was included as no research was found regarding beliefs' changes in relation to immersion programs

2.1.4 In-service Teachers Beliefs Changes regarding Professional Development

Studies about changes in-service teachers' beliefs have been usually explored in relation to the professional development. On the one hand, Richards & Lockhart (1996) point out that professional development programs bring the ways of thinking and doing things of decision makers and the collective decisions and beliefs of individual teachers, which in turn reflect the teachers' specific beliefs about problems with the programs they participate. On the other hand, the studies of Beswick (2007–2008) & Magos (2006, as cited in Fives & Buehl, 2012) show that beliefs can change regardless the duration of the program and that professional development "influence specific beliefs and practices" (Fives & Buehl, 2012, p.486).

However, the beliefs' shifting depending on varied factors such as the studied beliefs, the length and nature of the professional development program, and the individual and contextual factors should not be underestimated (Fives & Buehl, 2012)

Next, I examine literature on how in- service teachers of English configure their professional identities regarding the conditions of their work settings, understanding that multiplicity of issues such as their language proficiency, content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, teaching skills, professional development and, in some cases, familiarity with specific sociocultural contexts can play an important role in shaping their notions of teacher professionalism. The review is done by examining teachers' competences and abilities, but also the most salient challenges teachers may face while teaching English to elementary and/or secondary and high school students in urban or rural areas.

2.2 The Teacher of a Foreign Language

The considerable research interest on "how people, who teach a second or foreign language, use what they know to do what they do in the classroom" (Freeman, 2016, p. 12)

has bring together a trend to "focus on the uniqueness of teacher characteristics in language teaching and identify the universal characteristics of the teaching profession" (Al-Muslim, & Ismail, 2020, p.433).

Besides, the teachers' characteristics have been studied in a variety of different ways over the past several decades, for instance, "teachers' characteristics have been researched in relation to "personal qualities, pedagogical skills, classroom practices, subject matter and psychological constructs such as knowledge and attitudes" (Borg, 2006, p.6).

Further, more flexible approaches highlight how the factors that influence the teaching are related . To illustrate, the study of Barnes & Lock (2010) opted for dividing the teachers' characteristics domains into three main categories: (a) the relationship between teacher and student, related to communication, empathy, personality, and openness (b) the characteristics of the language teacher in terms of knowledge that involves aspects related to linguistic competences and (c) the delivery of teaching that reflects the personal style, pedagogy, and content.

 This section presents a descriptive understanding of what language teachers know and do, in the assumption prescriptive statements of teachers' knowledge and skills probably could not match with their current circumstances of work and context.

2.2.1 The teacher of English in Colombia

Taking the liberty of warning that the quality characteristics of foreign language teachers are totally dependent on the context, as they are socially constructed and defined in various ways in different situations (Borg, 2006). Cortes et al. (2013) analyze the professional profile of the teacher of English from the vision of competences, they define

competences as "the skills that the teacher should have in order to achieve optimal results in their pedagogical work" (p.23). They spread their idea in the field of learning, pointing out that as teachers prove their competences in a determined situation, they are challenged to demonstrate their domains of knowledge, abilities, and particular traits creatively, the authors coined these competences as learning to know, learning to do, learning to be respectively.

The vision of competences (Cortes et al., 2013) is appropriate to the interest of this study since, like the teachers' beliefs are analyzed regarding this specific situation (Fives & Buehl, 2012), the teachers' quality characteristics are also linked to aa particular context. Hence, teachers demonstrate their knowledge, abilities and attitudes in the situation presented by the context.

The conceptualization of the term "competences" allows Cortes et al. (2013) to determine four key distinctive competences with their respective abilities. Table 2 summarizes their interpretation of competences.

Table 2

Competences and abilities of the teacher of English in Colombia

Competences	Abilities
Communicative	Teachers are expected not only to use and analyze the language, but also to enhance these skills on their students
Pedagogical	Content knowledge, general knowledge about teaching a foreign language, knowledge about curriculum, students, educational goals, and philosophical foundations knowledge (Pineda, 2002 as cited in Cortes et al., 2013)

Research	Teachers who research are able link their communicative, and pedagogical competences with professional development, updating and historical awareness of their realities (Elliot, 2007 as cited in Cortes et al., 2013)

Note. Data collected by author on the 6th of September of 2022

Similar to the three learning competences, the communicative and pedagogical competences and abilities (Cortes et al., 2013) would play a determinant role in studying the immersion program. All this on the basis the local English immersion programs try to find professional alternatives to improve the teachers' linguistic and pedagogical competences (Ayala, 2021).

Having examined second language research about what implies to be a teacher of English, it is important to include the examination towards the in-service teachers of English done by the Secretary of education of Cundinamarca as it was the promoter of the immersion program the participants took part.

2.2.1.1 The teacher of English from the Secretariat of Education of Cundinamarca perspective. In the section of identification and analysis of the problem in the document "Fortalecimiento de las competencias comunicativas en inglés de los estudiantes de los establecimientos educativos oficiales del departamento de Cundinamarca" that supports the immersion program development, two of the direct causes of the -A or A1 students level are seen to be associated to the practices and linguistic competences of the teachers of English. Next, I present the direct and indirect causes (See figure 1) detected by the GoC (2020).

Figure 1

Direct and indirect causes of the low level of English in the students of high schools of Cundinamarca

1.Weakness in pedagogical actions for teaching and learning English in educational establishments	2.Low skills of teachers for an adequate teaching.
1.1 Lack of level of English of teachers and students through tenth grade	2.1 Low level of communication skills in teachers of english
1.2 Lack of accompaniment to pedagogical practices in the classroom	2.2 Low comprehensive professional development for teachers in accordance with the educational level in which they work
1.3 Low articulation between the curricula of the Educational Establishments and the suggested English curriculum	
1.4 Insufficient quality educational resources for the teaching and learning English in public educational establishments	

(Goc, 2020, p.32)

The excerpts shown above evidence, on the one hand, that "Colombian teachers of English have always been judged to have a deficit perspective " (Ayala, 2021, p.53). In other words, teachers are supposed to have low language proficiency and low pedagogical competences. Although diagnostic tests have been applied to teachers of English in elementary and secondary levels, it may seem that indirect causes 1,1 and 2,2 lack a research approach since more studies are needed not only to determine the level of English of teachers, but also to establish relationships among this level and other demographic and academic variables of the teachers (Bastidas & Muñoz, 2011).

On the other hand, the section concerning the identification and analysis of the participants identified the teachers of the educational establishments as collaborators, but also as beneficiaries of the project. These roles are based on the idea that teachers as

beneficiaries are going to improve their competences "through processes of professional development, assessment, and immersion programs" (GoC, 2020, p.35), and then they will become collaborators by promoting changes that favor the development of communicative competences of English in the students.

Once the identity(ies) of the teachers of English were best understood with the previous related research. In the following section, I highlight the main challenges teachers of elementary and licensed English teachers of secondary and high public education face up. Besides, rural conditions of teaching English in Colombia are included.

2.2.2 General Challenges faced by in-service Teachers of English in Public Education in Colombia

The table 2 shows some of the main daunting challenges in teaching English in secondary, elementary, rural, and urban contexts.

Table 3

Challenges in teaching English in secondary, elementary, rural, and urban contexts

Category	Major challenges in-service teachers experience
Professional challenges	• Insufficient planning, quality, and sustainability of professional development programs (Correa & Gonzalez, 2016) • Nativespeakerism (Ayala, 2020) • Lack of enough teachers prepared to teach English in elementary schools (Clavijo, 2016; Correa & Gonzalez, 2016) • Provision of professional development programs to teachers of secondary education and in urban areas (Cruz- Arcila 2020; Bastidas & Muñoz, 2011)

	• The Colombian national standards for foreign language learning display a very limited range of linguistic competences and insist on focusing on the grammar of the language (Clavijo,2016)
	• An insufficient number of hours of English instruction (Sánchez & Obando, 2008; Correa & Gonzalez, 2016)
Work related **challenges**	• Students who might have mixed levels of proficiency, ages and motivation (Sánchez & Obando, 2008)
	• Limited use of English in real communicative situations (Cardenas et al., 2011)
	• Reluctance to work in rural schools (Ramos & Aguirre, 2016)
	• Different sociocultural, economic, ethnic and political conditions in rural education. (Bonilla & Cruz, 2013)

Note. Data collected by author on the 6th of September of 2022

Table 3 was split into two categories: professional and work-related challenges.
(Correa & Gonzalez, 2016). For the sake of this study, the challenges cited as being the greatest faced in-service teachers on the ongoing professional development are important to consider since immersion programs are conceived of as being complementary to professional development.

Findings from Correa & Gonzalez (2016) that suggest the professional development programs for teachers may lack planning, quality, and sustainability are consistent with those reported by other researchers. To illustrate, Bastidas & Muñoz (2011) add that professional development has been "slow, discontinuous, with ups and downs, depending on the opportunities of the moment" (p.179), some irregularities detected by Bastidas & Muñoz (2011) in Nariño consisted of the hiring of language centers to provide the professional development programs. In the majority of cases, they do not have academic support or experience to develop better curricular experiences, individual and social

transformation, another factor affecting the teachers' professional development is the "excessive workload, lack of support from school administrators, family obligations or overlaps in time with postgraduate or other studies, among others" (p.138).

Disarticulation and discontinuity of the professional development programs due to the change of administration and organizational difficulties between universities and education secretariats (Bastidas & Muñoz, 2011; Correa & Gonzalez, 2016; Cárdenas et al.,2011) are other issues that challenge what in service teachers of English and elementary teachers do in the classroom through "their learning to know, to do and to be" (Cortes et al., 2013, p.15).

The geopolitical judgement between native- speaker teachers of English and non-native- speaker teachers emerges also as a truly challenge for teachers of English. This fact has promoted the belief that "native speakers teachers represent a Western culture from which springs the ideals both of the English language and English language teaching methodology" (Hollyday, 2006 as cited in Harmer, 2007, p.119). Inevitably, native-speakerism has impacted many levels of policy and practice, for instance, feelings of superiority or inferiority in teachers communities (Harmer, 2007) as well as the mistaken belief that proficiency is the only qualification for being a teacher of English is common in ELT (Ayala, 2020) .

Next, I describe the main challenges in- service teachers face in meeting the needs of rural and elementary education in the framework of professional development, special attention is given to both contexts since, first, they have been excluded of the target of the NPB (Sanchez & Obando, 2008). Second, many variables and situations can occur in a given educational context, even more when they work under unfavorable conditions and

there is scarce offering of professional development programs (Bastidas & Muñoz, 2011),

and third, the studied immersion took elementary, secondary, urban and rural teachers in.

2.2.2.1 Main Professional Challenges faced by in-service Teachers of English in Elementary Education in Colombia. The teachers who have the responsibility of teaching English to elementary school children have encountered many challenges (Correa & Gonzalez, 2016).

Among the professional challenges, those of lack of teachers prepared to teach English in elementary schools (Clavijo, 2016), the lack of opportunities to attend to professional development programs are particularly important and urgent.

In this regard, the study of Cárdenas et al. (2011) that analyzes the professional development opportunities offered by 31 Colombian universities in 2009, found that the biggest investment in professional development was made for secondary teachers of English followed by the elementary level with 54.55%, and preschool with 27.27%.

By the same token, the poor design of professional development programs in the sense of putting together elementary school teachers with no formal studies in English with English licensed secondary school teachers, without taking into account their linguistic and pedagogical needs (Correa & Gonzalez, 2016) is seen as a result of lack of planning.

2.2.2.2 Main Professional Challenges faced by in-service Teachers of English in Rural Education in Colombia. English teaching in rural areas cannot arbitrarily be compared with English teaching in urban areas, as this provides a high level of inequality and challenges the purposes of democratic education (Bonilla & Cruz, 2013, p.31). As a consequence, rural teachers of English in public educational establishments are now faced

with challenges that embraces unbalanced sociocultural, economic, ethnic and political conditions (Bonilla & Cruz, 2013).

Teachers' reluctance to work in rural schools, resulting in low recruitment. (Ramos & Aguirre, 2016) are some implications of foreign language teaching in rural areas. The important point is that resistance among teachers can have roots on the fear of being isolated in both, a social and a professional context" (p.213).

In fact, teachers' working in rural areas show that, first, professional development tends to be urban- centered (Bastidas, 2011; Cruz, 2020). Second, teachers experience difficulties with transport and long distances (Bonilla & Cruz, 2013), and the fact that professional development is scarcely feasible to apply in rural high schools has a demotivating effect on their attendance and participation.

Teachers of English in rural school realities are also put at a disadvantage against urban ones due to socioeconomic factors, for instance, inappropriate, indeed lack of infrastructure, didactic and technological resources for a better learning (Ramos & Aguirre, 2016. p.21; Cruz, 2020) managing multi-level groups and classes and being teachers of other fields of knowledge (Holguin, 2016; Cárdenas et al., 2011) are cited as other rural teachers' challenges to teach English with relative success.

2.3 Immersion Language Programs Around the World

"Immersion" is one of the terms which have gained prominence in EFL settings and established a form of foreign language education. Unfortunately, in most cases, the definition remains unclear (Ayala, 2020) and the term could be misused (Bostwick,2009). Next, I will explore the origin, definitions, formal characteristics and types of immersion

programs, it is worth stressing that the information offers an overview from the international literature.

2.3.1 Defining Immersion Programs

The origin of immersion's conceptualization comes from Genesse (1995), one of the world's leading authorities on immersion education, he describes the concept "not as much a method of second language teaching as it is a pedagogical approach that promotes second language learning" (p. 543). Genesse's notion of immersion relies on a communicative approach that offers the opportunity to integrate both the basic conditions of first language learning and the special needs of second language learners. Similarly, Johnson & Swain (1997, as cited in Ayala, 2020) define an immersion program as the educational process in which a second language is used as the language of instruction for academic content (p.38).

2.3.2. Formal Characteristics of Immersion Programs

Formal characteristics such as a school culture focused on the local community, similar levels of L2 linguistic competences among the students, inclusion of local curriculum such as the L1 high school study plan in the immersion program, L1 and L2 acquisition goes hand in hand (Bostwick, 2009) seems to be determinant for an immersion program. Ayala (2020) further states that immersion programs aim for additive bilingualism, so that "the L2 is a medium of instruction and the teachers are bilingual" (p.29).

2.3.3. Types of Immersion Programs

Three levels of distinction have been drawn regarding immersion programs: the first grouping is intended for Early, Delay and Late immersion programs, that depends primarily

on the grade levels and factors such as age, interaction contexts and study plans. Total vs partial immersion programs were the terms allocated by Genesse (1995) to the second distinction that is determined by the amount of exposure to the L2. A third category is accounted for one- way or two-way immersion program. Typically, the main difference in these immersion programs vary on language groups, then participants enrolled in one way-immersion program would only speak the L1, while the second type of immersion programs embrace both native and non- native speakers.

At this point, it should be noted that all these three models of immersion programs have been classified regarding different objectives, contexts, and populations (Ayala. 2020). Under this assumption, the concept of late, partial, and one-way immersion programs will be highlighted for the sake of this project, without first mentioning that the technical document "Fortalecimiento de las competencias comunicativas en inglés de los estudiantes de los establecimientos educativos oficiales del departamento de Cundinamarca" does not specify the type of immersion program was going to be undertaken Hence, this "apparent" classification of the immersion program, object of this study was based on first, the closest features to the immersions programs around the world and that the Secretary's intention probably was to replicate those models, having as a result a disconnection between those theories and the reality of the immersion program.

2.3.3.1 Late and Partial Immersion Programs. Curtain (1986) defines partial immersion programs as those that "only 50 percent of the instruction is in the second language" (p.5), whereas late immersion programs have been designed to spend at least half the school day in the second language with at least two subject content areas taught through the second language" (Genesee, 1984, as cited in Curtain, 1986).

