APPROACHING ICC IN THE EFL CLASSROOM: A STATE OF THE ART

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Abstract

The present state of the art has the purpose of analyzing documentation that reports the status of the intercultural communicative competence implementation and investigation in the EFL classroom. This research follows a qualitative paradigm framework, and its type is documentary research. Data was reviewed and compiled using two detailed rubrics systematically. The documents' corpus contained information for the last ten years in Colombian universities. Findings show that ICC implementation has been used to foster critical thinking, cultural awareness, and tolerance when integrated into the classroom through several pedagogic strategies and methodologies demonstrating positive results.

Key words: EFL classroom, ICC, critical thinking, cultural awareness, communication

Resumen

El presente estado del arte tiene el propósito de analizar la documentación que reporta el estado de la implementación e investigación de la competencia comunicativa intercultural en el aula de EFL. Esta investigación sigue un marco paradigmático cualitativo, y su tipo es la investigación documental. Los datos se revisaron y compilaron sistemáticamente utilizando dos rúbricas detalladas. El corpus de documentos contenía información de los últimos diez años en las universidades Colombianas. Los hallazgos muestran que la implementación de la CCI se ha utilizado para fomentar el pensamiento crítico, la conciencia cultural y la tolerancia cuando se integra en el aula mediante varias estrategias y metodologías pedagógicas demostrando resultados positivos.

Palabras clave: aula de EFL, CCI, pensamiento crítico, conciencia cultural, comunicación

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CHAPTER I

CONTEXTUALIZATION

Target Population

This state of the art was developed within the Colombian college context, including public and private universities in different cities of the country. According to the National Ministry of Education (2017), higher education corresponds to three undergraduate levels: technique, technology, and professional; for the aim of this research, the professional level is the only one considered. Moreover, the population encompasses students with diverse bachelor's degrees, ages, and sociocultural backgrounds but that were registered in an EFL course, whether it is an elective or program course.

In Colombia, higher education is defined as a permanent cultural, personal, and social education. Besides, the professional degree is obtained when the students accomplish all of the requirements in the study plan of the degree. Also, since the third year of university, students are able to acquire work experience by doing their professional practices (EAFIT, n.d.). Furthermore, in the country, there have been several national programs to enhance English teaching within higher education; for instance, the program "Colombia very well!" proposed in 2014 by Maria Fernanda Campo Saavedra aimed to subside the language deficiency that undergraduate students reach at the end of their programs with only 8% of them scoring a B2 level according to the CEFR and almost 70% of them classified between B1 and -A (Ministry of Education, 2014).

Similarly, the population selected for this research project includes learners from distinct undergraduate faculties that were attending an EFL course. The Ministry of Education (2006) established that students of higher education should have a B2 level as well as a C1 level for new graduates with bachelor's degrees in languages. Higher education

students tend to display a better level in English between B1 and B+ given the fact that for graduating, they need to accomplish a specific level with the international exams' accreditations. But also, the students are in need of becoming English speakers as the bibliographical material for their degrees is in this language, so they need to become English readers to access that information (Sanchéz, 2013).

Thus, it is relevant to know because, based on the British Council (2015), most of the universities in Colombia do not offer bachelor's degrees with affordable English lessons. Therefore, learners that are not part of foreign language studies have to pay to access English classes if there is still capacity available. Eventually, the statement of the problem of this study will be exposed.

Statement of the Problem

English is a worldwide language used to expand research information and get convenient career opportunities. Thus, Colombian universities attempt to provide learners with an intermediate or advanced level. However, communicative skills are deficient. According to the Minister of Education (2006) "the level of English has been identified as low, when considering the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) adopted by the Colombian government". Moreover, it is also concerning that English teaching is based on surface culture and repetition of the native speakers' language usage. Therefore, it delimits effective communicative competence students may develop (Rico, 2018).

However, despite becoming a globalized language and being present in the classroom, the EFL has focused the syllabus's cultural components on the two dominant cultures: American and British. For example, in Germany, a study proved that teachers preferred teaching British or American culture rather than teaching English as a lingua franca because

they considered it empty and abstract (Hammar, 2013). Furthermore, even universities include cultural content biased by North America, Britain, and Australia (NABA) countries in the lesson plans to instruct on English culture and literature (Le Gal, 2018). Therefore, it provokes what one could call a cultural knowledge gap in learners' mindsets.

On this subject, it is significant to highlight textbook utilization during language acquisition. Higher education institutions are free to adapt their lesson plans to any textbook. Hence, the usual didactic material used lies in mechanical, meaningful, and communicative activities. In 2019, in a Colombian investigation that analyzed the textbook "English Please!", researchers noticed that communicative activities introduced topics such as tourist places, food, landmarks, and national emblems; besides, they included some questions that displayed communicative obstacles due to non-verbal communication among people. Yet, the activities were language-controlled, and cultural analysis was delimited to surface reflections about one's and other cultures.

Thus, Romero and Truscott (2005), establish that the teaching of a foreign language should be connected to the culture as it allows students to value their cultural identity at the same time, they can approach other cultures in a reciprocal relation to modify their mentality and practices. Nevertheless, the application of the ICC in the language classroom brings at least two problems: first, the use of the material created does not show a real vision of the deep cultural aspects, and second, the study plans usually do not consider the time that the ICC takes to develop activities that could promote it so teachers feel restrained to use the time to implement interculturality (Altamar, 2015).

All in all, intercultural competence teaching is a requirement established by the Ministry of Education; however, its application is restricted due to the material provided in which learners approach surface culture exclusively. Therefore, it is necessary to keep

working on the ICC implementation to enhance a broader language acquisition that permits to focus on attitudes, values, belief systems, and behaviors critically (Manjarres, 2009) that is close to authentic interactions when communicating with diverse communities and does not rely on imitation, decontextualized or standard language.

Rationale

English has become a multicultural language due to the quantity of native and non-native speakers that, according to Statista (2022), has accumulated around 1.5 billion people worldwide. The globalization of English is due to the importance that it has gained on the professional level since almost 25% of jobs require speaking English. It also has become relevant in the educational field due to the easy access to scholarships, exchanges, and postgrad courses, as well as to being considered a language that mediates between two distinct cultures allowing communicative interaction (Cesena, 2022).

Likewise, culture is relevant to this extent since it affects the language itself and its learning. According to Kuo and Lai (2006), "Cultural knowledge is crucial in achieving linguistic proficiency, and the culture of a society can be changed depending upon the language used." (p. 5). Not only culture is crucial to the learning process, but also motivates students. Hawthorne (2021) established that when students are motivated they are more likely to achieve success and it can also contribute to positive behavior and wellbeing. Hence, they are able to understand and acquire knowledge of how others' cultures work, what practices they do and how it can influence their daily life and their communication using didactic material that helps them focus on the intercultural aspect while developing the English language skills.

Hence, intercultural communicative competence was proposed, since its conception, as a strategy to encourage speakers to communicate effectively with non-native and native

English speakers whose sociocultural backgrounds might differ. Likewise, when including cultural content from any anglophone origin, ICC encourages the analysis of power relations displayed in language and among people's beliefs, customs, and socioeconomic practices to reach cultural awareness about distinct cultures and how those factors influence English usage.

Furthermore, to foster the ELF's critical and tolerant education of learners, ICC can be generating a positive effect on the students. Indeed, Gómez (2013) concluded that the use of multicultural texts in the EFL to foster the ICC was successful as "students' opinions show that they became critical readers at the level of their own capacities as they were encouraged to read, interpret, and discuss diverse literary selection in a foreign language" (p. 108). Hence, the use of the ICC and multicultural text can be a useful tool in providing learners the capacity to develop critical thinking towards their own culture and foreign culture.

Accordingly, ICC application within the EFL classroom provides learners with critical thinking when reflecting upon a new culture and comparing it with their own one. Moreover, in the didactic field, ICC occurs through the use of various materials that imply cultural products, speech analysis, comparison between oneself and otherness, etcetera, to reach cultural awareness and respect towards the otherness.

Therefore, the investigation aims to establish how intercultural communicative competence has been implemented within the EFL classroom. Furthermore, due to the possible lack of ICC within some schoolrooms, the research will focus on identifying the strategies and materials that have been, are, and will be convenient for English classrooms. Considering this, one of the main purposes of this documentary research is also to provide a guide for teachers interested in the topic to use it for the planning and design of their own proposals taking into account what has been already done in the field of ICC. Finally, this

state of the art seeks to approach the trajectory of the identity field within the Intercultural Communicative Competence, which is to say, for information related to the students' experiences with their own culture and the others' culture.

Notably, this documentary research aims also to provide significant information about how the ICC in the EFL can enhance the student's critical thinking, cultural awareness, and tolerance. At the same time, this project seeks to nurture Colombian literature by providing a literary review of the advances in the field in our country at university-level education. Therefore, in the following chapters, there will be a review, analysis, and possible advantages of using the ICC in the classroom.

Research Question

How has the Intercultural Communicative Competence been approached in the EFL classrooms at university levels in Colombia during the last ten years?

Research Objectives

The main objective of this state of art project is:

To analyze documents that report information of the ICC implementation in order to describe what has been done in this regard in the EFL classroom.

The specific objectives are:

1. To identify the strategies and methodologies that have been used to approach the ICC in the classroom.
2. To examine the language skills that have been developed with the ICC and its approach proposal in the EFL classroom.

3. To determine students' perceptions about the implementation of the ICC in the EFL classroom to enhance critical thinking, promote cultural awareness and tolerance.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter discloses the conceptualization and explanation of the theoretical constructs surrounding this research: intercultural communicative competence, EFL (English as a foreign language) and higher education in Colombia. Furthermore, a graphic will be displayed, demonstrating the relationship between the aforementioned constructs.

Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

To begin with, to be able to define what ICC is, the constructs of interculturality and communication need to be developed.

Notably, interculturality implies the act of acknowledging and respecting other cultures, likewise, recognizing the cultural pluralism presented in our society and the fact that there should be a mutual and equal exchange among communities from different cultures (Hélia, 2019). However, this idea is an initial conception of the interaction among multiple cultures. Indeed, interculturality involves the rapprochement of distinct cultures and how people develop a willingness to understand the difference, promoting tolerance of disparate points of view, social practices, as well as behaviors (Hélia, 2019). But it involves further definitions.

Another aspect of interculturality is the critical one. This scope emphasizes recognizing how the differences among communities have been constructed within a colonial framework serving as a tool to identify cultural subordination; furthermore, the critical interculturality is understood as a decolonial and political project to challenge and transform existing institutions and social relations that perpetuate inequality (Granados, 2016).

Likewise, another connotation of the term interculturality refers to the interrelations of diverse cultures and how the sense of otherness conditions social practices. That is to say that within a community, one might find numerous groups of people from different origins and cultural identities, and their approach and status are determined by an asymmetrical relation concerning "political and socioeconomic power, that they often reflect historically rooted ways of showing or hiding, of emphasizing or denying diversity, of stigmatizing otherness, and of discriminating against particular groups" (Dietz, 2018).

Moreover, communication implies a system of rules that community members choose based on what is appropriate in the sociocultural context; furthermore, according to Hymes, communication and culture are inseparable because the former permits speakers to share beliefs and value systems that build the social structures, thus, when any community communicates, they display verbal and nonverbal elements particular to their society. This phenomenon, therefore, permits characterizing, understanding, comparing, and theorizing people's worldviews (Foss & Littlejohn, 2009).

Besides, one finds several communication theories proposed, that is the case of Roman Jakobson's model that established the communicative act composed of an addresser and an addressee, the message with a context, and the code and the contact in which it is produced. Bajtin recognizes that the message is transmitted thanks to a pre-established code and that it is not factual that the sender and recipient shared the same code. Hence, translation is necessary, risking a misinterpretation of the message in various forms, even if community members share the same basic semiotic system or language (Pilshchikov, 2021).

Therefore, developing the ability to communicate effectively with people from different cultures that recognize themselves with diverse social identities is what Intercultural Communicative Competence involves (Hoff, 2020). It was proposed in 1997 by Byram; this

construct emerged thanks to the communicative competence concept proposed by Hymes, which neglects the aforementioned intercultural aspect.

According to Byram, intercultural communicative competence (ICC) consists of five elements: attitudes, curiosity, and openness towards cultures (Lund, 2008); knowledge, understanding how social groups and identities operate; skills of interpreting and relating, interpreting a document or event from another culture; skills of discovery and interaction, acquiring knowledge of culture to utilize attitudes, knowledge, skills in real-time communication; and critical cultural awareness, evaluating critically one's culture and other ones in light of perspective and practices to exchange stereotypes (Vogt, 2007).

It is significant to remark that the ICC enhances the intercultural speaker "to build relationships while speaking in the foreign language; communicates effectively, taking into consideration his own and the other person's viewpoint and needs; mediates interactions between people of different backgrounds, and strives to continue developing communicative skills" (López-Rocha, 2016); all of this throughout the foreign language learning and usage.

Furthermore, intercultural communicative competence aims for language learners to become mediators between mutually incomprehensible languages and cultures. This ability involves learners being able to do a fine-grained analysis within their own culture and another one to examine differences in communication and speeches depending on the sociocultural context among communities and their interactions through the use of English (Jackson, 2012).

Despite the mediator role, Byram also proposed three interconnected facets that an intercultural speaker needs to acquire and thrive: being an open-minded person with the curiosity and courage of an ethnographer and being a person with the engagement and responsibility of a citizen. According to Byram (1997), the first consists in making the

learners reflect upon the viewpoints of the culture, the stereotypes, and prejudices and, if necessary, supplement them with "more valid knowledge, personal experiences and intercultural interaction in the target language" (Byram, 2020).

The second relies on self-discovery as a result of the observation process required of the language learner. That is to say that the learner has to observe the speakers in their everyday interactions and social context, participate in those scenarios, try to acquire their language, and interpret narratives and texts which, ultimately, will lead the learner to reflect on beliefs and different ways of living (Byram, 2020).

The third aspect lies in inducing the learner to be a responsible citizen, in the classroom and outside of it, who develops critical awareness to change for better their point of view about different cultures (Byram, 2020). To clarify the cultural awareness construct, Byram (1997) refers to it as "an ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices, and products in one's own and other cultures and countries" (Porto, 2017). Thus, this critical skill permits learners to explore, analyze and evaluate themselves and others, provoking a social transformation thanks to intercultural communication.

Consequently, for this project, the ICC will be considered as a skill that allows speakers to develop critical thinking and openness when communicating with a different cultural community. At the same time, speakers would be able to contrast their own culture with the other one to find similarities and differences, with the aim of performing a self-analysis of their practices and imaginaries in light of modifying behavioral patterns in their society.

Likewise, the ICC consists of the ability to communicate with different cultures as well as become a mediator through the use of English as a foreign language among

communities from different cultural backgrounds. It also allows them to know several world views with tolerance, engagement, and responsibility avoiding stereotypes and prejudice, resulting in a willingness to recognize and comprehend the cultural identities in the communicative act.

EFL English as a Foreign Language

English has become the principal language spoken around the world with approximately 1.348 million speakers, of these 379 million are native speakers, while the rest have learned this language as a foreign language (Fernández, 2022). An EFL classroom is where English is not the dominant language in the country. According to Stanley (2011):

> "Students share the same language and culture. The teacher may be the only native English speaker they have exposure to. Outside of the classroom students have very few opportunities to use English. For some, learning English may not have any obvious practical benefit. Students have limited exposure to English-speaking culture, most often through a distorted lens like TV or music."

Therefore, the EFL classroom is a space where English is not the dominant language and is taught as a foreign language. Moreover, students' mother tongue differs from the target language. Thus, it implies that the learners' principal approach to English is during class time.

Higher Education in Colombia

Education is a permanent personal, cultural and social process. Higher education can be offered by the State but also by particular entities. According to the National Accreditation Council (n.d.), there are four types of institutions that can offer higher education programs: Professional Technical Institutions, Technological Institutions, University Institutions and

Universities. Additionally, to access the formal programs students must present the Bachelor's degree and the State Exam as a requirement (Ministry of National Education, 2017).

Moreover, there are six fields of action: technique, science, technology, humanities, art and philosophy. Each higher education program must be registered taking into account these fields of action and the purpose of each institution. The undergraduate programs aimed to prepare the students to practice a profession or discipline. On the other hand, the graduate programs search to perfect the profession but also to promote the investigation as a basic fundamental activity (CNA, n.d.). Notably, in Colombia there are various programs that focus on teaching English such as degrees in translation and modern languages; however, the majority of programs aimed for students to become teachers (Colombian University degrees, 2021).

Thus, for this project, higher education in Colombia will be considered as degree programs that are offered by official institutions that allow students to develop their personal, professional and cultural knowledge in regards to their chosen program and the curriculum that is studied. It would be considered English degrees as well as other degrees that provide EFL courses within their curriculum or as elective courses.

This diagram is an analogy of the chemical synapse of the neurons, being a conjunctional process. In-depth, higher education is the central nervous system that integrates the main core of the system; it sends the information perceived to the brain. The EFL classroom is where everything occurs, the human brain. Communication is the presynaptic cell, which sends the information; interculturality represents the action potential that assists with the propagation of the presynaptic cell signal through the neuron's axon. The ICC displays the role of the postsynaptic cell, which receives this information.