Regarding those definitions, the emphasis on 50:50 models is commonly present in these two types of immersion programs. Probably, the main difference would be traced in the sense that previous foreign language instruction has taken place before the late immersion program participants enrollment (Curtain, 1986).

In the case of the immersion program I studied, it is important to note that even though some characteristics of these models are stated on its development (the use of L1 and L2, previous foreign language instruction); there are other features that differ (the amount of foreign language instruction, forms of content-based foreign language instruction, different levels of L2 linguistic competences among participants) Hence, this study confirms Ayala's ideas (2020) that each immersion program "represents a position based on the context and time" (p.39).

2.3.3.2 One-Way Dual Immersion Programs. Before starting, it is necessary to give a glance on dual language programs, that integrate content teaching and learning in L1 and L2 as well as proficiency in both languages (Bostwick, 2009) and one- way immersion programs that can be also found under names like foreign language immersion and language immersion programs, whose main trend is that the group participants as being from only one of the two languages and that they are expected to become bilingual, bi-cultural, and bi-literate. On the basis of this model of immersion program and the policy that allowed the studied immersion program execution, I would like to express that the participants' L1 was Spanish and they had the chance to use both Spanish and English, but also some uncertainties about proficiency in L2, biliteracy and bicultural education comes into my mind, being an indicative of a gap among EFL theory, policy formulation at national level and practice regarding immersion programs.

2.3.6 Defining Immersion Programs in Colombia

Although the concept of immersion has not been clearly defined in Colombia (Ayala, 2021, p.59), the NME and the education secretariats have sponsored the development of immersion programs (Moya, 2012; Pachón, 2012). On account of the possible lack of research on this topic in Colombia, I decided to search the possible definitions given by the responsible, the participants and the academic community who have an approach with immersion programs . First, I took advantage of the website of the NME to access information related to immersion programs under the decision-makers' perspectives. Looking at news in the portal, six reported data were related to immersion programs for teachers, from these, the most common definitions of immersion programs were "activities", "parts of an experience" and "extension projects." The excerpts are included below:

> "The immersion is part of an experience of using English 24/7 through recreational activities, cultural exchanges, practice spaces, field visits and explorations, and collaborative work in English"
>
> **https://eco.colombiaaprende.edu.co/incentivoinmersionpereira2022/**
>
> "This call is one of the activities developed by the National Bilingualism Program of the Ministry of Education to promote the personal and professional development of teachers, and school administrators"
>
> **https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/1759/w3-printer-386526.html**
>
> The standard English immersion program is one of the most important extension projects… (Mancera, 2012, p.3)

Subsequently, research in journal articles and theses pertained to immersion programs for teachers of English in Colombia was scant. Moya (2012) mentions "an English course as L2 aimed at public high school teachers of English with a language level

A2 or b1 (based on the CEF) " (p.34) for defining what she considers to be an immersion program of English. For its part, Pachón (2012) typifies a standard English immersion program as a multifaceted social phenomenon that embraces a diversity of experiences that go beyond learning English (p.204). Pachón's (2012) definition is adopted on account of this project.

Finally, a review of the journal "Cuadernos del caribe N°15" (2012) was conducted as teachers from different regions wrote their experiences about their participation on an immersion program. Even though there was any conceptualization of immersion programs from teacher voices, it is worth quoting Sanchez (2012), in the beginning of his writing made his questioning became evident in paper when he points out: "What is my idea about this kind of programs? I had one idea about this immersion, but when I came back to this immersion, I changed my idea about this kind of programs" (p.84). Following the reading, his concern about its conceptualization became less important. Instead, Sanchez (2012) would rather reflect on the impact and benefits on his life and pedagogical competence.

As the document used for the formulation of the project "Fortalecimiento de las competencias comunicativas en inglés de los estudiantes de los establecimientos educativos oficiales del departamento de Cundinamarca" includes the section technical analysis of the immersion programs as an effective alternative for improving the classification in English performance level in -A and A1 in the 75% of students of high schools of the non-certified municipalities of Cundinamarca in 2019, I consider important to include their perspective.

2.3.7 Secretary of Education of Cundinamarca Perspective about Immersion Programs

The English Immersion Programs are initiatives of the MEN that act as an incentive for those education secretariats that develop plans of bilingualism in accordance with the National Program of Bilingual and the parameters of the secretary itself (Pachón, 2012, p.10).

In that sense, the educational service adopted for the promotion of bilingualism in public high school teachers of Cundinamarca and set out in the document " Fortalecimiento de las competencias comunicativas en inglés de los estudiantes de los establecimientos educativos oficiales del departamento de Cundinamarca" was two immersion programs that aim to strengthen 200 teachers' communication skills (listening, speaking, writing and reading) in English, and to provide scenarios of practice in which teachers jointly plan improvement strategies for teaching English in their educational establishments (GoC, 2020, p.58).

Besides, the GoC (2020) points out that the immersion program is also intended to improve the teachers' professional development through workshops on curriculum, materials, and teaching methodology.

The GoC (2020) defines the immersion programs as "strategies that are usually used for the strengthening and development of communication skills" Key words such as cultural exchange and meaningful learning come along also with this definition.

The term "local immersion program" appears further on in the technical document, when referring to immersion programs undertaken at national level that "provide teachers' cultural heritage growth scenarios on their country, as well as networks of exchange, collaboration and research with teachers from other regions of Colombia; including

activities closely associated with teachers' improvement and practice of their

communication skills in English and classroom pedagogy.

The immersion program methodology that concerns in particular, seems to be

implemented regarding the component of bilingualism and immersion program as itself,

which in turn contains a series of moments. The table 4 summarizes the stages and

moments that guide the procedures of the immersion program.

Table 4

Stages that guide the procedures of the immersion program studied

Components of the immersion program	Moments related to the components
Bilingualism	**Moment 1** Diagnostic tests that allow the formation of groups and the immersion program success criteria
	Moment 2 Activities focused on the teachers' English linguistic competence improvement and professional development
	Moment 3 Exit tests that allow to identify the impact of the immersion program and the objectives achievement
Immersion program itself	**Moment 1** Socialization
	Moment 2 Academic
	Moment 3 Language improvement
	Moment 4 Sociocultural
	Moment 5 Monitoring and evaluation

Note. Data collected by author on the 26th of September of 2022

2.4 Previous Research State of art

This section presents a general scope of other studies on teachers' beliefs, the

implications of being a teacher of English under varied conditions and immersion

programs in national and international settings. The examination sheds light on meaningful

trends that cut across this study constructs and research methodologies. Thus, I include six

research studies related to this research topic, these reports are grouped into three topics: a)

teachers' beliefs, b) teaching English in elementary education and rural areas c) local

English immersion programs.

2.4.1 Teachers' beliefs

As the construct of beliefs is itself broad and encompassing, specific areas are

required (Pajares, 1992, p.316), teachers beliefs concerning language, learning, teaching,

the curriculum, and the teaching profession have been explored in the area of ELT scholars

(Richards & Lockhart, 1996; Borg, 2001). For the sake of this study, as theoretical

foundation on in service teachers' beliefs about immersion programs was scarce, the two

selected research studies deal with beliefs about the identity of any Colombian English

teacher (Cortes et al., 2012) and in-service teachers' beliefs concerning language learning

(Barcelos, 2000) as being interrelated issues to the construct of immersion programs.

The role of beliefs about teachers' self-efficacy is exemplified in Cortes et al.

(2012) study about the competences and domains a teacher of foreign language teacher in

Colombia should have. These researchers surveyed pre and in -service teachers, parents,

alumni and administrative staff of public high schools of Bogota to analyze the beliefs

towards English teachers' professional identity in Colombia. Most participants reported

believing that an English teacher in Colombia is expected to perform in the foreign

language very well, and have good knowledge of the target language culture. Knowledge of

the Colombian educational system, a strategic visioning of their students and institutional

dynamics, teamwork and abilities in other areas make also part of a lower proportion of

beliefs.

The study evidences that the educational communities could share some common

beliefs, (situativity theory) but they also differ (personal beliefs). Besides, the research

suggests new lines of research such as the factors that influence the formation of those beliefs, and the feasibility of being an English teacher regarding what is being believed in public high schools.

The study of Barcelos (2000) that centers on the relationship between American teachers' and Brazilian students' language learning beliefs in the setting of an international language institute in the U.S is also noteworthy. Barcelos (2000) unveiled that teachers' students' beliefs about language learning are interrelated and interconnected with the actions as in an ecological system, so that, beliefs act as representations of responses to the task of learning and teaching in different contexts. Teachers' awareness of the sorts of conflict that can happen in their classrooms is the call of the study.

As seen from the above, these studies about beliefs are important for this research since, on the one hand, Cortes et al.'s (2012) study coincides in two constructs of this study - teachers beliefs' and the teacher of English in Colombia- . On the other hand, Barcelos' (2000) research is of great worth to this study in the sense that two of the five research questions she approached, informed about the relation between language learning beliefs ESL teachers and their practice and if teachers' language learning beliefs evolve, and how, across a given period of time.

2.4.2 Teaching English in Elementary Levels and Rural Areas

In light that the participants of the previous studies are licensed teachers of English and work in urban areas. Next, I address Castro (2017) and Hansen- Thomas et al. (2014) studies about teaching English in elementary education and rural areas. Their relevance in

this study exists with respect that both focus on the influence of professional development in teaching English under such conditions and the adopted methodology - mixed methodology and grounded theory- are similar to this research.

Castro's (2017) research entitled: "Conceptions of primary school teachers on the teaching of English as a foreign language", aims at analyzing the conceptions that elementary school teachers have about English teaching and the relationship that exists with the professional development they participated. The research was carried out at a public high school of Bogota with four elementary school teachers who teach English as a foreign language. A classic approach to grounded theory was used to reveal that teachers shape their conceptions from the experiences during professional development and builds knowledge, even without having the formal education in teaching English as a foreign language.

Hansen- Thomas et al. (2014) explores the perceived professional development needs of in- service teachers of English-language learners from 10 rural districts in the USA. Using a mixed research methodology, rural teachers expose their perceptions regarding the most salient challenges they are intended to confront in light of the connections between professional development and perceived knowledge and expertise in ESL teaching.

Both qualitative and quantitative findings showed that "there were a number of areas in which teachers felt competent (and conversely, felt lacking) in their professional development with English language learners". (Hansen-Thomas et al., 2014, p.320) This suggests that the rural teachers' specific needs and contexts are important in the planning and framework for professional development programs for teachers.

2.4.3 Local English Immersion Programs

Pachón (2012) conducted a qualitative study to characterize the sociolinguistic, educational and communicative processes of a local English immersion program, carried out in San Andres Island, Colombia. The study was carried out with 28 teachers from different municipalities and 9 people belonging to the immersion program staff. Using qualitative analysis, Pachón (2012) found that the English immersion program was a multifaceted social phenomenon for the paticipants. In that sense, it encompassed a diversity of experiences, which in turn are influenced by the concurrence of the objectives of the NBP, the expectations, interests and needs of the teachers, the education secretariats, the specificities of the island and the objectives of the National University of Colombia, San Andres headquarters.

The results suggest that the English immersion program shared some of the characteristics of the late, partial, and one-way immersion programs described in the ELT field such as the use of L1 and L2, and previous foreign language instruction; however, there were achievements and difficulties regarding its execution and development in accordance with the national educational needs and the context of San Andres island.

Finally, Díaz (2021) provided a qualitative investigation to analyze the beliefs about teaching and learning through participation in immersion programs of four teachers of English in Meta. Using a grounded theory approach, Díaz (2021) states that the immersion programs embraced not only academic processes, but also life experiences. In the context of this study, the immersions have not only modified the teaching and learning beliefs of English teachers, but there has also been room for constant reflection and a positive criticism regarding the actions of the national government regarding educational

policies (Díaz, 2021). For instance, Diaz (2021) asserts that teachers' participation in immersion programs promote the belief that teaching and learning English could come through having to communicate real meaning, nevertheless, their communicative initiatives to enhance the students' English level fail when particular institutional dynamics limit the transition of knowledge from the immersion programs to the classrooms, as a result, the ideal of B1 level of proficiency in the high school students of English in Meta is increasingly out of reach of the program.

Although the use of just one instrument (semi-structured interview) limited the scope of the project, the perspective taken to examine teachers' beliefs in Meta, and the recognition of teachers with a range of beliefs and experiences that transform their local realities are important for this study.

In brief, the overview of the existing research findings on teachers' beliefs, teaching English to young learners and in rurality presented here demonstrates the importance of local knowledge in teachers' beliefs about immersion programs under the varied conditions teachers work. Additionally, it was identified that there are gaps in the literature related to beliefs of in-service teachers of English in the framework of varied educational levels and sociocultural contexts.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In this chapter, I explain the methodological aspects of the design in conducting the current research. First, I point out the paradigm or type of research I have implemented within this study. Second, I expose the two phases of the research methodology I executed

along with the study. Third, I introduce the approach -grounded theory- that guides this study. Finally, I refer to the data collection instruments, and the procedures used.

3.1 Research paradigm

In this study, the data collected process was textual and numerical, its focus was on the participants' beliefs about immersions, but also on the correlations and theory that could emerge from those beliefs. Then, the findings were reached following a statistical and an interpretative, grounded process. These characteristics made the study mixed. As the central idea of mixed methodology is to bring "a better understanding of research problems" (Creswell & Clark, 2017, p.5), the complexity of the construct belief could be addressed, collecting, and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data within this study.

On the one hand, the relevance of the quantitative research in this study lies on the unveiling of significant differences among teachers' beliefs about immersions programs, depending on the sociocultural context and educational level they work with. On the other hand, the key idea of introducing qualitative research resides in giving voice to the participants and exploring my reflexivity as researcher (Creswell & Poth, 2018) in interpreting and analyzing teachers' beliefs about immersions programs.

Three major complementary sources of data were used in the present study. A cross-sectional questionnaire with closed and open- ended questions provided quantitative data. Semi structured interview and a focus group interview were used to elicit the qualitative data.

The present study was carried out into two stages: a survey stage, and a qualitative study stage. The survey stage was aimed at obtaining broad and generalizable findings

about beliefs about immersions programs of 84 in-service teachers of English using the content, method, findings, and analysis from the survey distribution. The qualitative study phase focused on six in-service teachers' beliefs about immersions in a very deep way that enables to analyze findings and to build a significant analysis from all three data sources.

The following sections depict the context, participants, instruments, and procedures of the two study stages.

3.3 Survey Phase

3.3.1 Participants

Table 5

Participants of the study

Teachers participants	Quantity	Percentage
Pre-school	2	2,4
Elementary	33	39,3
Pre-school and elementary	5	6
Basic secondary education	15	17,9
Middle eduaction	7	8,3
Basic secondary and middle education	22	26,2
Total	84	100

Note. Data collected by author on the 2nd of August of 2022

In the present study, 84 teachers of 42 public schools of Cundinamarca were included, the questionnaire was then completed by two or three teachers at each school. In total, the participants in the questionnaire were comprised of 40 teachers who teach English, but most of them do not have their core preparation in that subject, they are in pre-school and elementary education and 44 English teachers who teach in basic secondary and

high school education. Besides, it should be noted that the participants work either in urban or rural schools.

3.4 Qualitative Phase

3.4.1 Participants

In total, the participants in the qualitative phase were comprised of six in-service teachers of public high schools of Cundinamarca. All of them were women, live with their families, and their ages ranged from 35 to 53 years old. The participants were professionals in a determined field of teaching, included in the study plan established by the NME. Three of them are specialized in second language teaching, whereas the other areas of specialization include basic education, Spanish and kindergarten (See table 6).

Their workplaces have similar conditions in terms of infrastructure and adoption of public policies; however, each teacher describes varied educational communities, context and realities. The schools, where the teachers work, are located in the municipalites of Cajicá, Choachi, Guatavita and Madrid.