Figure 1
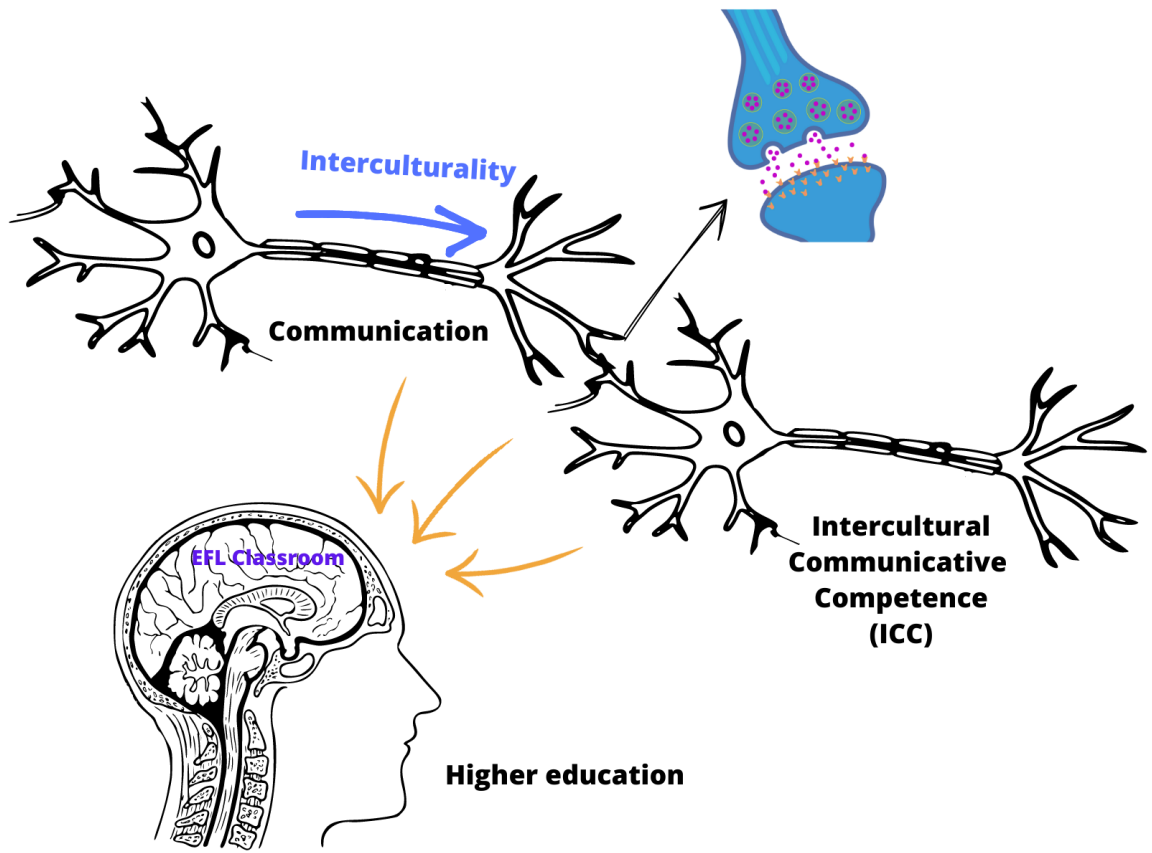
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

This chapter will display the methodological design of this research. It will include the research paradigm and type of research. Finally, the data collection instruments used in this research will concrete the methodological design of the study.

Research Paradigm

This research is based on a qualitative method. Hammersley (2012) defined the qualitative method as a form of social inquiry that featured by being flexible, data-driven research used to emphasize the essentiality of subjectivity throughout the investigation; moreover, its subject of study tends to compass small numbers of natural cases in detail. Furthermore, this paradigm aims to describe, comprehend, and interpret phenomena through data that emerged in context, including participants' perceptions and experiences. Equally, the method starts with particular information to arrive at the general data as results of the analysis (Baptista et al., 2010).

Crucially, within educational environments, qualitative research is a particular way of approaching reality that seeks to interpret it to understand it and thus guide the action of the actors of the educational communities (Ramirez, 2011). From this perspective, in this research, the qualitative paradigm aims to compile and analyze information, over the last ten years, at the national level about critical thinking and tolerance through ICC utilization.

Type of Research

The type of research chosen for this project is documentary research, understood as a systematic investigation process about a definite topic. It can be considered an analysis where

knowledge construction occurs based on the material found and used. It follows the next steps: planning, collection and selection, analysis, interpretation, and finally, writing and presentation of the material found during the process (Jannet & Maradiaga, 2015). Besides, the document selection needs to be situated within a theoretical frame of reference so its content could be understood; consequently, this sort of research refers to documentation analysis that contains information about the phenomenon desired to study (Uddin, 2010).

Taking into account the previous definition, an initial search was executed of secondary sources such as essays, journal articles, several theses, and research projects around the use of intercultural communicative competence in a language class as a tool to promote tolerance and critical thinking. The theoretical frame of reference corresponds to the intercultural communicative competence theory proposed by Byram. Then, with the documentary review, several sub-themes were seen regarding the topic as well as similarities and differences in all the different approaches to intercultural communicative competence. So after an information systematization, three categories emerged from the documents' analysis. Finally, the data collection instruments will be exposed.

Data Collection Instruments

In order to obtain the information needed, two main instruments have been used. Firstly, as a state-of-the-art, the selected documents were the principal resource to find similarities that led to the findings of this study. Secondly, it was necessary to design the rubrics to organize and analyze the information gathered in the documents. Those two instruments will be conceptualized.

Documents

One of the two data collection instruments was multiple written documents. Therefore, as explained previously, Jannet & Maradiaga (2015) exposes that documentary

research has the particularity of using as a principal source the written document in its different forms to assemble information in regard to a precise topic. Hence, this study aims to develop updated research (last ten years) from fifteen documents such as articles, research projects, theses, and journals. In that sense, these fifteen documents contain reliable information about the implementation of the ICC in Colombia at the University level of education; they will be analyzed in emerging categories afterward. Moreover, the second instrument will be explained.

Rubric

According to Andrade (n.d.), a rubric is a scoring tool that lists criteria for a piece of work; it also articulates the level of gradations of quality. It could contain purpose, organization, details, and mechanics. As explained by the author, rubrics can be a functional tool as they allow the researcher to judge thoroughly the material they are using. Hence, they can be considered as easy to use and explain. Moreover, a rubric permits exposure to the selection of a particular document (Cune et al., 1985). For this aim, two rubrics were used to organize the data collected. To begin, the first contained the following information: author's names, name of the study, population, methodology, and instruments for data analysis. Secondly, the next rubric analyzes the didactic material used and the purpose of the study. Therefore, the intention was to organize the data related to material, strategies, and their aim to categorize the information for the development of the analysis (see Annex 1 and 2). In such a manner, these two core data collection instruments facilitated the categorization and analysis of the information gathered to provide solid results.

CHAPTER IV

STATE OF THE ART

This chapter presents a review of the selected documents for this state-of-the-art. There are fifteen studies chosen that will demonstrate how the ICC has been implemented in the EFL classroom in Colombia at the university level in the last ten years. Hence, each study presents a description, analysis, and review; moreover, a table will exhibit the documents chronologically organized with some pertinent information about each paper.

Table 1

Detailed Information Regarding the State of the Art

Author	Study	Place	Year
Juana Valentina Chambo Torres, Miguel Felipe Cifuentes Cano, Ginneth Vanessa Hernández Pardo and Juan Gabriel Sierra Cumpian	The role of intercultural communicative competence in the EFL classroom	Bogotá, Colombia	2022
María Teresa Esteban Nuñez	Pre-Service Language Teachers' Knowledge and Practices of	Tunja, Colombia	2021

	Intercultural Communicative Competence		
Alexander Ramírez-Espinosa, Sol Colmenares-Rodríguez, and Marcela Castellanos	Development of the Intercultural Communicative Competence by Working with Literary Works	Bogotá, Colombia	2019
Laura Lucia Carreño Bolivar	Promoting Meaningful Encounters as a Way to Enhance Intercultural Competences	Bogotá, Colombia	2018
Luis Fernando Gómez	EFL Learners' Intercultural Competence Development Through International News	Bogotá, Colombia	2018
Natalia Alarcón Penagos	Implementing a Critical Intercultural Approach to Foster Adult English Students'	Medellín, Colombia	2017

	Intercultural Communicative Competence		
Liliana Beltrán Guarnizo and Wilson Vela Gómez	An EFL Teacher Candidates Teaching Experience from Action Research and Intercultural Communicative Competence	Bogotá, Colombia	2017
Milton Gerardo Hernández García	Involving University Students in Intercultural Communicative Competence Activities through the Use of Cultural Products and Practices	Tunja, Colombia	2016
Daniel Alfonso Rodríguez, Christian Arciniegas Calderón and Luisa Gutiérrez Rodríguez	La formación docente para interculturalidad en el programa de Licenciatura de Lenguas de la Universidad de La Salle	Bogotá, Colombia	2016

Nestor Julián Jaramillo Ante	A proposal to improve intercultural communicative competence through videos in an English program of a private university	Cali, Colombia	2015
Luis Fernando Gómez	Relational teaching: A way to foster EFL learners' intercultural communicative competence through literary short stories.	Bogotá, Colombia	2014
Julián Martínez	An Approach to the Concept of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)	Bogotá, Colombia	2014
Alba Olaya and Luis Fernando Gómez Rodríguez	Exploring EFL Pre-Service Teachers' Experience with Cultural Content and Intercultural Communicative	Bogotá, Colombia	2013

	Competence at Three Colombian Universities		
Luis Fernando Gómez	Enhancing intercultural competence through U.S. multicultural literature in the EFL classroom	Bogotá, Colombia	2013
Luis Fernando Gómez	Fostering Intercultural Communicative Competence Through Reading Authentic Literary Texts in an Advanced Colombian EFL Classroom: A Constructivist Perspective	Bogotá, Colombia	2012

The first appointed study was done by Juana Chambo, Miguel Cifuentes, Ginneth Hernández, and Juan Sierra in 2022 and was titled *The role of intercultural communicative competence in the EFL classroom.* The study was a research project with a mixed method and single case study design, and it was applied to a group of 17 university students in the 5th

semester that are pre-service teachers from ages 18 to 22 in Bogotá, Colombia. The foremost objective was to determine the ICC's role in an EFL class in a private university. The information was collected through 3 tools: an initial questionnaire, an interview, and one observation of the EFL class to gather relevant findings about students' perceptions and knowledge about ICC.

As a result, on the one hand, it was found that ICC is not fully developed amongst students since the teaching of the target culture is limited to surface cultural activities such as festivals or geography rather than a deep understanding of it. Therefore, this negatively impacts the way language is both taught and understood. On the other hand, in the context, data demonstrate that the ICC's role is a secondary factor because its implications are considered complementary and not essential for future English teachers. Thus, it is indispensable to highlight the observation and compilation of the learners' perceptions of the ICC. Even more, after taking into account that they had not experienced it precisely, but through textbooks that do not include intercultural activities. Hence, it is necessary to analyze the curriculum implications regarding interculturality. Likewise, it would be recommendable to examine ICC's role and perceptions during class time to be able to recognize how the ICC is used in the classroom and how students feel about that implementation.

Moreover, a study was carried out by María Teresa Esteban-Nuñez called *Service Language Teachers' Knowledge and Practices of Intercultural Communicative Competence* in 2021. It was a descriptive case study. The participants were five female pre-service teachers from a public university; they were doing their practice at a public school in Tunja, Colombia. The main objective was to learn about the knowledge pre-service students acquired about the ICC; also, their approach in the classes when planning to develop it in their final pedagogical practice. The data collection instruments were an analysis of the

lesson plans the pre-service students created, a survey, and a 10-minute semi-structured interview that was applied at the end of the process.

In the end, the researcher managed to identify that the student's notion was more focused on *knowledge* and *faire* from Byram's model. The learners had a connection with the traditional view of culture rather than approaching it from a critical point of view. Also, it showed that during the university process, they did not have the opportunity to develop the ICC as their classes conducted them toward communicative competence. In the end, the students recognized the importance of approaching the ICC; they realized their role as cultural mediators in the classes. Notably, one aspect noteworthy is the analysis of the lesson plans to be adequate for students' necessities and English level; yet, commentaries and further analysis are necessary when implementing the lesson plans, as well as the need for a pedagogical unit for the ICC implementation in the EFL.

As well as a study carried out by Alexander Ramírez-Espinosa, Sol Colmenares-Rodríguez, and Marcela Castellanos called *Development of the Intercultural Communicative Competence by Working with Literary Works* in 2019. It was a research analysis and a study guide created and implemented to work on the book *Americanah* by Chimamanda Adichie. They executed it in the fifth semester of the degree in foreign languages in Bogotá, Colombia. Also, the study guide was composed of 7 units with 12 activities on average. The main objective was to propose activities that allowed the exploration of the novel with multiple aims, thus creating various pedagogical dynamics and evaluating the resulting material. In addition, the data collection instrument was a matrix proposed by Rico-Troncoso for the materials evaluation. It included the analysis of 5 dimensions: proficiency, awareness, knowledge, attitude, and skills.

In conclusion, the researchers establish that the analyzing process of their material allowed them to specify the dimensions in which they focused and reflect on proficiency recurring as the most used dimension in the exercises. Likewise, the researchers provide advice for choosing a literary work to develop the ICC: analyzing the presented themes, asking about the production and discussion of diverse literary genres, and finally, language usage in the text. Lastly, the study proposes that the students can be involved in the text selection to help the pedagogical reflection. Literature is considered a powerful tool to develop the ICC due to its capacity to construct an identity with the interaction of the own and the foreign culture. Thus, the study guide analysis was a successful exercise as it permits them to improve their activities related to the culture. Due to the critical analysis, it would have been relevant to propose a new guide or pursuit with the considerations they concluded.

Likewise, a study entitled *Promoting meaningful encounters as a way to enhance intercultural competences* was realized by Laura Carreño Bolivar in 2018. The action research project was applied to a group of six higher education students during the first semester of 2015 in the course "Intercultural Studies and Local Identities" in Bogotá, Colombia. The project aims to research the acquisition and development of intercultural competencies in higher education. Besides, the investigator also evidenced the diploma course's contribution to the ICC development; and how it increases awareness among international students. The class was implemented within 64 hours and divided into two-hour blocks twice a week. Participants were required to work on virtual activities for an extra hour. Regarding data collection artifacts, researchers employed an asynchronous forum to evidence the process, as well as oral tests and class presentations.

To summarize, evidence illustrates that students reflected on their origins and international learners' ones, demonstrating the interculturality effectiveness when performing

their perceptions analysis of their national identity. Moreover, they identified that participants were willing to discover from others and consider that everyone has something to offer, regardless of their social status. Consequently, the foremost benefit identified was the modification of lesson plans and curriculum according to the target population to include and develop national cultural topics. However, there is a lack of a variety of methodologies to address the cultural content, as well as to propose activities that allow learners to put into practice what has been reviewed.

In addition, the research titled *EFL Learners' Intercultural Competence Development Through International News* was published by Luis Fernando Gómez in 2018. The population comprised four university students from Colombia between the ages of 26 to 30. The research was a qualitative case study to examine in-depth and analyze four Colombian EFL learners' ICC fostering and critical reflections on cultural issues introduced in international news sources. The research case study was conducted through a conversational club where they discussed international news every Saturday afternoon from March 5th to May 7th, and each session had a specific topic; first, understanding the concept of ICC; second, race relations in the USA; third, Islamic sharia; fourth, teens' views of marriage. The data collection instruments used for the project were field notes during every meeting, artifacts (worksheets) on which participants wrote personal opinions about the news, and a questionnaire about the topics.

Accordingly, researchers concluded that news utilization enhances the ICC since they are authentic language texts that contain controversial ideologies of deep culture topics. Further analysis indicates that news could develop knowledge of the current political and social climate from several countries. It also strengthens critical skills concerning collective behavior, actions, and beliefs in the origin and foreign culture. Moreover, learners also

created attitudes such as empathy and readiness for other human beings who suffer social injustice and prejudices, who live subjected to strict cultural norms. Significantly, learners acquire knowledge about cultures through authentic didactic material and controversial topics; but it would be necessary to test students' intercultural skills with the help of multimodal texts, which are not restricted to written language. Therefore, the study lacks the use of complementing material as well as analyzing and discussing various cultures that could give the student a better understanding of the cultural difference, allowing them to become tolerant and critical subjects.

Subsequently, a document entitled *Implementing a Critical Intercultural Approach to Foster Adult English Students' Intercultural Communicative Competence* was carried out by Natalia Alarcón Penagos in 2017. The study population included 14 students between 18 to 50 years old located in Medellin, Colombia. The methodology design for the project was based on a critical sociocultural paradigm, and the researcher drew on a qualitative case study to achieve the main objective of the project, which lies in exploring how a critical intercultural approach helped adult English learners foster their Intercultural Communicative Competence and CI in the classroom. The researcher taught an English class of an extension program at the University throughout part of the semester, the syllabus followed a communicative approach, and she used authentic language material. The theoretical content of the pedagogical unit proposed by the researcher included Byram and Walsh's ICC theory. Lastly, the data collection instruments were questionnaires, audio and video recordings, student work samples, journal, and interviews.

In summary, the students show a positive attitude when contrasting with other perspectives and analyzing critical representations of stereotypes they had. They develop the ability to communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds; at the same time,

they improve their linguistic competence. The researcher considers it imperative to implement the ICC in the classes to help them prepare for intercultural encounters they may have. Therefore, one considers successful the use of authentic literary material to foster the ICC within the EFL. Also, the data collection was complete as it included various methods that provided multiple perspectives on students' responses to the activities and programs.

Furthermore, research titled *An EFL Teacher Candidates Teaching Experience from Action Research and Intercultural Communicative Competence* was conducted by Liliana Beltrán Guarnizo and Wilson Vela Gómez in 2017. The population included five teacher candidates from Antonio Nariño University located in Bogotá, Colombia, and the project had an action research design. The main objective was to strengthen the teacher candidates' teaching skills through the reflection and collaborative dynamics that empower their professional growth, as well as to enhance ICC implementation so that pre-service teachers could become intercultural mediators and include cultural aspects in the EFL classroom. Several didactic materials were utilized depending on each pre-service teacher's aim, for instance, music from around the world, pastime short texts, tourist brochures, and Christmas traditions. Besides, the candidate teachers gathered the activities' results in audio journals, surveys, and interviews applied to their school students.