About their familiarity to the immersion programs, only 2 of the participants had two participations in immersion programs before the studied one, the rest of the participants report having heard about the term "immersion program", but they had not partcipated yet.

Table 6 provides information about the participants concerning their studies, working agreements with the Secretariat of education of Cundinamarca, academic assignment and other related jobs when they participated in the immersion programs.

Table 6
Participants of the qualitative phase

Participant	Undergraduate degree	Master degree	Years of teaching in the Secretariat of Education of Cundinamarca	Assigned grades in 2021 school year	Other jobs
P01	Bachelor's degree in Spanish and foreign languages	Master's in language	Eleven years	Eighth and ninth graders	Tutor "todos aprender" program *
P02	Bachelor's degree in philology and languages	Master's degree in education	Fifteen years	Tenth and sixth graders	Universities
P03	Bachelor's degree in basic education with an emphasis in mathematics, humanities and Spanish language,	-Specialist in learning needs in Mathematics and Spanish. --Master's degree in educational technology.	Thirteen years	First graders	
P04	Bachelor's degree in kindergarten education	Master's degree in child development	Four years	First graders	
P05	Bachelor's degree in Spanish and literature		Sixteen years	Second and fifth graders	
P06	Bachelor degree in modern languages, Spanish and English	Master's degree in English language teaching with autonomous learning environments. -Currently pursuing her	Eleven years	Sixth seventh and tenth graders	

	doctorate in Educational Sciences

Note. *She retook her job as a teacher of English in 2020. Data collected by author on the 15th of August of 2022

The participants selection followed three main criteria. First, they answered the questionnaire; second, two people were high school teachers, while the other two ones taught English in pre-school and/or elementary education. Third, two teachers at least worked in rural schools. Due to the difficulty in locating rural teachers, convenience sampling criteria (Merriam, 2009) was used. Convenience sampling implies in this study that the researcher "selects a sample based in time and location availability of sites of respondents and so on" (Merriam, 2009, p.98). It is worth noting that, the scope of the criteria enables to see if the participants' beliefs about immersions were different from each other depending on variables such as context and educational level in which they work.

3.5 Ethical perspective

The study ethical framework takes into account of essential aspects. First, a prior written request, to carry out the research, was presented to the delegate of the Secretariat of Education of Cundinamarca in the immersion program, this request was managed in the master program, and finally, signed by the director of Languages Department of Universidad Pedagógica Nacional (UPN).

As suggested by the UPN, a consent form was delivered to and accepted by the in-service teachers in order that they participate, and approach the research objectives before they engage in the research (see Appendix 2). This consent was delivered to the participants before they answered the questionnaire, it means in the immersion program.

Furthermore, at the beginning of the interview and focus group, I informed to the participants that I guarantee the safety and protection of the data they provide. All this on the basis of Law 1581 of 2021 on data protection. Following ethical considerations, the participants' names were changed for the protection of their identities, so that the names were not used throughout the study. I refer to P01, P02, P03, P04, P05, and P06 to make this approachable.

3.6 Data collection instruments

In this section, I describe the instruments and the procedures I developed to collect and analyze the data. To collect the data, I implemented a questionnaire, an interview, and a focus group.

3.6.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire made part of the survey phase. Gay & Airasian (2000, as cited in Griffe, 2012) define a questionnaire as "several questions related to a research topic". (p.135) This simple and practical definition reveals its primary objective at collecting information. In this study, a questionnaire is understood as an "instrument for collecting survey information, providing structured, often numerical data, and often being comparatively straightforward to analyze (Wilson & McLean, 1994, as cited in Cohen et al., 2018). The present questionnaire consisted of 9 closed-ended questions items in Likert-scale, and 5 open-ended questions (See Appendix 1). In section I, it was addressed the sociodemographic information including school name, urban or rural context and levels of education they were teaching. The section II was intended for the questions, the scales ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) and then, the open- ended

questions were addressed. The last statement was asked to identify personal information only for the teachers who showed agreement to participate in the interviews.

Regarding the questionnaire validity, the first version of questionnaire was reviewed and piloted by the thesis advisor and a master program peer. They were familiar with social sciences field and the concept of beliefs and immersions. The statements were analyzed to minimize redundancy in the statements and bring meaning interpretability and clarity to the statements. It was reduced from twenty statements to ten and some changes in word order were made.

Besides, the questionnaire was tried out by two teachers at public schools of Cundinamarca in order to check the validity and comprehensibility of the statements. Through WhatsApp, they were asked to complete the questionnaire and comment on any comprehension problem(s) filling out with their answers. Overall, the two participants' answers showed that the items were understood clearly and consistently with the questionnaire objective. However, item 15 needed major revision because it was misinterpreted by the two participants due to the tense used. A minor change was made for this statement.

3.6.1.1 Questionnaire Distribution. The questionnaire was distributed two days after the immersion started. The delay was due to some stringent requirements by the bilingualism manager. She asked a prior request by the director of Languages Department and some changes that did not embrace the objective of the questionnaire and the meaning of the statements under the assumptions that first, the program was being evaluated rather than investigated and second, the participants were public servants, so that the granted permissions should be given also by the Secretary of education led by the director of

quality, I assume that the participation of the teachers in the two days did not interfere their prior beliefs.

Before completing the questionnaire, the teachers were informed that the participation in the study was voluntary, and the questionnaire was not a part of the immersion program. Then, they were asked to read and sign a prior written consent of the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional (See Appendix 2). The questionnaires were completed and returned to me within the time of the immersion they were participating. A total of 84 completed questionnaires were obtained at this stage.

3.6.1.2 Statistical Analysis. The data corresponding to the section I and the scores and the frequencies of the closed questions from the 84 participants were included in a database in the program Statistical Package for the social sciences SPSS. They were used to describe the service EFL teachers' beliefs about immersions (See Appendix 3).

In the analysis, the five rating scales were consolidated into three groups and were interpreted as follows. Answers "1" and "2" were combined and analyzed under the category of "Disagreement" which revealed that the participants disagreed with the statement. Answers "4" and "5" were analyzed together under the category of "Agreement" which meant that the participant agreed with the statement. Answer "3" was analyzed in the category of "Neutral" which evidenced that the participant did not either agree or disagree with the statement. It is worth mentioning that the Likert scale inclusion at the planning stage was precisely the reason behind the three groups.

3.6.1.3 Independent t- tests. A t-test is an inferential statistic used to determine whether there is a significant difference between the means of two groups and how they are related (Hayes, 2022). For the sake of this study, two independent t-tests were used to

determine whether the difference was significant between the means in two unrelated groups. It is worth stressing that unrelated groups are characterized by the fact that their participants are different.

For instance, as the group in this study corresponds to the in-service teachers, an in-service teacher of the group could also be member of another group and viceversa, it means that the participants can be, on one side, teaching in secondary level or taking up her/his duties in elementary education; nevertheless, in both scenarios, they make part of the in-service teachers. The same situation occurs with the place they work, they are in-service teachers ,but also can be rural or urban teachers.

Hence, the scores of the preschool and elementary teachers were paired with basic and higher education teachers' answers as well as means from teachers who work in urban and rural contexts were analyzed in in two t-test analysis (See appendix 4) to determine whether there were any significant differences about beliefs about immersions.

In order to guarantee a balanced design, (Hayes, 2022) that is to say, the same number of participants in each group, the t-tests were conducted with a sample of 40 teachers of pre- school and elementary education and the same number was chosen for secondary and high school teachers. Regarding the context, a sample of 35 rural teachers of English was chosen to conduct the second t-test in comparison with 35 teachers of English in urban contexts.

It is highly valuable for this research carry out the independent t-tests as first, this study assumes that a sample does not fully reflect all characteristics of the entire population of in-service teachers, so that the independent t-tests can provide an accurate reflection of reality, it also has a need to do so, in order to include conclusions and reccomendations

based on the compatibility of the study hypothesis and the data base don modelling assumptions.

3.6.2 Interview

Nunan (1992, as cited in Griffee, 2012) suggests a general definition of an interview as "the elicitation of data by one person from another through person-to-person encounters", (p. 152) while Griffe (2012) sees interview rather as "a person-to-person structured conversation for the purpose of finding and/or creating meaningful data which has to be collected, analyzed, and validated" (p.159).

I think of the interview as "an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, sees the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production, and emphasizes the social situatedness of research data" (Kvale, 1996, as cited in Cohen at al., 2018, p.349).

It should be made clear that two kinds of interviews were conducted. On one hand, the study benefited from the semi-structured interview (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, as cited in Cohen et al., 2018) in which the content, the set and sequence of questions and procedures were organized in advance, but also the flexibility and freedom in the content and wording (Cohen et al., 2018) was a basis for this study.

On the other hand, this study implemented a focus group, in which data emerged from the interaction of the interviewed participants rather than from the interviewer and interviewed encounter (Cohen et al., 2018). As the present research interest lies primarily in analyzing the in-service teachers beliefs about immersion programs, this study subsequently adopted this form of group interview since it encourages to voice opinions,

and gather feedback from the previous instruments -questionnaire and semi structured interviews- and get triangulation (Robson, 2002, as cited in Cohen et al., 2018).

3.6.2.1 Semi-structured interview. Once the data analysis was done in terms of frequencies and t-tests of the questionnaire, the six in -service teachers were interviewed individually, (See Appendix 7) each interview lasted approximately 60 -90 minutes and they were more casual in register than its presentation yet remained semi-structured. The six interviews were oriented in Spanish, the first language of the interviewed and interviewer. Four of them were mediated by Google Meet and the other two were face to face. In both cases, they were recorded and transcribed afterwards.

The interview topics dealt with first, background information, teachers' selection and decisions adopted in relation to the teachers absence made by the head teachers, second, questions related to their personal reasons, expectations level of satisfaction and suggestions were asked, third, their beliefs about the logistics, immersion activities and their relations with the bilingual leaders and the elementary and/or secondary counterparts were stated, finally, teachers gave their own definition regarding local English immersion programs. The value of the semi-structured interviews was having a clear and deep understanding about the participants' profiles, general background and how the in-service teachers characterize the local English immersion program through their beliefs once they participated at least in the studied immersion program.

3.6.3 Focus group

The focus group was run with the same six interviewed participants. It was oriented in January, 2022 due to the 2021 academic calendar of the Secretary of Education. (See appendix 8) As some interviews, it was in a virtual mode and it was necessary to mention

some of the characteristics of the instrument before its implementation in order to develop it successfully. The main purpose of the focus group in this study is to generate and evaluate data from the different subgroups of the teachers' population,: - elementary, secondary and rural teachers -. Reaching triangulation, giving voice to groups and gathering feedback (Cohen et al., 2018) from the questionnaire and the interview were also other motives to include it.

Similar to the interview content, the partcipants first give a brief presentation, second, it was necessary to mention the focus group purpose, emphasizing in my role as a moderator, third, questions related to her expectations before their taking part were addressed, then, they described their experiences with their collegues, national and foreign leaders, finally, further suggestions for the implementation of local English immersion programs for teachers.

3.7. Data Analysis approach

I embraced grounded theory to execute the qualitative phase of this study that allowed me to understand in-service teachers' beliefs about immersions at a deeper level.

According to Strauss and Corbin (1998, as cited in Creswell, 2007), grounded theory is a qualitative research design in which the researcher creates a general explanation (a theory) of a process, action, or interaction in accordance with the perspectives of a large number of participants. Creswell (2007) adds that this generation of a theory can be developed through interrelating categories of information based on data collected from the participants.

More recently, Charmaz (2006) stands for a more constructivist perspective; according to Charmaz (2006) grounded theory could "place more emphasis on the views, values, beliefs, feelings, assumptions, and ideologies of individuals than on the methods of research" p.65. This study relies on this constructivist approach of Charmaz (2006) assuming grounded theory as "a general methodology with systematic guidelines for gathering and analyzing data to generate middle-range theory" (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2015, p.1). First, the methodological aspects of the constructivist grounded theory enable to emphasize on the multiple and complex teacher' beliefs about immersions, second, doing constructivist grounded theory provides an interpretive approach with flexible guidelines (Creswell, 2007). So that, as a researcher, I can make visible the beliefs in contrast to teachers' experiences within embedded, hidden networks, situations, and relationships (Creswell, 2007).

Coding is essential in grounded theory since it is "the pivotal link between collecting data and developing an emergent theory to explain these data" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 43). The grounded theory of this study consists of three phases: initial, focused and theoretical coding that is described on the section procedures of data analysis.

3.7.1 Procedures of Data analysis

Once the implementation of the questionnaires and semi structured interviews finished, the data analysis began with a first reading. Regarding the open- ended answers in the questionnaires, it was found that this instrument provided aspects such as the beliefs the participants expressed and how they feel before and during the immersion program. The audio transcriptions from the semi structured interview evidenced their beliefs about

experience they had, their expectations and the good and bad points they noted as participants. Besides, they showed how the participants expressed their beliefs regarding the impact on their families and schools.

Then, data was split into two groups at first: (1) open ended questions from the questionnaire transcripts, (2) semi structured interviews transcripts. Subsequently, I followed the three phases suggested by Charmaz (2006): initial, focused, and theoretical coding. First, I named each line of data of the questionnaires and interviews through a comparative study of incidents (Glaser, 1978, as cited in Charmaz, 2006). Then, I kept the most frequent codes and main themes through the examination of the initial coding. At this point, having as a basis this initial coding, the data from the focus group was collected and analyzed, it is worth mentioning I returned to earlier data to compare data to these codes which help to refine them, gather enough information that shape the categories and saturate the categories. In the second phase, it was evident that some units prevailed over others considering both the number of excerpts and the relevance given in the three instruments, for instance, some of the categories include motives, expectations, evident results, complaints, suggestions, and others.

Nevertheless, the list of categories still encompassed a broad view of the data, an analysis of the research objectives enabled an interpretation process to establish possible relationships between the emerging categories in the focused coding.

As a result of this grounding, three final refined categories: (a) a sense of balance in discussing immersion programs: high and low expectations, (b) the unheard in-service teachers' voices and (c) faultfinding within suggestions for immersion programs' improvement and their corresponding subcategories emerged, allowing to discuss how in

service teachers' characterize a local English immersion program underlying their beliefs about immersion programs.

The results and discussion of the findings of both survey and qualitative phases are presented in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4

4.1 Findings from the Closed-ended Items of the Survey Phase

This section details the results from the survey phase. It is worth stressing they respond to the first specific objective outlined in chapter 3.

The detailed results of the closed- ended items of the questionnaire were organized in three categories: a) rationale of immersions b) nature of immersions c) home and school settings. For each category, I present the results in tables 7, 8 and 9 with their corresponding frequencies, percentages and descriptions, the discussion will be found after the categories and the independent sample t- tests presentation. The statements for each item and scales are listed on the first column and row respectively. Beside the statements, the frequencies are shown whereas percentages are listed below. The last column entitled "lost" refers to no answers

4.1.1 Rationale of Immersions

In general, the participants reported believing that immersions have an impact in the English linguistic competence improvement, half of participants surveyed (49,3%) agreed that the immersions address the English linguistic competence improvement, In other words, teachers' beliefs evidenced two trends regarding their improvement of their linguistic competence in English. However, as the statement was closely related to the item

"her/his participation in immersions lead directly to the students' linguistic level competence strengthening" show different results, a large majority of the participants (91,7%) believed that their participation has a potential impact on their learners' linguistic competence.

About the professional development, the participants were also optimistic, less than 5 % of the participants did not report believing that immersions can develop new skills, stay up-to-date on current trends, and advance in their role as teachers. More than fifteen participants were either neutral (11,9%), did not answer (2,4%).