To conclude, data indicated that English teacher candidates recognize themselves as cultural mediators according to their own experience within a multicultural class with students from distinct cultural backgrounds of the country. They noticed that intercultural activities motivated the school students during English class. However, they do not fully acknowledge all the implications behind diversity in Colombia. Finally, this study presented activities that motivated students and helped them to assume the mediator role. Whereas students did not fully reach the role of mediator, since they were only in charge of displaying

the comparisons among Colombian culture with others, there is a lack of acknowledgment of the reasons for the differences and similarities, as well as of identifying significant sociocultural backgrounds that ended up resulting in those cultural products. One recognizes one of the teacher candidates was able to do it. Therefore, they did not develop a critical reflection on the ICC. Finally, they mainly focus on the diversity of Colombia without delving into the reasons for topics such as migration.

Besides, research was done by Milton Gerardo Hernández García called *Involving University Students in Intercultural Communicative Competence Activities through the Use of Cultural Products and Practices* in 2016. It was managed through an action research methodology, and its population comprises eight university students of 17 to 28 years old at the elementary English level from Tunja, Colombia. The main objective was to foster ICC spaces in which students from different degrees could develop intercultural competence, as well as enhance students' awareness of culture and display their perceptions regarding ICC. The pedagogical intervention was carried out during six sessions every other week for about three and a half months. Subsequently, the didactic material utilized were cultural products such as newspapers and personal experiences. Data was collected and systematized in journal entries, surveys, and focus group interviews.

In brief, the study demonstrated that participants were willing to learn about other cultures from a different point of view; they also acknowledged other cultural products and practices' existence, allowing them to reflect upon their culture from a distinct perspective. Besides, students learned the skills to identify, comprehend and interpret their own and foreign cultural practices to foster their oral expression when sharing thoughts on ICC. Some difficulties were found due to the level of English. Accordingly, the interaction between learners and native speakers permits learners to develop openness and approach to different

worldviews; not only do they analyze ideologies through film usage but directly from the linguistic approach with the native speaker. Nevertheless, a possible recommendation is that the analysis of activities should be deeper to promote a critical awareness of distinct cultures, beliefs, and collective imagination.

Additionally, a study carried out by Daniel Alfonso, Christian Arciniegas, and Luisa Gutierrez called *Teacher training for interculturality in the language degree program of Salle University* in 2016. The researchers used the study case methodology and the qualitative paradigm. The main objective was to identify, describe and analyze the didactic strategies that promote intercultural competence in students. Hence, the population was students from the seventh semester that were doing their emphasis courses, they were 18 to 24 years old. The study aims to analyze the syllabus of the three emphases (English, Spanish, and French) and to do observations to verify the ICC in the classroom. The data collection instruments were a documental analysis, an analysis of the syllabus, and class observations.

To sum up, the researchers establish that the didactic strategies were used in the three emphases and that the teachers also proposed multiple activities that target the development of interculturality. The students can create relations based on respect and tolerance to build an intercultural classroom. Therefore, the university programs show the importance of this competence for teacher training. Hence, this study analyzed the syllabus and the relevance of intercultural competence in the classroom successfully. However, they could have involved the actual classes verifying if what the syllabus established was also applied to them. Moreover, one noticed that the study does not propose or examine all the implications of the ICC during the teaching preparation; thus, interviews collect surface information about the knowledge pre-service teachers could have had about it. Lastly, this is the same impression

perceived during the analysis of the didactic materials to foster ICC since the research focuses on the structure of activities rather than the content.

Equally important, a study called *A proposal to improve intercultural communicative competence through videos in an English program of a private university* was carried out by Néstor Julián Jaramillo Ante in 2015. The population was 53 students (32 men and 21 women) from a private university in Cali, Colombia. Furthermore, qualitative, and quantitative approaches were used. The main objective of the research was to improve the awareness of the ICC in English students using TV series and movie activities. The materials were movies and TV series (*Modern Family, the Big Bang Theory,* and *Reservoir Dogs*). The data collection instruments were surveys (diagnosis and perceptions survey) and journals.

In conclusion, the author establishes that using movies and TV series helps to develop the ICC as the students could approach foreign cultures, improve their cultural awareness and motivation, and improve verbal and nonverbal communication skills. Finally, the author considers that the ICC must be developed in an EFL classroom as it allows people to face different communication situations with other cultures. Thus, the researcher shows relevance in the students' opinions to create the didactic material and activities. However, the main focus was the American culture and their perceptions without considering a more diverse cultural selection; hence, this could stop students from interacting with other cultures and analyzing them critically and acquiring tolerant thinking.

Afterward, a study done by Luis Fernando Gómez Rodríguez called *Relational teaching: A way to foster EFL learners' intercultural communicative competence through literary short stories* in 2014. Furthermore, it is an action research project aimed at 23 undergraduate students from the seventh semester of a public university in Bogota, Colombia. The project's main objective was to foster the ICC with the use of authentic multicultural

stories implementing the relational teaching approach. Hence, the research was done with the related teaching approach and the use of three multicultural short stories from the U.S. (Sandra Cisneros, "*Woman Hollering Creek*"; Bernard Malamud, "*The First Seven Years*"; Dick Gregory, "*Shame*"). The students had two weekly sessions and needed to read the material beforehand and fill out a study guide. Also, the data collection materials were note fields, student journal entries, semi-structured interviews, and lastly, the student responses (artifacts). The sessions were carried out with multiple discussions in class around the topic of the stories: gender roles, discrimination, prejudice, and family conflicts.

Therefore, evidence illustrates that using the relational teaching approach and authentic texts motivated students to express their opinions and achieve critical thinking. Students were able to establish topics of connection among different cultures as a result of the interpretation of texts. Another finding was that students became promoters of social justice against unfair and radical cultural beliefs, thanks to a critical analysis of literary short stories. Moreover, the study showed that students improve their teaching practices as the EFL classroom can be a space where teachers can foster ICC and not only focus on grammar and language skills, but it becomes a critical environment. In fact, this study demonstrates positive implications since learners reflect on their own and other cultures; however, one considers that the cultures depicted in the literary texts tend to be mainstream, and they are announced from the second and third-generation immigrants' experiences. Thus, it would be advised to use authentic African, Jewish, and Mexican cultural texts from the point of view of the nationals to contrast their experiences and worldviews to provide the students with another perspective to compare cultural behaviors and analyze the differences.

At the same time, a study entitled *An Approach to the Concept of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)* was done by Julián Martinez in 2014. It was a

documentary research review, and its main objective was to reflect on the contributions and limitations of communicative competence and present a critical perspective of the ICC in foreign language teaching. The document was a state-of-the-art that aims to show the multiple dimensions involved in the ICC, that's why the study is divided into six parts: communicative competence, intercultural communicative competence, intercultural speaker, intercultural teacher, intercultural communication, and conclusion. In each of these sections, the author explores diverse perspectives that have built this ICC theory.

Hence, the study highlights the importance of interculturality in the classroom due to its ability to create a relation between cultures, values, and beliefs that can invite the student to reflect, compare, and assume a critical position in order to understand another culture. This intercultural approach implies a critical attitude towards society, and it can become a relevant part of the foreign language class as it allows self-reflection and the acquisition of a positive vision of the differences between cultures. Therefore, the study has a thematic division that allows the connection with the teacher labor as it exposes the advantages of implementing the intercultural focus in the classroom, but it mainly lacks research and analyzes the advances that have been done in Colombia regarding the ICC.

Further, a study carried out by Alba Olaya and Luis Fernando Gómez Rodríguez called *Exploring EFL Pre-Service Teachers' Experience with Cultural Content and Intercultural Communicative Competence at Three Colombian Universities* in 2013. It was a diagnostic study with a qualitative approach. The investigation was applied to 51 pre-service students from three universities in Bogotá, Colombia (two public universities and one private university). Thus, the main objective was to diagnose perceptions, knowledge, and attitudes pre-service EFL teachers possessed regarding the ICC and culture in their English classes. The researchers selected three data collection instruments to help them obtain the information

needed: the first one was a questionnaire that focused on knowledge, perception, and attitudes that students had towards culture, the second was an individual semi-structured interview in English to expose them to the target language and finally, a documentary analysis of the study plans of the programs of students.

Consequently, the researchers divided the findings into five categories: perception, knowledge, and attitudes towards culture and ICC, cultural contents reviewed in and outside of the English classroom, the importance of incorporating culture in the EFL classroom, pre-service teachers' preferences about cultures to be studied and methodologies and resources used to teach and learn the culture. Hence, the study indicated that the programs included surface culture aspects, but there was a lack of deep ones. Students also need more preparation to have the ability to interpret and compare cultural content in order to have better training in interculturality and to be ready to teach. Therefore, the ICC in these universities is developing roughly without delving into deeper factors, and they need to start creating open and tolerant atmospheres as students still display some stereotypes and misconceptions. In fact, the study asserts when analyzing the study plans of the university programs as well as considering the student's perceptions to demonstrate the lack of profound cultural aspects in classes. Nevertheless, there is a lack of recommendations and lesson planning proposals to improve ICC implementation both in educational university programs and pre-service teachers' instruction.