Table 7

Frequencies and percentages of service teachers' beliefs about immersions (N=84)

Closed-ended items	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Lost
1.The immersion programs approach the teachers' English linguistic competence improvement	42	50	8	
	41,2	49,3	9,5	
7.Your participation in immersion programs leads directly to your students' English linguistic competence strengthening	1	77	6	
	1,2	91,7	7,1	
9.The immersion programs approach the teachers' professional development	4	68	10	2
	4,8	81	11,9	2,4

Note. Data collected by author on the 20th of August of 2022

4.1.2. Nature of Immersions

The other items in the category of beliefs about the characteristics of immersions concern the use of Spanish in the immersion and the suitable location to develop it. The responses to the items in this group were divided . Approximately 36% responded to the

statement "the use of Spanish is allowed during the immersions journeys" in the "agree" scale, 25% in the disagree scale and 38,1% in the neutral scale.

Also, the vast majority reported believing the English-speaking countries have the conditions for an immersion, but also the municipalities where they work can be good scenarios for having an immersion. More than two fifths of the participants (44%) agree that " the immersions can take place in the municipalities where they work, whereas a minority of the participants (11,9%) believed that "immersions do not necessarily have to be in nations where English is the mother tongue .

Table 8

Frequencies and percentages of service teachers' beliefs about immersions (N=84)

Closed-ended items	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Lost
2.The use of Spanish is allowed during the immersion programs	21	30	32	1
	25	35,7	38,1	1,2
3.The immersion programs can be carried put in the municipality you work	29	37	17	1
	34,5	44	20,2	1,2
4.The immersion programs should be carried out in a English-speaking country	10	68	6	
	11,9	81	7,1	

Note. Data collected by author on the 20th of August of 2022

4.1.3. Home and School Settings

There was a consensus in beliefs about the family and school support; a significant number of participants (94%) believed that they count on an overwhelming family's encouragement to participate in immersions. Similarly, more than four fifths of the participants (88,1%) endorsed the statement "you consider that you have gotten support from the entities where you work to participate in immersions". Only 3,6 % and 7,1% of the participants believed that their families and schools did not agree with their immersion participation respectively. For the item addressing the time and space to share their

experiences and reflection with their co-workers, the 64.3% of the participants agreed that time and space on which they can narrate their feelings, thoughts, and experiences in relation to their participation make part of their school agendas. The rest were either neutral (17,9) or disagree (16,7%) with the statement.

Table 9

Frequencies and percentages of service teachers' beliefs about immersions (N=84)

Closed-ended items	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Lost
	11,9	81	7,1	
5. Your family agrees with the initiative of participating in immersion programs	3	79	2	
	3,6	94	2,4	
6. You consider you have received support to participate in the immersion programs from the entities in which you work	6	74	3	1
	7,1	88,1	3,6	1,2
8. You have the time and space in the entity you work to share what you have learned during the immersion programs with your coworkers	14	54	15	1
	16,7	64,3	17,9	1,2

Note. Data collected by author on the 20th of August of 2022

4.2 Results of the Independent Sample T-Tests

In order to determine the in-service teachers' beliefs about the immersion programs that show significant changes in accordance with the context and the level where teachers work, this study carried out t- tests for independent samples. An examination of the elementary and urban results in comparison to those of secondary and rural areas respectively. The results showed that only two items differed significantly at the 0.05 level in elementary and secondary teachers' sample (1) the immersion programs approach the teachers' English linguistic competence improvement (2) the use of Spanish is allowed during the immersion programs, and one entry differed for the teachers who work in urban and rural contexts (9) The immersion programs can be carried out in the municipality you

work in. The items 1 and 2 are in the category called rationale of the immersion programs whereas the item 9 makes part of the category related to the nature of immersion programs.

Before presenting the differences, it is worthy to mention that it was carried out a Levene's Test of Equality of Variances, assessing the assumption of homogeneity of variance in the reported beliefs in the elementary and secondary in- service teachers' samples; however, no assumption of homogeneity of variance in the statement "Immersions should be carried out in an English-speaking country" was given; the program SPSS allows to carry out the t-test under the assumption of different variances.

Further, I discuss the three beliefs that showed significant differences under the following assumptions:

H_0=There are not statistical differences between elementary and secondary, and rural and urban teachers' reported beliefs

H1= There are statistical differences between the elementary and secondary, and rural and urban teachers' reported beliefs

Hence, the hypothesis 1 was accepted, which means that there are significant differences in the reported beliefs regarding the educational level and the context in which in-service teachers work. The means scores of the answers, the degree of freedom, the t-statistic, and the significance probability in reported beliefs about immersion programs are shown in Table 10.

Table 10

Independent sample t-test results of the in- service teachers' reported beliefs about immersion programs showing significant differences

Samples	Rationale of immersion programs	Df	t	Sig.

Elementary and secondary in-service teachers	1.The immersion programs approach the teachers' English linguistic competence improvement	76	-0,582	0,116
	2.The use of Spanish is allowed during the immersion programs.	77	,148	0,02
Samples	**Nature of immersion programs**	***Df***	**t**	**Sig.**
Rural and urban in-service teachers	9. The immersion programs can be carried out in the municipality you work	76	0,530	,003

Note. Data collected by author on the 20th of August of 2022

The first belief that disclosed a statistically significant difference (t=-0.582; df:76; p >.05) between teachers of elementary and secondary education is in the category of beliefs about the rationale of immersions. In the questionnaires, the statement "The immersion programs approach the teachers' English linguistic competence improvement" received more agreement by the elementary teachers, only 14% of the secondary participants believed that they could improve their English linguistic competence through the immersion programs.

In the same category, the results of the item concerning the use of Spanish in immersions, as being the mother tongue, approached significance at the 0.05 level (t=-,148; df:77; p >.05) . The percentage of the participants who work in basic and high secondary education in comparison with pre-school and elementary education differed from 9.5% to 2.4%, and the neutral responses changed from 28.6% to 35.7.

In the category beliefs about the nature of immersion programs regarding the context variable, a significant difference (t=0,530; df:76; p >.05) was found in the results of item 9, "the immersion programs can be carried out in the municipality you work" The unanimous agreement of the participants in the rural context was higher than those of the urban area; the percentage of the participants who agreed with the statement and reported

working in rural schools was 88.1 %. In addition, the participants responded to the statement in the "1" scale which meant that they "strongly disagreed" with the statement.

In summary, the comparison of the results in the four samples, elementary and secondary education, and urban and rural contexts, reveals that some reported beliefs about immersions changed depending on where and who they work with. The beliefs that showed statistical significant differences included beliefs about the English linguistic competence and professional development growth and the belief about the use of the mother tongue, Spanish in the immersion programs.

4.2.1 Discussion of the Results of the Independent T-Tests Results

4.2.1.1. An additive form of bilingualism may occur in the immersion program. The variation across the reported beliefs of the groups of teachers'– between elementary and secondary teachers- concerning the acceptance of the use of their mother tongue within immersions could respond to "their personal theories that have been formed as a result of their own schooling, their professional experiences and their daily contact with the pedagogical practice inside the classroom" (Díaz et al. 2015, p. 57).

As developed in the theoretical framework, the current situation of ELT in elementary public schools of Colombia has been studied by various researchers (Bastidas & Muñoz, 2011; Correa & Gonzales, 2016; Sanchez & Obando, 2008), all them call into question the availability of teachers and even further the qualification of the hired teachers in the public education system. The absence of teachers of English is more evident at the elementary school level where teachers who neither have an English linguistic competence, nor a degree in English language teaching, but they are demanded to teach the language as part of their work-related duties (Correa & Gonzales, 2016).

As some elementary teachers could have less learning and teaching experience, and professional development in English than the secondary teachers, they can still cling to a traditional way of teaching and learning English that presumably can have roots on their experiences when they were students of English teachers. With this, I am not assuring that the use of Spanish is detrimental in the ELT practices, on the contrary, the disparity in the reported beliefs about the role of Spanish in immersion programs between elementary and secondary teachers discloses the heterogeneity challenge that elementary teachers have had to encountered, noted earlier by Correa & Gonzales (2016).

4.2.1.2 Their Judgement Does Not Define Who You Are, It Defines Who They Are. By the same token, regarding the item "The immersion programs approach the teachers' English linguistic competence improvement" showed a significantly higher mean score in elementary teachers than in teachers who work in basic and middle education, it can be assumed that despite the remarkable embracement of teachers in the various school education levels, still, the immersion program, in which participants take part in this study, suffered from a series of flaws.

First, leaving behind the fact that that many pedagogic and linguistic development usually favor basic, middle and normal school teachers of English (Correa & Gonzales, 2016), the convergence of elementary and secondary teachers, almost a half of the participants (47, 7 %) in preschool and elementary levels and 52,3% in secondary school levels in the same scenario can lead inappropriate contents (Correa & Gonzalez, 2016).

Opposite to other studies (Correa et al., 2014) that showed the professional development programs were more suitable for English licensed secondary school teachers than for the elementary ones since they required a level of English that they did not have, In

the account of the t-test and the interviews, I assume that the content in terms of English linguistic competences was unsuitable for secondary teachers in this particular immersion program, and that is the reason why elementary teachers agree with the belief concerning the improvement of their English linguistic competences through their participation in immersion programs.

The statistical significant difference in regards of the few enhancement of the English linguistic competences reported by the secondary teachers and their agreement to practice English as much as possible   indicate clearly that the policy makers and the government "ignores the previous knowledge and experience of Colombian teachers and fails to make their realities the foundation of these programs" (Ayala, 2021, p.54). As a result, the social stigma of insufficient linguistic competence, even in licensed teachers of English surrounds local and international realities.

4.2.1.3 The Immersion Program Is Not a Place, It Is the Educational Community. Finally, there existed statistically a significant difference in the reported belief that immersion programs could take place in the municipalities teachers work in the groups of teachers who work in urban and rural areas. As the highest average scores regarding this belief were reported by participants, whose workplaces are located in rural areas. The reported belief can have roots on the "unbalanced sociocultural, economic, ethnic and political conditions" (Bonilla & Cruz, 2013, p.28) that rural teachers face in the development of their professional practice.

According to Bonilla & Cruz (2013),the professional development of rural teachers is evidenced in the understanding and reflection of the sociocultural factors of the communities they work with; however, the other side of professional development

understood as "immersion programs, language courses, methodological updating, improvement of methodology, evaluation and follow-up processes" (Bastidas & Muñoz, 2011, p.14) is a restrictive option, or even a lack of luck for teachers who teach English in rural schools. Many factors come together to throw light on why teachers of rural areas have as an option to develop immersion program in their towns, the limited access transport and the few opportunities to communicate with other teachers (Bonilla & Cruz, 2013) can be some of those variables.

In particular, it is clearly evident that the government' emphasis on the professional development of urban teachers of English, and even though the scope of this immersion included 39 teachers of rural schools, the belief on developing immersions in their places of work evidences the neglect of learning and teaching conditions by the state that, on its part, makes teachers believe that despite their "optimistic views of their professional endeavour" (Bonilla & Cruz, 2013, p.31), the professional growth depends at a large extent on the facilities and resources, and that as well as they encounter difficulties in teaching English to their students every day, English proficiency and professional development also remain far from being fulfilled, at least in their rural contexts.

Next, I present the findings in relation to the open- ended questions. The survey data used in this section were the responses to the questionnaire items 10 to 15. I describe the results, using grouped bar charts that draw the relation of two parameters, the educational level and context in which in-service teachers work. A separate-colored bar represents each sub-group of in-service teachers: gray for secondary teachers, blue for elementary teachers and orange for rural teachers. The grouped charts are followed by some descriptions, the results interpretations and discussion are also presented.

4. 3 Findings from the Open- ended Items of Survey Phase

Given that from the 84 participants, 44 teachers work in secondary, middle education or both, and 40 people are teachers of kindergarten, elementary or both, (table 5) this analysis was conducted with a sample of 40 teachers of pre- school and elementary education and 40 people for high school teachers. The reason behind the equal size subgroups is that the normal distribution allowed to have smaller subgroups that contributes to have statistical power and a balanced design (Hayes, 2022). On the same premise of 84 teachers – participants, there were exactly 35 in-service elementary and secondary teachers who work in rural schools. Their answers were also analyzed under a rural context category.

It is important to highlight that depending on the level teachers work, two restrictive questions were addressed, the statements look like: answer this question, only if you are a kindergarden and /or an elementary teacher: why do you believe there are local English immersion program for kindergarden and elementary teachers?. Same survey question was conducted, but for basic secondary and middle teachers of English. As the two questions addressed specifically the educational levels, the rurality variable was out of the question scope, so that, it was not taken into account.

The procedures carried out to analyze the gathered data and the resulting categories of the open- ended items of survey phase. The present data analysis was carried out bearing in mind the inductive analysis that matches with the nature of the open- ended questions. Inductive reasoning by means of which the study of a number of individual cases would lead to an hypothesis and eventually to a generalization" (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 6).

Consequently, once the answers were transcribed, I considered the three coding levels of the grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). First, I segment on the data into similar groupings regarding each question and sample subgroups: – elementary, secondary and rural teachers- . Then, on the basis of each question, I noticed words or short phrases that denoted a revelant data for it. After having redundant codes, they were organized into categories that are shown in figure 2 – 6. The initial list of categories was reviewed, and in somes cases, regrouped. Finally, the identification of concepts in relation to identified codes and categories took place. By virtue of this study, color coding was advisable to identify and compare each code, category and concept. (See Appendix 6)

Figure 2

In- service teachers' of English definition of immersion programs

Experience — 3, 0, 0
Program — 3, 0, 0
Process — 5, 0, 0
Journey — 3, 0, 0
Strategy — 5, 0, 0
Socialization — 0, 6, 0
Trip — 3, 3, 3
Living together — 0, 3, 8
Pedagogical exercise — 3, 0, 3
Meeting — 0, 3, 3
Presentation — 5, 0, 7
Activity(ies) — 8, 20, 11
Opportunity — 8, 6, 11
A sense of space and time — 54, 59, 54

Título del eje

■ In- service secondary teachers   ■ In- service primary teachers   ■ In-service rural teachers
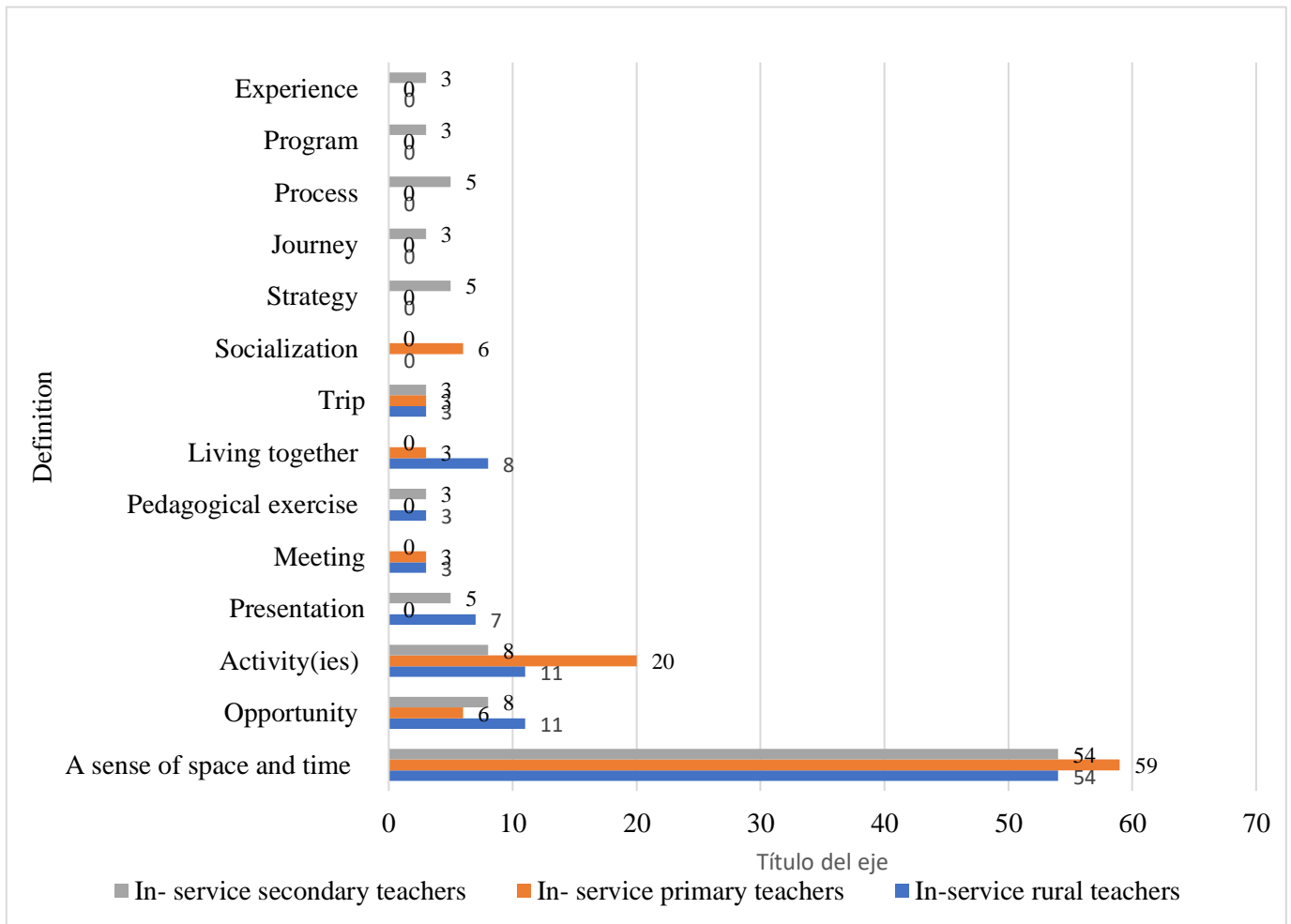
The above graph shows how in-service teachers of English defines an immersion program, *a sense of space and time for the three groups was the main option to define immersion programs whilst the other categories each represented between 20% to 3 %. The three groups also described immersion programs as activities (20%) and opportunities (11%) being the in-service elementary teachers sub-group and the rural teachers that showed the most marked preference respectively. The displacement to an English-speaking country was evident in the three groups with a 3 %. The association of immersion programs as meetings and pedagogical exercise was absent in secondary and elementary teachers groups correspondingly. In the in-service secondary teachers group the*

understanding of immersion programs as a presentation fell to around a ten, and other

definitions such as program, experience, process, journey, and strategy are competing

words to define an immersion program. Regarding in-service teachers who work in rural

settings, a tendency to believe immersion programs are related to living together was

prominent with a 8%. Overall it is clear that each in-service teachers sub- group has an

own definition which varies depending on the educational level and the context they work.

Figure 3

In- service teachers' of English motives to attend to immersion programs
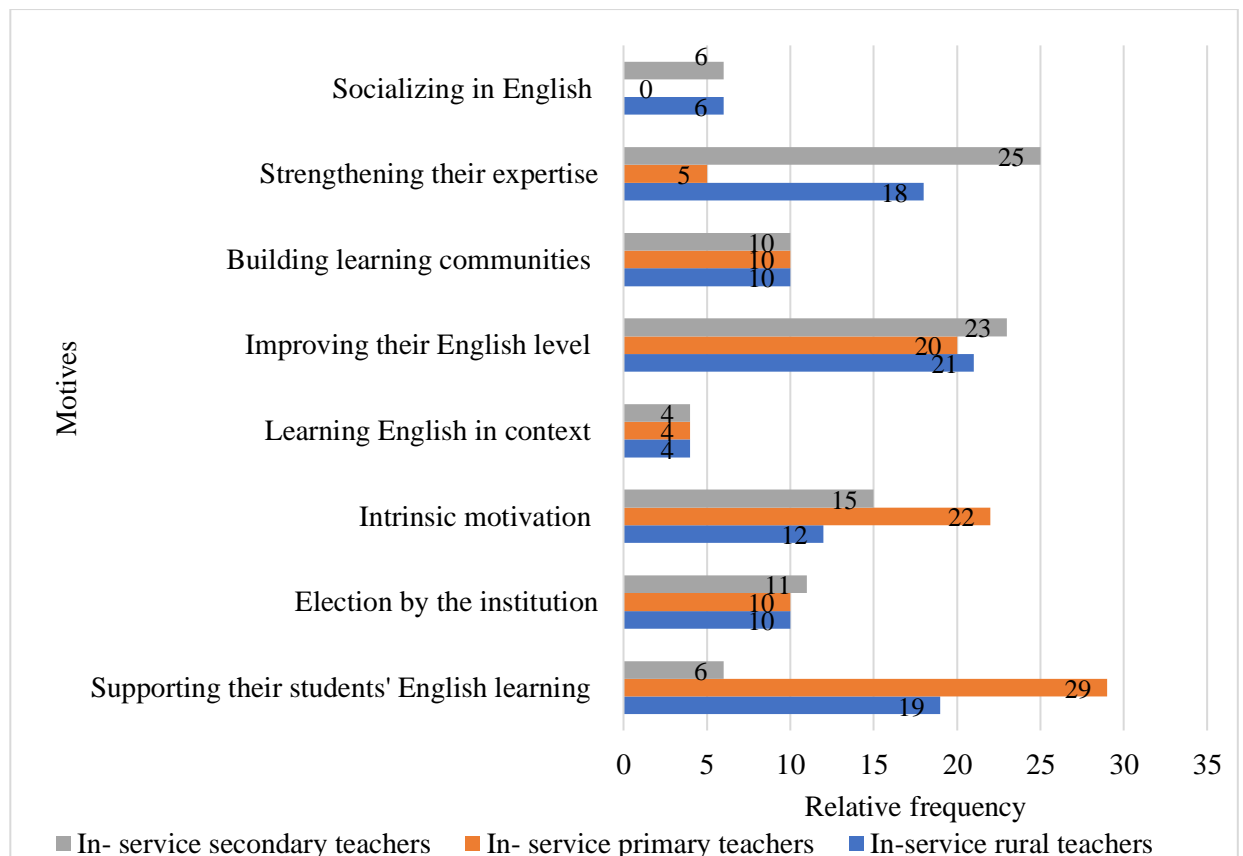
Graph 3 shows the rate at which in -service teachers believed they attend to

immersion programs. Overall, professional alternatives related to the linguistic competence

(23%) and the pedagogical competence (25%) to achieve higher standards in their jobs are

the predominant reasons of in- service rural and secondary teachers respectively to attend

to immersion programs. As opposed to in- service elementary teachers, whose main reason to attend to immersion programs is to enhance their students' English learning. The in-service elementary teachers' belief that attending immersion program can lead to their students English level learning was intertwined in most cases with intrinsic motivation (22%), this was evident since both categories emerged, in most cases, together in the in-service elementary teachers' answers as can be seen in the following excerpts:

"I want to learn and improve my English level, and to practice and be able to apply it in the school" (IQ1,P53)

"Because I want to improve my English level, socialize in English and strengthen my skills and then to strengthen the teaching with my students" . (IQ1,P66)

Building learning communities and just because in-service teachers were selected to represent their institutions accounted for almost 11% of the in-service teachers' intentions to make part of the immersion programs in the three samples of population. Among others aspects related to the English linguistic competence enhancement teachers believe that the use of English in meaningful contexts (4%) such immersion programs justify teachers' participation in the three subgroups and the possibility of socializing make sense to both secondary and rural teachers at a similar rate (6%) to attend to immersion programs.

Figure 4

Types of content that should be included in the immersion programs by the in- service teachers' of English perspectives
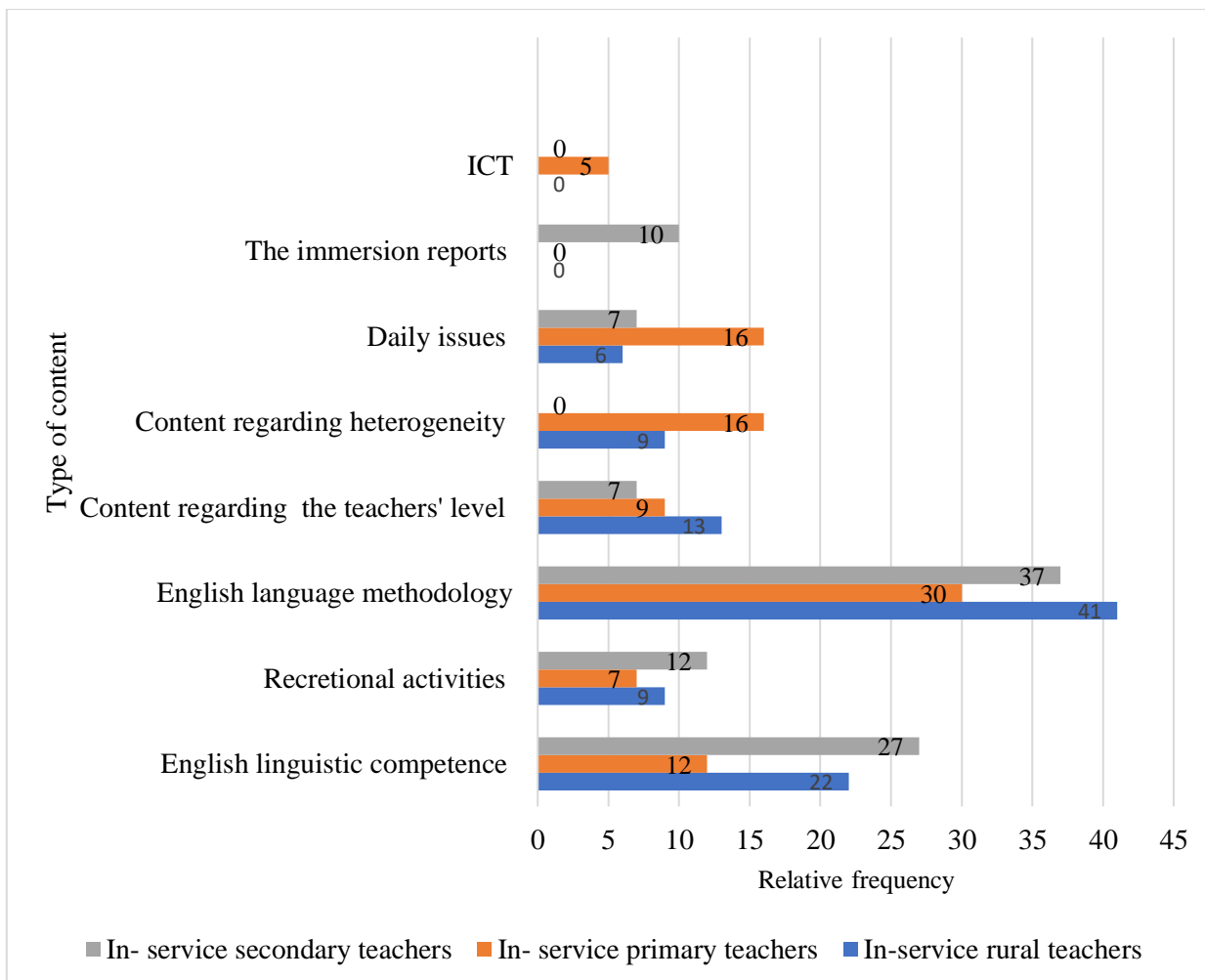
The graph 4 outlines the type of content that the in-service teachers believe could be included in the immersion programs. Most of the participants believe that methods, practices, procedures and strategies used in the field of teaching English as a second or foreign language, with just 4% and 9% difference among secondary and elementary teachers with respect to teachers who work in rural contexts can provide content to the immersion programs. In- service elementary teachers pointed out that the content

distinctions (16%) must be drawn between secondary and elementary teachers. By the same token, the level of English of the participants should be considered in the context of addressing content in immersion programs. These percentages for each sub-group is similar (ranging from 7 to 13%) in in-service secondary, elementary and rural teachers correspondingly. Promotion of content from other disciplines is also a hopeful prospect for the execution of immersion programs, for instance in- service elementary teachers asked for ICT (5%) while in-service teachers of secondary levels believe playful activities (12%) are key to develop immersion programs. Besides, it is important to note that in-service secondary teachers believe that a document summarizing the proceedings of the immersion programs play an important role in the content design.

Figure 5

Reasons why there are immersion programs for in- service licensed secondary teachers and elementary teachers
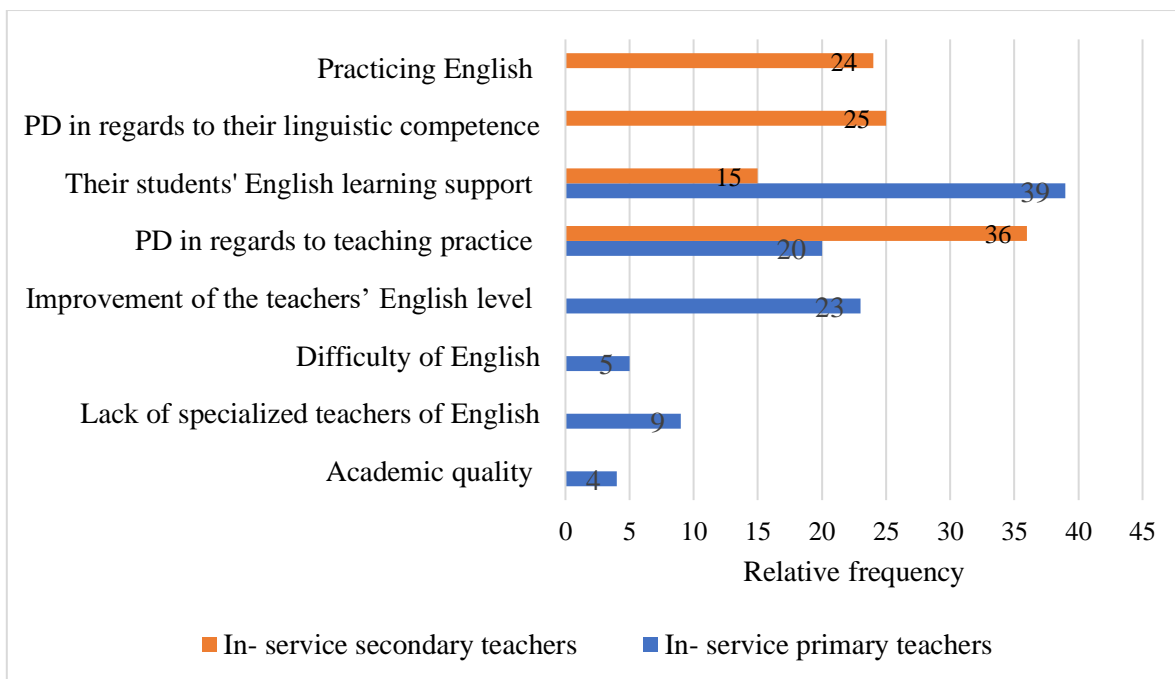
Figure 5 depicts the relative proportion of eight reported beliefs about the reason of existence of immersion programs for teachers of elementary and secondary levels. In general, elementary and secondary teachers are more likely to believe that the students' English language learning (29%) and professional development (36%) in regards to English language methodology are the main arguments in favor of implementing immersion programs for each educational level. Other necessary justifications for any immersion program differed considerably, depending on the educational level teachers work, to illustrate, practicing English (24%) and professional development of the linguistic competence in English (25%) are some strategic compasses for immersion programs. On the contrary, teachers of elementary believe that immersion programs for them could overcome gaps such as the lack of specialized teachers of English (9%), difficulty of English language (5%) and low education quality (4%).