Moreover, a study done by Luis Fernando Gómez Rodríguez called *Enhancing intercultural competence through U.S. multicultural literature in the EFL classroom* in 2013. It was an action research project, the participants were 23 students from the seventh semester of a public university in Bogotá, Colombia. Accordingly, the study objective was to demonstrate the impact of including authentic material in the EFL classroom as a way to

enhance ICC. The project was developed with two main approaches: contextualization of contact zones and engagement of debate and conflict. Gomez used three stories (Sandra Cisneros, "*Woman Hollering Creek"*; Bernard Malamud, "*The First Seven Years";* Alice Walker's, "*Everyday Use"*) and study guides for each text. Students had 2 weeks to develop the activities of each story, six weeks in total. Moreover, the researcher selects the following data collection instruments: field notes from observations, student journal entries, students' responses to a question debated in class, and a semi-structured interview.

Thus, the study proved that students become critical readers that engage, interpret, and discuss diverse topics. Students learned about the ICC as well as acquired awareness of their learning process. Another finding was that learners discuss critical matters such as discrimination, marginalization, generation gaps, gender, and social inequality, and imposed cultural constructs. Finally, the study showed the importance of considering the student's opinions when creating the materials and developing the class as the pedagogical practice was meaningful for them. Consequently, the approach selection was a wise decision to foster critical thinking through the analysis, comparison, and discussion of deep culture topics. Although, it is necessary to include an intertextual analysis among texts to recognize the influence connections between American Culture and alternate cultures within the US. Moreover, learners acquire motivation thanks to the texts' corpus, strengthening the ICC development and linguistics skills.

Finally, a study entitled "*Fostering intercultural communicative competence through reading authentic literary texts in an advanced Colombian EFL classroom: A constructivist Perspective* was done by Luis Fernando Gómez Rodríguez in 2012. It was an action research project implemented for a group of 23 students from 18 to 22 years old at a public university in Bogotá, Colombia. The study's main objective was to demonstrate how multicultural texts

and their analysis, through inquiry-based, dialogical, transactional, and content-based constructivist approaches, are crucial means to develop intercultural competence in the EFL. Furthermore, the study was carried out during the semester, and four short stories were used (John Steinbeck: "*The Chrysanthemums*"; Alice Walker: "*Every use*"; Sandra Cisneros: "*Eleven*"; Bernard Malamud: "*The first seven years*"). Some activities included study guides, dialogues, parallel exercises, and discussions. Correspondingly, data was gathered right after class activities and was systematized in direct observations' field notes, in-depth interviewing transcriptions, and three journals; finally, all the information was analyzed and compared based on a triangulation process.

Data revealed that the aforementioned constructive approaches constitute a starting point to improve teaching practices within the ELF since they foster meaningful negotiation, as well as construct knowledge memorably and meaningfully. Likewise, results indicate that as long as teachers provide proper assistance, students understand authentic texts easily. Including literature in the EFL classroom is an ideal means to enhance intercultural communicative competence. Moreover, with an appropriate constructivist approach, EFL learners can potentially build language and cultural knowledge through a meaning negotiation procedure by placing the language in context. Hence, the use of the constructivist approach was successful since students were able to build their cultural grounding. One aspect to consider is that there could be other didactic materials to complement the text, considering that the research focuses mainly on reading, writing, and speaking English, but it is significant to train listening comprehension in the target language.

CHAPTER V

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The following chapter introduces the analysis procedure to examine data compiled throughout the research. Similarly, it displays the categories of analysis, which emerged from the review of the documents that composed this state-of-the-art project.

Procedures for Data Analysis

The research development was sequential and started in March 2021. In the beginning, a search was carried out by selecting documents from various university repositories and academic publications from March to May 2021. Researchers established requirements for the selection of them: documents must be a product of recent research, at least during the last 10 years, related to the research question to use them fruitfully and be applied in higher education in Colombia. Then, each document was read with the goal of searching for elements that connect with the main topic; nevertheless, some of them brought newer insights or perspectives to the investigation. Afterward, the data analysis and depletion were managed between August to November 2022.

All in all, the method to analyze and distinguish the emerging categories was the grounded approach. The theory constitutes a guideline to develop an integrated set of concepts providing a theoretical explanation of social phenomena. Likewise, it serves to explain and describe findings derived from data collected during the investigation (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Therefore, the categories were not pre-established beforehand, they emerged from the similitudes and deviations that were found during the organizing and analyzing process.

Furthermore, to propose the categories, researchers act following the three stages proposed by Corbin and Strauss (1990): open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. In the first stage, open coding, after reading the documents, the documents were categorized into groups to compare and contrast the gathered information initially. Secondly, the axial coding allowed us to start making connections between the similarities found previously to find how the documents and data could be grouped into categories. Lastly, with the selective coding step, the subcategories that emerged were connected to three core categories based on the type of data collected in the interest of organizing all the documents.

Categories of Analysis

Essentially, the categories of analysis were built based on the documents selected and the results of the rubrics as part of the instruments. Therefore, the categories will correspond to the core and specific objectives of the study. The main objective is to analyze documents that report information of the ICC implementation in order to describe what has been done in this regard in the EFL classroom. The specific objectives were; firstly, to identify the strategies and methodologies that have been used to approach the ICC in the classroom; secondly, to examine the language skills that have been developed with the ICC and its approach proposal in the EFL classroom; and thirdly, to determine students' perceptions about the implementation of the ICC in the EFL classroom to enhance critical thinking and promote cultural awareness. In such a manner, the following categories were established concerning such aims; in order to answer the research question that was settled at the beginning of this study.

The first category named *Strategies and methods to foster ICC* emerged as a response to the first specific objective of the study, regarding a revision of what strategies and methodologies have been used to approach the ICC. Afterward, the second category titled

The use of ICC to prepare intercultural and competent speakers, is related to the second specific objective, which was to examine the language skills that were developed with the ICC and its purpose of approaching it in class, and finally, the third category was called *Students' perceptions about the ICC implementation in the EFL classroom;* indeed, this category was framed on the third specific objective of the research, which was to determine students' perceptions about the implementation of the ICC in the EFL classroom in aims to enhance critical and cultural thinking.

That said, for the first category, three subcategories were established: *Exploring multicultural literature, Comparing Cultural products' effectiveness*, and *Approaching teaching methods in the class.* Besides, for the second category, four subcategories were designated: *Enhancing speaking and listening silks, Discovering narratives through reading and writing skills*, and *Lack of nonverbal communication*. Subsequently, for the third category, *three subcategories were settled: Finding stereotypes, Developing critical thinking*, and *Being culturally aware.*

As revealed, intending to provide a better understanding of how the categories were established and organized, the following table disclosed the categories of analysis of this study.

Table 2

Detailed information of the categories rising from the analysis.
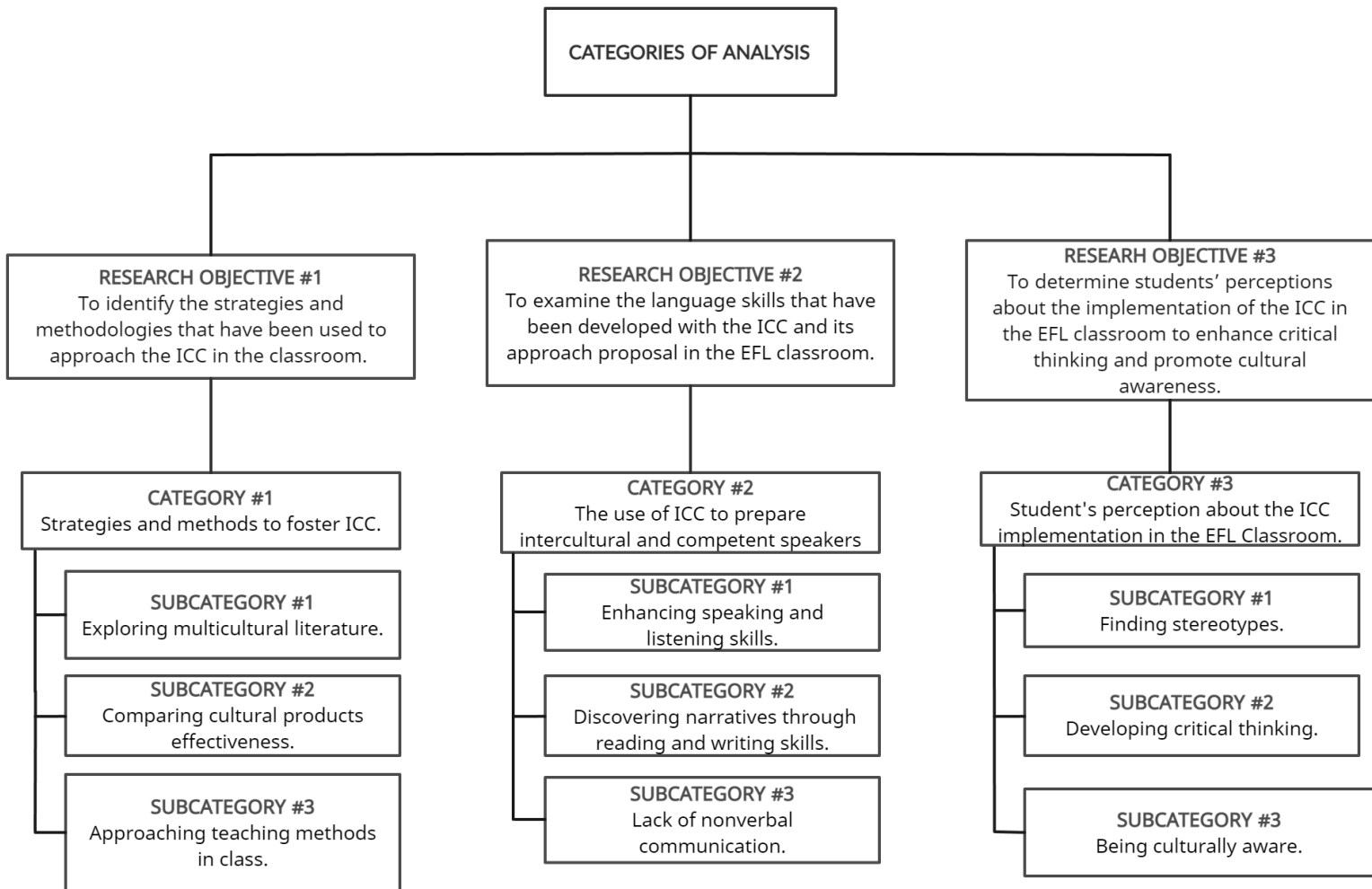
Note. Based on "Enhancing Speaking Skills through ICTS", by J. Peña, 2022, p. 36.