Figure 6

Process undertaken at in -service teachers' schools for the (dis)continuity of their institutional activities
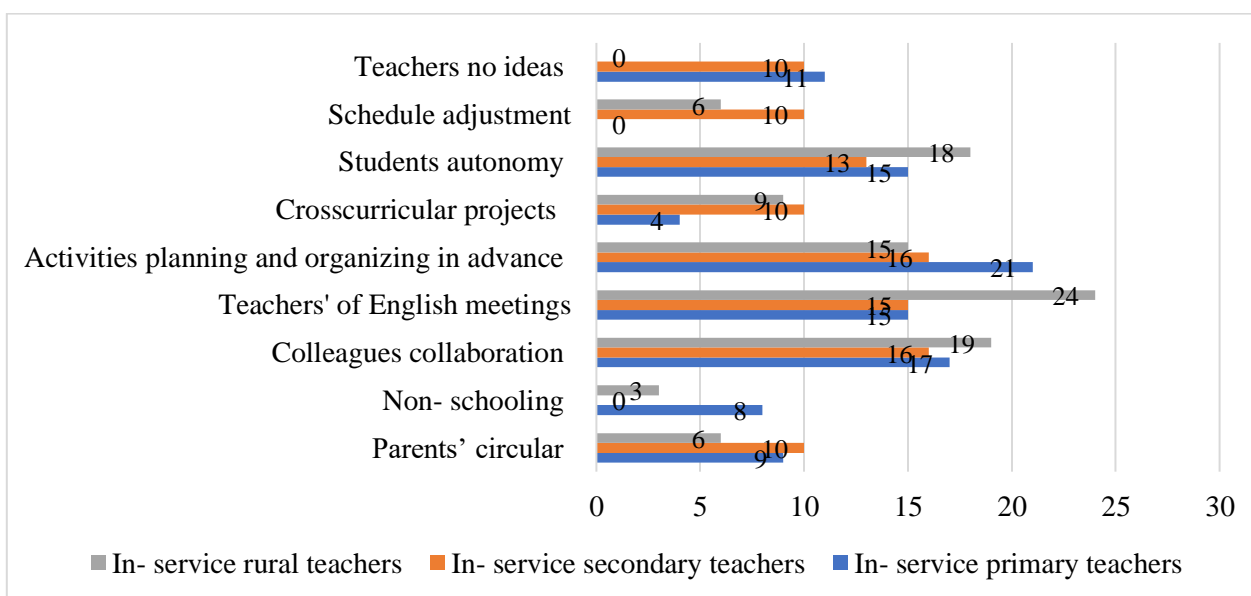
This bar chart above represents the relative frequency of the processes undertaken in the in-service teachers' high schools for the teachers' continuity or cessation of their institutional activities when they participate in immersion programs. Six actions, among them colleagues collaboration, meetings with other English teachers, planning of the activities before their taking part in the immersion program, crosscurricular projects, schedule adjustments and students autonomy are adopted in the in-service teachers' educational establishments to ensure their institutional duties, being the meetings with in-service teachers a viable option for assuring their work duties for the schools in rural settings. For elementary and secondary levels, teachers plan and organize the activities before participating in the immersion programs, enhancing students' autonomy is another alternative in the rural (18%), elementary (15%) and secondary (13%) sub-groups. There is also a clear trend towards colleagues' collaboration mainly in in-service rural teachers (19%) followed by elementary (17%) and secondary (16%) teachers. Furthermore, an adjustment to the secondary (10%) and rural (6%) levels schedules in order to minimize the absence of the in- service teachers is made up. Finally, cross curricular (10%) projects tend to be more used in secondary levels than (9%) rural schools or (4%) elementary education.

In contrast, two processes that do not guarantee, at least, the educational service includes lack of schooling and parents circular being. The fact that students miss school days (8%) takes place mainly in elementary levels whereas parents' circular (10%), that implies parents are notified of the teacher absence with special schedule in accordance with the teachers' academic assignment, is the category predominant in secondary levels. Surprisingly, secondary and elementary teachers refers that they do not know (21%) what happened in their schools as, in most cases, it is their first immersion program taking part.

4.3.1 Discussion of the Open- ended Items of the Quantitative Phase

4.3.1.1 Untangling the concept of immersion programs. Immersion programs constituted a broad range of appellations from spatial and time notions to a presentation, that is the reason why this item addresses to straighten out the in-service teachers' understandings. In accordance with the figure 2 , in- service secondary teachers treat the term "immersion program" as being synonymous with program, process, journey, and experience. With this in mind, secondary teachers definition could be closely associated with the decision makers' (Mancera, 2012) and academics'(Moya, 2012; Pachón, 2012) preferred related terms to describe immersion programs, as those terms were found in the MEN website and research articles search . In contrast, elementary in-service teachers perceive immersion programs as activities. Activity is a broad term covering a large scope of things such as the pursuit of fun, learning, self-fulfillment and connectedness with others (Greeno & Engeström, 2014), making it increasingly difficult to make sense of the term immersion program. Besides, it is important to note that some participants of this sub-group hold immersion programs to be socializations as they learn and develop a series of skills to achieve successful participation in society.

4.3.1.2 In- service teachers choices reflect their working conditions and struggles. A general pattern I notice in the figure 3 is that in-service elementary teachers believe the immersion programs are intended for enhancing the students' English level and they attend these programs for the same reason. This belief could have roots on the responsibility of elementary teachers, who are not necessarily licensed teachers of English, in teaching English to elementary school children.

With this, in-service elementary teachers accept that learning another language is not a matter of "learning isolated and decontextualized vocabulary or, administratively, making a simple curricular adaptation instead of having well qualified teachers to teach English to children" (Clavijo, 2016, p. 7). This can be evidenced when they pointed out that they participate in immersion programs as there is a need to reinforce the academic quality, together with the fact that they believe English is difficult, and there is a lack of specialized teachers of English , so that,   they need to improve their English level.

For instance, when P37 and P25 were asked about the rationale of immersion programs, P37 mentions that "they must exist because elementary school teachers generally are not specialized in a specific area and P24 points out that "it should be taken into account that not all teachers know how to speak and write English". Besides, P25 highlights the importance of academic quality, mentioning that immersion programs are pivotal to "improve teachers' English skills and abilities, which in turn lead educational quality in high schools".

Furthermore, in-service elementary teachers are the most motivated sub-group to learn English by personal satisfaction as can be read on these excerpts: "Because the idea of learning English excites me" P36 and "because it is my greatest academic desire" P80

At this point, a question arises: Should in-service elementary teachers be blamed for their weakness in pedagogical actions for teaching and learning of English, and their low skills in English when they are intrinsically and extrinsically motivated? One thing is clear; teachers' motivation alone does not lead school students' English proficiency to perform successfully as citizens.

A difference between in- service elementary and in- service secondary teachers was clear in terms of discourse in the category "improving their English level". On the one hand, in- service elementary teachers introduce in general terms the improvement of their English performance. Expressions   such as "improving my English level" P65 or "to have an approach with the language and improve skills" P78 in items 11 and 13 respectively were common. On the other hand, in-service secondary teachers highlighted micro skills such as: "because I am aware that I need to improve my fluency in English" P18 or "..to improve my speaking level in English" P82, emphasizing on the communicative competence. This finding was emergent in Gonzales et al.'s (2002) study, which indicated that teachers placed a better language proficiency to enhance their individual professional satisfaction through professional development.

Similarly, in-service secondary teachers know their strengths and weaknesses, so that, they need to shape specific abilities through advanced professional development programs and, -ideally- different to those available for regular students or heterogenous groups.

In- service rural teachers, on their part, seem to reflect beliefs similar to in-service secondary teachers, with the exception of the category "supporting their students' English learning" that show similarities on the in- service elementary teachers' beliefs. This belief can take roots on rural areas realities that make teachers involve their particular communities in their jobs; this coincides with Bonilla & Cruz' findings (2013) when they point out "rural teachers find opportunities to enhance their professional action in being familiar with the sociocultural factors of the community they work with" (p.31). In the

questionnaire, we could find that they attend to the immersion programs because they "can teach the students, indeed their families" P46.

4.3.1.3 (E)merging Beliefs about Suitable Content for Immersion Programs.

Various in-service teachers of elementary and secondary levels and teachers who work in rural schools shared the belief that content that spans the English linguistic competence and methodologies to teach English is usually the most helpful for immersion programs. In-service secondary teachers go deeper on their beliefs. To confront the new challenges of teaching English in public high schools, immersion programs should go further than providing theoretical and practical elements of content and teaching strategies. In words of in-service secondary teachers: "topics related to neuropsychology, learning rhythms, multiple intelligences, among others, should be addressed" P59.

ICT and gamification were also in the in-service teachers agenda, as Sanchez & Obando (2008) note that "it is necessary to introduce additional authentic materials that are relevant and meaningful for learners. In an era of computer mediated communication, teachers need to include in their instruction process materials related to technology" (p.186).

This category unveils also the professional challenge -heterogeneity- discussed extensively by Colombian language policy literature heterogeneity, for instance in-service teachers, especially elementary and rural teachers claim that their linguistic and pedagogical needs were very different (Correa & Gonzalez, 2016). On the one hand, in-service elementary teachers recognizes themselves with no or minor preparation in English than English licensed secondary school teachers, hence, for them, "any topic is valid; however, it is important to take into account the professions" P80.

The level of English at the moment of designing content for immersion programs was a request mainly made by teachers who work in rural contexts. Regarding that none of these participants ask for distinction on the elementary and secondary level can be related to the fact they manage multi-level groups (Ramos & Aguirre, 2016; Cárdenas et al., 2011), perhaps; being "multitasking to teach multiple grades, plan extracurricular activities and fit in the educational environment"(Ramos & Aguirre, 2016, p.212) can be also reflected when they are in the learners position.

Elementary teachers would have liked to share their real-life experiences. Unlike younger students, teachers are adults with **life experience**. Hence, speaking about their own personal recollections, thoughts and ideas on these topics could be, on the one hand, a good start for elementary teachers whose level of English could be lower than the licensed teachers of English and on the other hand, "spaces are generated in which language ceases to be an object of study to become a tool for carrying out actions in everyday life" (Pachón, 2012, p.41). Another question appears: Did the studied immersion program disregard the value of teachers' identity, their schools, regions and beliefs that could be unveiled through telling life experiences?

4.3.1.4 Waking up from the institutional comfort zone. This section refers to processes undertaken by the schools to establish the continuity or cessation of in-service teachers' institutional activities when they participate in immersion programs. It is worth mentioning that teachers who work in rural settings indicated varied dynamics at institutional level to compensate their absence, for instance, P12 described: "I explained didactic guides to the students in advance, then other teachers cover for my absence" Even

though the teachers mentioned other teachers' accompaniment, it is clear that the students should develop the guides during teachers' absence.

Another important aspect is that coordinators collaboration is stated by in-service secondary teachers; nevertheless, elementary, and rural teachers only refer to other teachers' help. In light of the results on the research article "challenges for professional development for teachers of English in the Colombian Bilingual Framework" by Cárdenas et al., (2011) "few actions tending to the professional development of teachers to teach in basic elementary education and in rural school contexts" (p.141) is done.   I can conclude so, that this disadvantaged position can also happen at institutional level.

Finally, various teachers from the three sub-groups did not know what happened in their schools, so that the name given to this discussion part, to illustrate "So far it is the first (immersion program), I do not know how I have to act and what will happen" P46. This can contrast on the account of Díaz' (2021) study, she points out that her participants assert that the immersion programs are not framed within a public policy strategy of the department, so that, the teachers who were with them; the teachers of the teachers, all the logistical part and the institutions did not agree.

The implication of this category on the teachers' beliefs about immersion programs is that immersion programs alter the educational service in schools and as professional development is important for teachers, the English classes and a positive working environment for teachers and head teachers are also important.

4.4 Findings from the Qualitative Phase

Results and findings from the qualitative study phase are presented in this section. Firstly, it is traced the instruments' coding sample; then, the categories that emerged from

the grounded theory analysis are shown. It is important to note that some answers and
excerpts from the open- ended items of the questionnaire, the interviews and focus group
are presented to illustrate the discussion points and ground explanatory theory which
emerged from the findings. Those quotations were selected based on relevance, frequency,
and idiosyncrasy to show significance and variation in the data. I provided the English
translation of the excerpts as the data was collected in the mother tongue of the participants.

4.4.1 Instruments' Coding Sample

I assigned codes to each instrument to track the source of the categories and make
the information approachable (See table 11).

Table 11

Instruments' coding sample

Instrument	Code
Questionnaire	IQ1
Semi structured interviews	ISI2
Focus group	IFG3

Note. Data collected by author on the 19th of October of 2022

As a result of the grounded theory analysis, the findings are shown together under three
final categories with their corresponding interrelated subcategories as shown in the table 12

Table 12

List of emerging categories and subcategories regarding immersion programs

General objective	Research question	Specific objective	Categories	Subcategories
To analyze the beliefs of the in-service teachers from public schools of Cundinamarca regarding a local English immersion program	What beliefs about a local English immersion program do in-service teachers from public schools of Cundinamarca report having behind their participation?	To characterize a local English immersion program in accordance with the in-service teachers' beliefs through clear-cut answers to some fundamental wh - questions	1.A sense of balance in discussing immersion programs: high and low expectations	1.1Pushing the English language communicative competence boundaries
				1.2 The portrayal of the immersion program activities in the classrooms
			2. The unheard in-service teachers' voices	2.1 The teacher of a foreign language as a magician
				2.2 Re(/in) sisting (on) the native speaker fallacy in immersion programs
			3. Faultfinding within suggestions for immersion programs' improvement	3.1 In-service teachers look at themselves: motivation matters
				3.2 Heterogeneity: A view from the bottom up

Note. Data collected by author on the 19th of October of 2022

4.4.2 Category 1: A sense of balance in discussing immersion programs: high and low

expectations

Every participant (P01-P06) discussed some expectations to take part of the immersion programs in the three sources of information, showing they all associated the rationale for immersion programs with enhancing the English language communicative competence. Besides, the possibility to ado(a)pt the activities developed in the   immersion program with their students appeared to be a significant component of how the participants' beliefs defined and found meaning with immersion programs. Therefore, both aspects the linguistic competence and the feasibility of the activities in their classroom will be addressed in detail below.

4.4.2.1 Subcategory 1.1:Pushing the English language communicative competence boundaries. This category represents how the participants depict the professional alternative of enhancing their English communicative competence in immersion programs as being influenced by the educational level and context they work. To explain this subcategory, it is important to clarify that communicative competence refers to systems underlying knowledge and skills necessary for communication. The knowledge refers to what the individual knows about the language and its communicative use, and skills have to do with the ability to apply knowledge to real communication (Canale, 1983, as cited in Pachón, 2012).With this in mind, the participants believed that their English communicative competence was going to be improved. This was reported on the three sources of information:

"I want to improve my level of English" (IQ1,P80)

And I find the exercise just as interesting as I feel that this was what we were going to strengthen, especially the listening" (ISI2, P01)

"Of course, I was also encouraged by the possibility of improving my speaking. What the teacher says is true with our students we cannot practice the same" (IFG3, P03)

Nevertheless, taking into account the "interactive and dynamic relationship of teachers' beliefs and actions" (Barcelos, 2000, p. 44), that is to say that beliefs can influence teachers' actions, but also actions and behavior can influence and change the beliefs. I point out that the in- service teachers' participation in the immersion program highlighted a decrease on their expectations, especially on in-service secondary teachers.

Such change was initially accompanied by the participants' high expectation to improve their communicative competence reported in the questionnaires: "Because I consider it a good opportunity to learn and strengthen my communication skills" (IQ1,P56).

However, the participant's expectations show a decrease in the interview and the focus group, as can be evidenced in the following excerpt:

"Although it is true that some of us use the language (English), other teachers, for instance, spoke in Spanish in the lunch, or made jokes or approach a different topic, but not in English, but in Spanish. So those spaces, they were lost, they are lost" (ISI2, P05).

This excerpt indicates that, on the one hand, the participants possibly believe the immersion programs are typified as being total immersion programs, as this design implies: "the more contact hours, the better the second language proficiency of the students"

(Curtain, 1986, p.8), for instance, P03 replied: "I said, well, everything is going to be in English there, including the food space. I mean, I imagined everything 100% in English" (ISI2, P03).

Regarding the perspective of the GoC (2020) that two of the direct causes of the -A or A1 students level - are seen to be associated to the low English linguistic competences of the in-service teachers, together with factors such as the budget and the scheduling assigned to the immersion program contributed that the GoC had opted for a total rather than a partial immersion.

In that sense, the denial of adoption of a total immersion program design evidences, the gap between EFL theory, mandate and implementation of the immersion programs at national level and one wonders :if the technical immersion program document established to strengthen 200 teachers' communication skills (listening, speaking, writing and reading) in English, and even to provide scenarios of practice in which teachers jointly plan improvement strategies for teaching English in their educational establishments (GoC, 2020, p.58), then why were the general aims not broken into small tasks such as talking in English at the restaurant? And even more so given that it is believed that in- service teachers have low communicative competences in English (GoC, 2020). Another question arises: was there a follow-up in the usage rate of Spanish and English?

4.4.2.2 Subcategory 1.2: The portrayal of the immersion program activities in the classrooms. According to Cortes et al. (2013), the pedagogical and methodological competences consist of life in class: group management and different resources, creation of exercises for specific skills, search and adaptation of materials and activities. The participants (P01-P06) were strongly motivated to enhance this competence through the

adoption and/or adaptation of the implemented activities in the immersion programs. The category is discussed by (P02, P06, P56) when they are asked why they attended the immersion program and if the call for their participation happened in a timely manner respectively.

> "Achieving training and applying each of the strategies in the classroom".
>
> (IQ1,P56)

> "How to rethink my methodologies and strategies, so that the level of the school grows, which is a challenge. Taking into account, the levels that exist in the school, in public schools particularly, then let's say that those were the reasons"
>
> (ISI2, P02)

> " I don't know what educational levels I'm going to have , I don't know if I'm going to teach in second, third or fourth, they can change my grade and what one suddenly imagines is that one of the many activities that they taught us there in the immersion, one imagines how to apply them with the children" (IFG3, P06)

Category 1.2 is similar to category 1.1 in the sense that the participants' expectations were reached at different degrees, to contextualize this subcategory, the educational level and the context is a key factor to understand these expectations, for instance, the perspective of the participants who work in secondary and high school levels categorized the activities as: warming up activities or related to the total physical response (TPR) method. When asked the suggestions for a next immersion program, P05 replied:

"They were mostly about movement, the use of body language of movement, as

total physical response doing this type of activity, so there was a lack, let's say, of

opportunities where the teacher exposes a topic " (ISI2, P05)

The in-service elementary teachers also classify the activities as being related to

TPR, clarifying they relate the activities with words such as "movement, dynamism and

energetic" which in turn reflect the local problem, of lack of enough teachers prepared to

teach English in elementary schools in Colombia (Correa & Gonzalez , 2016; Bastidas &

Muñoz, 2011). With this issue in mind, the elementary teachers reported that the

applicability seem to be higher in their level than in secondary or high education, for

instance P03 described: "Yes, of course, in fact, I had two days of classes after the

immersion and I have already applied some dynamics" (ISI2, P03).

On its part, the teachers who work in rural settings recognize the suitability of the

energetic activities with their students , the P06 who teach English in elementary education

also raise concerns about multilevel groups. P06 highlighted that working on the five

elementary levels do not give long enough to the teachers to plan their classes, far less to

prepare English classes.

"Several activities are applicable for children and I like it because from there others

arise. That is as an idea they give you, but from that, you can get others. The

other thing I have always in mind is that it also depends on the groups. All groups

are not the same…, so that one has to study the group very well. In other words,

there are many multi-level locations and the teachers manage all the elementary

grades. Of course, then because they do not have time, they cannot do English

classes well". (ISI2, P06)

This finding is supported by Hansen- Thomas' et al. (2014) who mention that managing multi-level groups and classes is one of the major challenges as teachers should integrate the pedagogical and methodological competences (Cortes et al., 2013) but also the students' cultures, experiences and needs.

Hence, teachers' beliefs about immersion programs activities depend on the context and the challenges teachers face everyday.

4.4.3 Category 2: The unheard in-service teachers' voices

This category focuses on how teachers encounter challenges in the course of the immersion programs, which in turn are evidenced in complaints. The two sub-categories are related to external factors, long sessions and leaders' performance, that determine the teachers' wellness and the aims fulfilling in accordance with the teachers' beliefs respectively.

4.4.3.1 Subcategory 2.1: The teacher of a foreign language as a magician. In-service teachers mention that they had to endure unusually long hours in the immersion program. Their descriptions include a schedule from 7:00 am to 22: 00 pm with two breaks. As it was observed on the first category, the goals proposed by the GoC (2020) in the proposal document were aligned with the teachers expectations, so that, it can be inferred that they are willing to participate and co-construct knowledge around professional alternatives that allowed them to achieve higher standards in their jobs (Ayala,2021).

> "We did not get up at 7:00 in the morning, it was earlier. Some of us like to get up
>
>   early and well I do not complain about that. But the issue is also that we went until
>
>   9:00 or 10:00 p.m. at night. This was a topic of discussion for some and annoyance

for others, because one works only half a day, some until 2:00 p.m., others only in the afternoon. So one knows that is our participation in an immersion program, but I think the sessions were very, very heavy, the schedule was very long" (ISI2, P02)

Most of their complaints were on the basis of the possible negative impact of their tiredness on their performance at the immersion program due to the extra work for completing their pending activities in the framework of school end year. It is important to note that, the immersion program was developed from 21st to 26th November 2021, then the schools were retaking in-classes due to the COVID- 19 emergency cease and there was a resolution that provided a study commission for the in-service teachers' absence.

"(immersion) is a space for reinforcement, learning and enhancing skills, rather than a lot of activities until the night (IQ1,P49).

"I had remaining work because I had 3 groups with this way of working, one of those groups was virtual and I was still working with them and getting emails. Regarding workshop evaluation. I reviewed some of them there, I also had to upload third term and final grades, and well, one ends up very tired during the day . Let's say, that I did that on the weekend we came back" (IFG3, Miriam).

The three above excerpts show the non-conformity about the session's organization, the P49 started to feel disappointed with the issue when she was asked in the questionnaire what an immersion program is , the reported beliefs of the participants in the interview and focus group informed that they had worked in advance; nevertheless, there were some institutional activities that required their attendance and approval; hence, the excerpt below evidences the situation and questions the immersion program formulation and implementation, specifically the articulation between the participants, the educational

communities, the secretary of education and the recruited staff to develop the immersion program.

> **Researcher:** And in that case, for example, if you had to develop some of those activities, such as a record or an activity, did you do those activities in advance? or Did you send them? or how was it done?
>
> **P02:** I had to do them there, in the immersion program, Also I had to ask permission twice or three times to be in the level meetings
>
> **Researcher:** okey, were these two activities handled?
>
> **P02:** Yes, I managed to fulfill at school and to fulfill there (ISI2, Magda and researcher)

The complexity of being a foreign language teacher, which is, moreover, under a remarkably diverse nature, along with the precariousness of conditions in public high schools allows Cortes et al. (2013) to think about the metaphor regarding the teacher of a foreign language as a magician. In this study, I consider that the role of magician can persist, even in an immersion program where it is supposed teachers are enhancing their linguistic competences and updating and co- constructing pedagogical theory and practice as a fundamental part of the teacher's knowledge.

As described in the theoretical framework, the analysis of the participants in the proposal document identified the in-service teachers - participants as collaborators, but also as beneficiaries of the project. In no case, it states the continuity of their role of teachers. It makes one wonder: Are the secretary of education, the recruited staff, the administrators in the schools aware that multitasking can reduce in-service teachers' efficiency and

performance? Clearly, more attention to their demand for multitasking and other abilities should be paid before making assumptions about teachers' competences and abilities.

4.4.3.2 Subcategory 2.2: Re(/in) sisting (on) the native speaker fallacy in immersion programs. The participants disagreement regarding national and foreign leaders were pulled in two opposing directions, possible reasons can be associated to the educational level and the context in which they work. It is worthy to note that this topic was not included in the questionnaire; but I consider the category is still reliable and valid due to the large number of occurrences in the in-service teachers' reported beliefs and because a questionnaire was applied to national and foreign leaders, then, the teachers' and leaders' reported beliefs could be compared in order to check the consistency of the data.

On the one hand, elementary in-service teachers (P03 and P04) and the secondary teacher (P05) who works in a rural high school find fault in the low number of native English leaders attend to the immersion program. Her assertions include:

"I don't know, I think a person who really talks genuinely is needed. That the language is not a foreign language, but rather a real language, that is their mother tongue, so to speak, so that they could also impart us that knowledge that one expects, because when one speaks says: how do you say such a thing? So, I suppose that people who have these answers, and do not tell you: sorry, I do not know, are required" (ISI2, P05).

That there would that language knowledge, so that we could also delve into the different aspects, because we were not only talking about pedagogy and academia, we were also talking and many things: cultural activities, breakfast time, so I

suppose that people who have a deep knowledge of the language were needed"
(IFG3, P04).

On the other hand, the two secondary teachers who work in urban areas give objections related to the passive attitude, low qualification in EFL field evidenced in their interventions and the general ignorance of the language teaching conditions in public education in Colombia by the foreign leaders.

Researcher: Did you notice differences between the national and foreign leaders? or did they work along the same lines?

P02: Some had more methodological management, of the group. Pedagogical management, but you know, others did not have, for example, the last foreigner …well, a very good level and everything….at the end, he gave a talk, but it was not an activity and that is why I greatly appreciate…

Researcher: And then, if there were differences between them, why do you think foreign leaders participated in the immersion? …

P02: Well, I think they were a support for the interaction in second language, but the core activities were always directed by the Colombian teachers…I believe that it was more evident in the activities' development, let's say, they were little more passive leaders" (ISI2,P02).

Regarding the P04, P05 claim, these findings conform to the existing literature that English classes in elementary levels, are taught by teachers who are not foreign language teacherS (Bastidas & Muñoz, 2011; Clavijo, 2016), whose consequences may lie in an array of beliefs as personal assumptions that are incongruent with information in reality.

In words of Fives and Buehl (2012), "an individual's understanding of reality is always seen through the lens of existing beliefs" (p.478). To exemplify, elementary teachers could believe that native speakers characterize the ideals of the English language and English language teaching methodology competences (Harmer, 2007; Ayala, 2020; Shibata, 2010).

On the contrary, the P01 and P02 complaints about the foreign leaders allowed them to value the national leaders, their colleagues and their identities as teachers, all of them demonstrate their knowledge of the language, the ability to teach a foreign language and promote its learning, the knowledge about other disciplines related to the foreign language, abilities to understand and interact with the participants and/or colleagues, their strategic intelligence to establish relationships with the social context, their ability to propose a project and print their personality traits in each one of the activities proposed in the immersion program.

Regarding the factors influencing teachers' beliefs formation. Richards & Lockhart (1996) highlight that teachers' beliefs may result from several causes at various ages in one's life, and can be derived from (a) their own experience as learners and teachers, (b) established practices, (c) personality factors, (d) principles flowing from research, education, a determined approach, and/or method. In this study, the origins cited as being the most suitable for elementary teachers could come from their own experiences as learners and some principles from research and education that set up the native- speaker as a role model (Ayala, 2021, p. 54). For their part, secondary teachers' beliefs are clearly attributed to their experiences and practices as licensed English teachers.

4.4.4 Faultfinding within suggestions for immersion programs' improvement

Next, participants mention important suggestions for the execution of an immersion program. At this point, it is accepted as a fact that the decision on participating in an immersion program is given in the agreement of the involved parties. Participants consider that motivation and heterogeneity are key factors to consider before implementing and attending an immersion program.

4.4.4.1 Subcategory 3.1: In-service teachers look at themselves: motivation matters. As Castro (2017) remarked, "…learners with sufficient motivation can achieve a working knowledge of an L2, regardless of their language aptitude or other cognitive characteristics in most cases. Relocating Castro's (2017) hypothesis to the local English immersion program, the participants show a strong tendency of agreement in their beliefs that motivation is important when deciding to participate in an immersion program.

The following excerpts show the participants' claims about this key variable. The first excerpt was obtained through the questionnaire item 11: Why do you attend to immersion programs? the second excerpt reflects P0 suggestion for teachers who are thinking about attending to an immersion program and the last one was about the aspects that can be improved for a next immersion program.

"I love English and it is an opportunity to learn and improve in order to provide students with meaningful strategies every day". (IQ1,P34)

"I think that immersions are not for everyone because it depends on the person and how he/she may respond or assimilate the different challenges or situations in which he/she may probably feel uncomfortable and how he/she also deals with the

issue of long hours. So, I think it's not for everyone …I think it's for those who want and like that kind of activities" (ISI2, P03).

Well, I don't know if it's logistical, but I think that, at least in my case I applied voluntarily, I wanted to go. My understanding is that some teachers do not. And it is important when you are participating, you know what you are going to face, what type of activities you are going to do and decide voluntarily: I want, it is something that I like, maybe I can participate or definitely it does not go with me. Because that affects development of activities when there are participants who do not want to be there, and they do not feel comfortable (IFG3, P06)

Reflecting on the participants' reported beliefs, possible reasons why the participants highlight motivation as a basis for the improvement of immersion programs could have their roots on the irregularities they noted in the in- service teachers behaviors as sources of their fears to communicate in English with partially unknown people just traced by a common goal, their disorientation and incommodities to reflect identities and abilities, they are not, and in some cases, are not interested in developing.

This coupled with the information obtained in the interviews about the selection criteria lead, as it has been indicated in local research literature, to suggest that clarity is key for designing a curriculum, a course, a syllabus, a lesson plan (Sanchez & Obando, 2008, p. 184) or a professional development program such as an immersion program. In this case, clarity is needed not only launching a call to high school principals, but also analyzing the teachers who want to learn English (in the case of elementary level), without leaving behind the claim of engagement of licensed teachers of foreign language, but also teachers who wants to go to an immersion program, I say , "wants to go" because as it was

evidenced on the quantitative phase, the reasons why they participated are varied. The context, planning and academic assignment, in this case, for school year 2022 also should have been considered.

4.4.4.2 Subcategory 3.2: Heterogeneity: A view from the bottom up.

Heterogeneity is described as the fact that the professional development courses often put together elementary school teachers with no preparation in English with English licensed secondary school teachers, without taking into account that their linguistic and pedagogical needs were very different (González, Montoya, & Sierra, 2001). Heterogeneity should not be ignored as a possible challenge for the studied immersion program; however, for the sake of this study, such heterogeneity is not, in any case, a call for in- service elementary teachers' exclusion from immersion programs, on the contrary, the difference in terms of their English language competence among the in- service teachers could serve as a resource for individual and mutual learning and as an opportunity to spur on educational decisions and more effective immersion practices for the future.

Having said that, when an elementary teacher (P15) was asked why he/she believes there are immersion programs for teachers of kindergarden and the secondary teachers (P01 and P02) described their relation with elementary teachers, they suggest:

"If they had considered the (English) level of the teacher, I would have probably learned more - I felt that it was out of my context" (IQ1, P15).

"I feel that the teachers who were obligated, or they don't like the stuff so much or maybe they don't have the level, I don't know how far. Well, obviously they were not going to feel comfortable with anything, and then they begin to see the but" (ISI2,P01).

"I insist that elementary education should have an English teacher. In other words, the teachers who go to the immersion programs should be teachers specialized in English no matter, because we are talking about an immersion. And I feel that they want to point all or nothing, you know what I mean, for example I had the opportunity to work with an elementary school teacher, she was too confused" (IFG3,P02).