Category #1: Strategies and methods to foster ICC.

This category describes the strategies and methods utilized by researchers to implement, analyze and recommend the ICC inclusion in the English programs with the aim of finding effective mechanisms to enhance cultural awareness, openness, readiness, self-discovering, and tolerance between distinct cultural identities with their own. Data evidenced that the strategies and methods were fulfilled through the use of several materials like textbooks, short stories, storytelling, movies, music, photographs, newspapers, relational

method, and other elements that researchers managed to create to introduce the ICC during class time.

All in all, the Education Department of Alberta, Canada (2002) defined teaching strategies as "techniques… use to help students become independent, strategic learners. These strategies become learning strategies when students independently select the appropriate ones and use them effectively to accomplish tasks or meet goals" (p. 67); on the other hand, a teaching method is used "for the effective presentation of the specific content of the subject which helps the student to understand it" and its emphasis laid over the instructional steps taken for the proper presentation (Grill, & Kusum, 2016). Thus, three subcategories came out from this category: *Exploring multicultural literature, Comparing cultural products' effectiveness, and Approaching teaching methods in class.*

Exploring multicultural literature. The first subcategory of analysis refers to the literature usage within the ELF to enhance and improve the intercultural competence of learners by approaching authentic language and multicultural texts. Moreno (2019) supports the previous idea by considering literature "as beneficial in the acquisition of language, but also in the acquisition of knowledge about the foreign language, showing the learners the target identities, beliefs and values". Therefore, data displayed literature helps to explore mindsets and world views, as the ensuing fragments show.

The literary text, as a cultural artifact, offers a place of dialogue in which we can identify ourselves as emotional creatures, stage personal stories and recognize ourselves as the product of a system of values... This activity could be improved if we propose… "texts... that introduced provocative topics... inclusion of unfriendly literary characters with whom it may be difficult to identify, or for the presence of narrators whose reliability is doubtful" (Hoff, 2016, p. 64). (translation by authors)

[Research study #3: State of the art. Lines 25-30]

...Transformational multiculturalism... does not imply a naïve and idealistic celebration of the plural voices and viewpoints of literary manifestations. Instead, it initiates a critical

exploration of the cultural identities embedded in American literature, a literature that has always been characterized as multicultural.

[Research study #11: State of the art. Lines 20-27]

literature…. contributes to transformation of culture through time,... help students to become critically intercultural individuals. Several scholars….agree that teaching literature in the EFL setting can contribute enormously…. First, through literature students can improve their language competence because literature is an authentic language in use. Second, literature is a means through which students can acquire literary knowledge and reading and interpretative skills through the negotiation of multiple meanings.

[Research study #14: State of the art. Lines 86-87 & 1-12]

Nevertheless, in several incidents, the literary approach did not fully raise intercultural awareness owing to its application in EFL class. Thus, data reveals that, currently, textbook activities, literary workshops, and selection restrain the intercultural perusal between dissimilar cultures. Then, learners tend to discuss surface cultural topics that perpetuate prejudice and stereotypes, evidencing a lack of social practice analysis and critical thinking.

The fostering of intercultural awareness is relegated to informative activities such as festivals, basic geography, or customs, among others. Such topics only cover superficial facts about the target culture, normally heavily influenced by stereotypical misconceptions

[Research #1: State of the art. Lines 9-12]

ICC cannot be enhanced by just identifying and learning by heart lists of general facts of surface culture… [it] requires a deep and "dynamic interactive process of intercultural relationships" as individuals from different cultures confront "a relatively more abstract level of cultural difference, ...develop empathy (the ability to look at things from the perspective of our cultural hosts), and learn to construct cultural difference better" (Shaules, 2007, p. 100).

[Research #5: State of the art. Lines 22-29]

In such wise, the ICC inclusion within the class should consider the establishment of considerations for the literary pieces selection, since the main goal is to foster and guide students to experience an intercultural analysis, as well as to read narratives from different perspectives to enrich their worldview. Accordingly, the data collected pointed out several

requirements some researchers considered to select intercultural texts in their investigations as shown in the following extracts.

(the literary piece) is part of an Anglophone literary canon that recognizes and legitimizes ethnic diversity and conflicting identities. . . . All this diversity allowed us to explore, not only the recognition of lexical varieties and discursive strategies, but also, and above all, the discussion of issues such as power relations, and the construction of identities. (translation by authors)

[Research study #3: State of the art. Lines 20-21, 25-27]

The first text was a compilation of real short stories where people narrated cultural misunderstandings they had. The purpose was for students to identify the origin of the misunderstanding. The send text was a *DO's and DON'Ts when traveling to the US* where some tips are presented.

[Research study #6: State of the art. Lines 20-24]

Multicultural literary texts (Sanders, 2009) constitute a body of literature that focuses on underrepresented groups whose racial, ethnic, religious, and social conditions have been marginalized by a dominant culture.

[Research study #11: State of the art. Lines 11-15]

In this way, one determines that literature and, specifically, multicultural texts ensure an intercultural approach in the EFL as they portray distinct perspectives and worldviews which students analyze and compare with their own one. But the acquirement of intercultural communicative competence relies upon the objective of activities that includes these texts, since as proved before if the books are not utilized with intercultural purposes and integrated with discussion, they will impact significantly in the student's language learning,

Comparing Cultural products effectiveness. This subcategory presents the findings in reference to the use of cultural products to approach the ICC in the classroom, intending to improve language skills through authentic cultural material. According to Luo (2014) the use of popular culture in the EFL classroom explores "how this resource, supported by a contemporarily accepted learning theory, can be used to facilitate learning" (p.1). As well as,

enhancing and motivating students in the classroom; therefore, teachers have adopted popular culture not just as warm-up activities but activities that take up the whole class (Baoan, 2008). Hence, data illustrated that cultural products can be a useful tool in the EFL classroom that can provide dynamism to teaching English and improving language skills, at the same time, as noted in the following excerpts.

They propose that the materials present world realities that can help students develop critical consciousness, develop social and language skills, engage them in the cycle of reflection and action, and that include the learner's own culture. (...) The materials I selected included two video segments, two sets of images with their corresponding descriptions, and two written texts.

[Research study #6: State of the art. Lines 14-19]

TV programs and movies are a great opportunity for students that have not been abroad to see and experience situations that they will rarely see or live in Colombia. (...) doing activities using a movie or TV program that students enjoy while learning and improving the intercultural communicative competence leads students to a more vivid experience than just using reading, listening or speaking activities without using videos.

[Research study #10: State of the art. Lines 3-5 & 9-12]

Students at the three universities (33 participants out of 51) reported that videos and movies are the most used resources to study culture in class. However, they did not give concrete examples of those visual materials. Listening activities rank second place.

[Research study #13: State of the art. Lines 26-31]

In this fashion, it can be seen that movies, videos, images, and series are one of the main materials used to develop the ICC in the EFL classroom, considered authentic material that can expose students to new realities and topics resulting in cultural exposure and enjoyment of the activities proposed which can lead to a higher involvement of students in the class.

The previous examples evidenced that these EFL learners started to develop ICC through international news as they were aware that these documents enabled them to gain new cultural knowledge about contentious viewpoints and behaviors related to race, segregation, domination, and religion as conceived by other groups different from their own cultural environment.

[Research study #5: State of the art. Lines 1-6]

In the first workshop students used local and foreign newspapers as cultural products in order to find cultural similarities and differences between the two products with the intention to foster students' conception of local and foreign cultures through the comparison.