It is clear that their linguistic and pedagogical, even their personal needs differed, just in the way they describe their reasons to attend the immersion program, their beliefs about the activities and the incidence they perceived on their professions reveal that, secondary teachers' reported beliefs evidenced they are strengthening their professions in the pedagogical field and in specific knowledge, whereas elementary teachers show the strong belief that English competence will be enhanced through the immersion programs, for instance, secondary in- service teachers believe they are activating background knowledge and/or updating on current methodologies.

"I also recalled some strategies, especially playful ones like warmings up. Then recall them because you know, although we had applied them, let's say, in pedagogical professional development, they are not being applied permanently, that is, different strategies are integrated every school year" (ISI2, P05).

Some elementary participants emphasized that they want learn English and they are excited how they are learning with the leaders and colleges. P06 drew attention about those expectations:

"So I said: I cannot wait around for anyone else to be with me, but I can learn it. I know that I am already old, but I can learn it and throughout all this, some learnings will stay with me in pursuit of my children learning" (ISI2, P06).

Some suggestions for next local English immersion programs comprise first, the organization of sessions in accordance with the English level teachers obtained in the diagnosis tests before the immersion program, sessions for secondary and high school teachers and elementary teachers in different spaces during two or three days then one may conceivably think on general sessions promotes learning communities. All this supported by the principle of diversity mentioned above.

Chapter 5

After analyzing the findings, and the results, this final chapter presents the conclusions derived from the quantitative and qualitative analysis. In addition, it sets out implications for the ELT community, and the involved parties in the execution of immersion programs in Colombia, this chapter also reflects upon some limitations encountered throughout this research and gives recommendations for further research.

5.1 Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to analyze the beliefs of the in-service teachers from public schools of Cundinamarca regarding a local English immersion program. To achieve this objective, two specific objectives were led through a mixed methodology.

Regarding the first specific objective intended to examine significant differences in the in-service teachers' reported beliefs about a local English immersion program, depending on the sociocultural context and educational level they work with, some categories were arranged on the basis of the questionnaire items. They include (a) rationale

of immersions b) nature of immersions c) home and school settings. Rationale of immersions deals with the professional alternatives enhanced in the immersion programs, the nature of immersion programs addresses the use of mother tongue and foreign language and the place to develop an immersion program whereas home and school settings implies teachers' family and colleagues' support before and after their participation in immersion programs.

Once the independent t-tests were carried out, the alternative hypothesis (H1) was stated as the means were not equal to the value stated in the null hypothesis. In other words, there were statistical differences between the elementary and secondary teachers' reported beliefs and the rural and urban ones.

In that sense, two reported beliefs differed significantly at the 0.05 level in elementary and secondary teachers' sub-groups and one reported belief differed for the teachers who work in urban and rural contexts. Elementary in- service teachers' answers were more strongly associated, than in-service secondary teachers' entries, with the beliefs: (a) the immersion programs approach their English linguistic competence improvement and (b) the use of Spanish should be allowed during the immersion programs beliefs. On their part, rural teachers believe at a larger extent than teachers who work in urban areas, that the immersion programs can be carried out in the municipality they work in. Regarding difficulties of the rurality in Colombia such as transport, infrastructure and also the teachers' commitment with their communities.

The differences in in-service teachers' beliefs allow to confirm beliefs are context dependent (Nespor, 1987) because they exist in relationships to other things. As Barcelos (2000) states "individuals can find meanings in the situation they live in, and in the

modifications and adaptations they make to solve problems in their daily lives" (p.16). The differences in- service teachers' beliefs represent the task of learning and teaching in different contexts. In that sense, those variances on teachers' beliefs are totally valid as they reflect the main challenges rural and urban schools face in meeting the needs of their students and educational levels.

In line with these conclusions, when thinking about the immersion programs, it is clearly evident that they are crucial to the shaping of teachers' beliefs since a diversity of experiences are covered in these programs (Pachón, 2012), for instance, teachers may draw on their understanding of a learning principle, teaching strategy, or practice put forward on the immersion programs to keep on building up their beliefs gradually over time (Richards & Lockhart,1996).

The second specific objective consists of characterizing a local English immersion program in accordance with the in-service teachers' beliefs through clear-cut answers to some fundamental wh – questions. In that sense, in the present study, I define beliefs about immersions as service teachers' personal knowledge about local English immersion programs, including issues such as what an immersion program is (what), the best place or environment to develop an immersion program (where), the other key actors by teachers' side, that are involved in the immersion programs (who) the reasons why teachers participate in immersion programs (why), and the ways that professional alternatives (linguistic and pedagogic) (Ayala, 2021) are enhanced (how). Next, I present the conclusions in regards with the five issues

First, regarding what an immersion program is, in- service teachers describe immersion programs in the context of definitions which range from trips to a sense of space

and time, with the latter tending to be the most often - quoted definition. As space and time   are universal forms of the existence of matter, I can conclude that in- service teachers found difficult to define immersion programs and "overgeneralization of the concept has been normalized" (Ayala, 2020, p.42). Regarding this particular immersion program, research and literature on the topic, and the reported in-service teachers' beliefs, I consider a closer term to what in-service teachers experienced would be a "continuing education camp" on the basis of camp is a circumscribed place where some people settle temporarily.

Second, on the subject of analyzing the place or environment for developing an immersion program, I conclude that as immersion programs often occurred at different locations from work and far away from the teachers' family, together with the fact that the journeys, moments and emotions are quite intense, teachers' beliefs can draw their power on the recollection of the vivid images teachers experience in the immersion programs.

Third, in- service teachers' beliefs about the other key actors that are involved in the immersion program (who) show two trends. On the one hand, the inclusion of native speakers in the immersion program upholds the belief that they are the best models of both the English language and of English language teaching methodology, especially in elementary and rural teachers (Ayala, 2020). On the other hand, the positive relation among colleges and national leaders created a base for building learning communities that allow them to reflect on ways to improve their teaching and adjust their practices.

Fourth, analyzing the reported in-service teachers' beliefs towards the reasons why they participate in immersion program, their individual motives include enhancing their linguistic competence, but also their pedagogic and didactic development. This situation

gives us a deeper understanding about their motives' alignment with the national educational priorities regarding teaching English. Their awareness about immersion programs rationale also unveils the challenges that come to bear in teaching English (low level of English, demotivation, institutional dynamics' disarticulation, few institutional projects and others).

Finally, taking up Pajares' (1992) idea that some beliefs can be called into question, whereas others are more likely to be hardened, the teachers' beliefs about immersion programs could keep on causing definitional problems, and differing understandings of immersion practices, the word "keep on" is used in the sense that as it was explained in the theoretical framework section, there is "a lack of understanding about immersion among the NBP and ELT scholars (Ayala, 2020, p.41).

5.2 Contributions

The present study attempted to address various gaps and in doing so made important contributions.

First, the study extends the limited research on the understanding of immersion programs for teachers in Colombia under the in-service teachers' beliefs and its impact on its implementation and development. This body of work has contributed to the appreciation of the in- service teachers' knowledge and needs regarding their working conditions, which remains under-researched by the education secretariats and MEN.

Regarding the previous idea, the secondary in- service teachers' linguistic English competence knowledge, evidenced in their request to enhance determined micro-skills in the instruments, and even though elementary in-service teachers reported having a limited

English competence, their insights of their students' needs and likes, the working

conditions and the inter- disciplinary expertise, together with the rural in-service teachers'

engagement with their educational communities reflect highly valuable knowledge that

could translate into constant improvement of future immersion programs based on both

impacts and possible solutions.

For instance, previous research and conventional structure of immersion programs

tell us that immersions programs have been used as a means to teach communication and

instruct learners about the language (Genesse, 1995) and it is advisable in development

that the teachers in these programs are either native or native-like speakers in terms of

proficiency (Ayala, 2020). On the contrary, this study shows that immmersion programs

even respond to the enhancement of the foreign language , they also enhance the

pedagogical competences, adressing the special needs of teachers. This study also indicates

that proficiency is important for them, but prevail the learning communities with their

colleagues and national leaders who could not be like native speakers, but foster their

normal duties.

Second, this study is among the first to consider not only in-service teachers' beliefs

of secondary and high education in urban areas, but teachers' beliefs of all educational

levels, including rural areas. Consequently, I have contributed to an intersection of a mixed

methodology and grounded theory that enables a visualization of deep reflection on how

the immersion program occurred and is valued by the four sub-groups of in-service

teachers.

Third, this research process has embraced the principles of openness, collaboration

and connectivity (Farrow, 2016). It is worth stressing that I have conducted this research as

a requirement to obtain the degree of Master in the Teaching of Foreign Languages, but I consider important to bring the scholars and academics' attention in other spaces. Therefore, I have been committed to openly disseminating the research through on presentations in Asocopi 57th Annual Conference and the itinerant week of research and extension 2022 at UPN (See Appendix 10) as well as writing a research article to be published in the framework of the above-mentioned congress proceedings. This type of extra-institutional research contributes to a growing understanding of the in-service teachers' beliefs about immersion programs in the ELT research community and a promotion of increasing interest to research on the topic.

Fourth, in coherence with the rationale and the previous contributions, this study would significantly contribute to raising awareness among policy makers on further ways to implement immersion programs under the recognition and acceptance of in- service teachers' knowledge and experience. When the article is published, a copy will be sent to the royalties' director of Fundación Univalle, as this institution was the project operator under Secretariat of education of Cundinamarca concession and it was a requirement when I was conducting the survey field phase.

5.3 Implications

The present research examined the influence of the in-service teachers' participation in a local English immersion program on their beliefs about immersion programs. After grounding data and examining findings, I identified different implications for the ELT community and bilingualism field for the education secretariats, the study participants, and myself as a teacher of English in a public high school and a researcher.

First, considering the significant differences of the three beliefs about immersion programs depending on the educational level (elementary and secondary) and the sociocultural context teachers work (urban or rural) presented in the results of independent sample t-tests of the survey phase. Caution is especially important when heterogeneity takes place. This advocacy will be more effective if teachers are heard first, it is a social responsibility that in- service teachers make their needs known to school leaders and decisions makers. If in-service teachers of foreign language have a voice in the immersion programs' design and agendas, they can hear and support the NME long term goals under a closer sociocultural perspective of teaching- learning.

Second, despite the selection criteria, and the low number of participants in relation to the whole teacher staff in the education secretariat of Cundinamarca , teachers from all educational levels and from urban and rural areas were taken into account to participate in the immersion program . I shall take the opportunity to invite, on the one hand, teachers to believe in themselves, in their learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, further, to maintain their motivation on the permanent search for professional development and alternative ways to their particular teaching contexts, and on the other hand, to policy makers to support academically and financially professional development that emerges from in-service teachers' initiatives.

The third conclusion evidences that teachers and national leaders support building learning communities, so that, efforts in enhancing systematic and collaborative activities in immersion programs where teachers can teach together, observe samples of their colleagues classes, provide feedback, exchange teaching materials, discuss the guiding

principles and procedures of each school, as well as providing time for them is vital in making learning communities happen in immersion programs.

The implementation of immersion programs suggest that their design based on the Colombian language teaching policies is not enough to encourage good practices. Teachers' needs, interests and contextual realities should be considered. Socialization of agendas and in-service teachers´ participation based on their motivations and their awareness about what it is going through is key to strengthening immersion programs.

5.4 Limitations

The results reported in this study should be considered in the light of some limitations.

First, the replication of models of language immersion programs, disregarding particular circumstances, needs and contexts in the educational system of Colombia makes it difficult to find relevant research. In their studies, Ayala (2020-2021); Moya (2012); Pachón (2012) led the way in researching into language immersion programs for teachers in Colombia; however, studies that embraces this population at a global level was scarce.

Second, as this research involved surveying in- service teachers of the Secretary of Education of Cundinamarca, I faced the problem of having limited access to apply the questionnaire as it was planned (before the immersion program execution). Even though the permissions were asked in advance and having the logistics and organization staff 's endorsement, Secretary of Education asked a petition signed by the director of the program at UPN (see Appendix 11). Submitted the request, the questionnaire application was possible on Wednesday, November 21, 2021 . I consider this study is still reliable and valid

despite this limitation as the questionnaire had only two days of delay and rather than studying immersion programs in different time intervals -before, during and after-, I grounded an explanation of those by identifying the key elements through the in- service teachers' espoused beliefs.

Third, as the questionnaire was planned before the immersion program, the issue of national and foreign leaders topic was not included, nevertheless, the other complementary instruments items drew important results that deserved to be shown.

Last, but not least, since the immersion program was executed one week before in-service teachers go on vacation, participants were only available during that week for the qualitative phase, the semi structured interviews were carried out in that period of time, whereas the focus group was carried out in 2022. Participants could fail to make the immersion program memories, nevertheless, regarding that the grounded theory analysis includes a constant comparative method, this time span allowed me to rediscover key components of my theory through the focus group.

5.5 Further research

There are diverse ways to continue these insights into beliefs about immersion programs. First, other variables that can be framed include beliefs about immersion programs and its influence in (a) their communicative competence (b) the students learning, (c) contexts (d) the use of specific teaching practices.

Second, it would be enriching to deeply analyze the impact immersion programs could have on the in -service teachers of elementary level and rural high schools. Despite

the fact that I found three statical differences in the quantitative phase, but also some shared beliefs in the qualitative phase among the four subgroups, research may point to the analysis in detail to what extent the immersions influence their professional development in relation to their needs, motivations, challenges and context in which they work.

Finally, research into epistemological conceptions, procedures, practices and methodologies enhanced in these programs and the way in which they affect the school contexts, as well as the leaders' education and profiles need to be done.

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<div align="center">**Appendices**</div>

The appendices are shown in the following way. First, I included the table ???? that compiles a brief description of each appendix of this research. Second, as data collection and analysis was fairly considerable, a drive folder is included, the link can be founded just below the table 12 title. Third, some data analyzed in the Statistical Social Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was impossible to include in this section due to the extension format (SPSS statistics output, SPSS statistics data document) . However, some screenshots are presented to evidence them.

Table 13

Appendices of the study

Appendices link:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Pyu7Sx9aYAdGCjy4epviVeq03wgt2LMC?usp=share_link

Element	Description
Appendix 1 Questionnaires	It evidences three of the 84 applied questionnaires to the in-service teachers. I included one sample for a elementary in-service teacher, another for a secondary in-service teacher and a questionnaire answered by a teacher who works in a rural setting.
Appendix 2 Consent of the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional	It evidences three consents signed to the in-service teachers. I included one sample for a elementary in-service teacher, another for a secondary in-service teacher and a consent signed by a teacher who works in a rural setting.
Appendix 3 Closed- ended questions coding	It shows the organization of the closed-ended questions in the program
Appendix 4 The t-tests with closed- ended questions	It shows the files exported by the program SPSS once the t-tests were carried out

Appendix 5 Open- ended questions organization and analysis	It presents the transcriptions of the five open - ended questions of the questionnaire organized in accordance with the in service teachers' educational level and context they work and analyzed through color coding
Appendix 6 The Open- ended questions bar charts	It shows an Excel file with grouped bar charts that summarizes the open ended questions results
Appendix 7. Interviews	It presents the transcriptions of the six interviews.
Appendix 8. Focus group	It presents the transcriptions of the focus group
Appendix 9 Grounded theory analysis	It evidences the process of Grounded Theory under the perspective of Charmaz (2006). Hence, the reader will find gerunds and line -by line codes
Appendix 10 Extra- institutional research	It presents the extra- institutional research presentation on Asocopi 57th Annual Conference and the itinerant week of research and extension 2022 at UPN
Appendix 11 Permission to the Secretary of education	It shows a formal letter, signed by the director of the program at UPN, asking the project viability

Note. Data collected by author on the 15th of November of 2022