[Research study #8: State of the art. Lines 41-48]

In addition, arts can be applied in order to attend to multiple students' learning styles. (...) the manifestation of arts within the classroom presents many advantages, such as the easy access that everybody can have to arts (independently of its economic status, social context, etc.); and one of the most important things is that different expressions of arts (music, painting, theater, movies, literature) are part of the daily life, therefore, all the people are connected with at least one of those expressions.

[Research study #7: State of the art. Lines 14-19]

As it has been exposed, these extracts allude to the material that teachers used to implement the ICC in the classroom in order to expose students to distinct cultures through authentic material that portrays the realities of those countries. In this sense, data showed that newspapers, movies, series, images, videos, music, and art are considered cultural products of big success in the class as it also allows them to be involved and motivated in the activities promoting the learning of English and culture.

Approaching teaching methods in class. This subcategory intends to demonstrate several teaching approaches that have helped to implement ICC. In such manner, The University at Buffalo (n.d.) as "techniques used to help students achieve learning outcomes…. Teaching methods help….: master the content of the course learn how to apply the content in particular contexts". Besides, data proved that teaching methods tend to be diverse in styles and provide a degree of flexibility, permitting them to alter the task of teaching (Banning, n.d.). Therefore, ICC inclusion could involve various teaching approaches with specific objectives to achieve, as is seen in the following excerpts.

The type of approach used was phenomenology because the author focused on individual experiences, beliefs and perceptions students had about the intercultural communicative aspects. Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009).

[Research study #10: State of the art. Lines 9-12]

Keating (2004) introduces Relational Teaching as one classroom approach that observes literature and cultures through history in a critical and objective way, in which the past is the result of an intimate link of what happens to individuals in the present. (...) By commonalities, Keating refers to complex points of connection that enable students to negotiate sameness, similarity, and difference.

[Research study #11: State of the art. Lines 17-22 & 18-21]

(...) the so-called intercultural approach of social skills considers that intercultural competence consists of "being able to behave appropriately in the intercultural encounter, that is, according to the norms and conventions of the country, and trying to pretend to be another member of the community".

[Research study #12: State of the art. Lines 38-41]

These two approaches, Interaction of Contact Zones and Engagement in Debate, aim at helping students to become critically intercultural beings. (...) McGee and Banks (1995) explain that equity pedagogy refers to teaching strategies and classroom environments that help students from diverse cultural backgrounds to acquire the appropriate knowledge, skills, and attitudes to deal successfully within a pluralistic society.

[Research study #14: State of the art. Lines 37-39 & 1-9]

These fragments manifest how the ICC has been implemented in the EFL using multiple teaching approaches in accordance with the specific goal that the teacher aims to achieve. The students, while being exposed to the approaches, were able to develop critical thinking, express their ideas, and be involved in the class, as well as compare the target and their own cultures. Therefore, the teaching methods' involvement assists the lesson planning to incorporate the ICC through diversified activities.

Category #2: The use of ICC to prepare intercultural and competent speakers.

This category exposes how ICC implementation increases language skills development to reach proficiency in almost every linguistic domain. Accordingly, through this state-of-the-art analysis, the selected data demonstrated that ICC helps teachers improve

listening, speaking, reading, and writing due to the type of activities proposed and the integration with intercultural content. Nevertheless, there is an evident lack of nonverbal communication emphasis; thus, the skill remains stagnant.

Traditionally, improving language skills facilitates communication with the target culture. Thus, schools have tended to integrate the four skills in order to instruct competent speakers; consequently, there are two tendencies in the classroom: speaking and listening, and reading and writing activities. According to Manaj (2015) "these skills should be addressed in a way that helps students meet the standards… and develop their communicative competence gradually."; listening and speaking foster oral communication, and writing and reading strengthen written communication. Besides, nonverbal communication corresponds to the "behavior of the face, body or voice… everything but the word" (Hall et al. 2018). Hence, three subcategories are proposed in this category: *Enhancing speaking and listening skills, Discovering narratives through reading and writing skills,* and *Lack of nonverbal communication.*

Enhancing speaking and listening skills. This subcategory sets forth the data compilation concerning speaking and listening strategies development in the EFL classroom. The mentioned linguistics competencies were carried out under the ICC framework in which students acquired intercultural knowledge while strengthening English oral communication. Therefore, data proved that the group discussion was the more relevant strategy used in the class due to its goal of coming "to some agreement regarding a particular topic or issue… the general idea is that each participant can act to stimulate ideas in the other people present and that by a process of discussion, the collective view becomes greater…" (Poulson, 1996). Group discussion utilization is evident in the subsequent selection.

A preference of teachers for those activities that stimulate the expression of opinions and points of view on different topics stands out.

[Research study #3: State of the art. Lines 38-39]

Through a series of activities inquiring as to how much they knew about other cultures (e.g., class debates on a series of generating statements, written and spoken reflections, class discussions based on videos or reading excerpts, etc.) and how interested they were in getting to know other countries.

[Research study #4: State of the art. Lines 11-16]

Then, school students discussed in groups about the differences and similarities of people's traditions from different places of the world. In the discussion they included their families tradition at Christmas time. Conversations about issues of identity frequently lead to deeper dialogues about students' own backgrounds and the experiences of others.

[Research study #7: State of the art. Lines 8-16]

During the discussion of these commonalities, students worked in small groups and then held class discussions in which they presented their critical views regarding the intercultural issues reflected in the stories. Other times, students gave short presentations about the topics they had identified as important for class discussion and analysis.

[Research study #11: State of the art. Lines 79-83, 1-2]

From the field notes it was concluded that learners discussed in small groups and later as a whole class the cultural meaning of the story "Everyday Use".

[Research study #15: State of the art. Lines 6-9]

In this degree, discussion group activities not only permitted the oral communication practice in the EFL classroom but also lowered the affective filter in the classroom which encouraged reserved students to participate in the discussions and express their ideas. According to Cuartero (2023), the affective filter involves "how learners feel about the target language, impacts motivation, and eventually allows access to the process of acquiring a… language…., propose a state of relaxation and a comfortable setting for learning, which lowers to a minimum and maximizes learning". Consequently, data collected demonstrate the impact of the listening and writing activities regarding the affective filter in the next extracts.

Whole class discussions might frighten those shy students, who would prefer to stay quiet than take the risk of making a mistake. However, I also realized that these students participated more when talking in small group discussions.. Arguado (2003) asserts that… the teacher must allow the small groups in order to facilitate dialogue (p. 94).

[Research study #6: State of the art. Lines 17-22]

The school students in this activity used different regional dialects to perform the roles. Some of them talked as paisas, others as tolimenses and so on. It was interesting for them to recognize their own dialects while talking in English.

[Research study #7: State of the art. Lines 4-9]

They [students] also expressed that the class offered them a safe atmosphere of respect and acceptance in which they spoke freely and revealed their perceptions and literary reflections without feeling scared of making mistakes.

[Research study #15: State of the art. Lines 51-55]

Oral communication in the EFL classroom has been developed to a certain extent, along with the ICC implementation. The core trend is to use discussion groups to make students feel comfortable speaking without being scared or timid. In addition, data compilation demonstrates that the main goal of listening and speaking activities is based on the use of the language in a real context and they do not focus on grammar revision, but the message effectiveness in the discussions.

Discovering narratives through reading and writing skills. This subcategory involves the reading and writing skills that were developed in the EFL class through the ICC implementation. The reading and writing skills "require…. knowledge,.... cognitive and linguistic processes—such as knowledge of vocabulary, spelling patterns, text structures, and syntax—.... so learning and insights in one area can lead to learning and insights in the other. In fact, research has shown that reading improves with frequent writing" (National Research Council, 2012). Consequently, data collected confirmed that reading has worked in the EFL class with various types of texts; however, writing is mostly developed through journal entries.

(...) literature, that window always open to the possibility of establishing contact with other places and times, can help to promote intercultural reflection among students. (translation by the authors).

[Research study #3: State of the art. Lines 25-27]

Teaching literature in the EFL setting can contribute enormously to the learning process of students in two main emphases. First, through literature students can improve their language competence because literature is authentic language in use. Second, literature is a means through which students can acquire literary knowledge and reading and interpretative skills through the negotiation of multiple meanings.

[Research study #14: State of the art. Lines 4-12]

To this extent, it is shown that reading can help them to reflect on cultural practices

but at the same time, they are able to improve their language and acquired knowledge with

the use of authentic material.

(...) students should be exposed to different types of readings like textbooks, newspapers and magazines, because they offer opportunities for the negotiation of meaning while learning about different cultural representations.

[Research study #10: State of the art. Lines 7-10]

In general, all kinds of reading materials such as newspapers, magazines, and books are implicitly loaded with diverse levels of cultural expression because, over all, they are the product of a particular community essentially depicting cultural content.

[Research study #15: State of the art. Lines 35-36 &1-4]

(...) reading literary texts that are culturally relevant provides routes for students to acquire knowledge and to establish cultural connections thus affirming their own culture and learning about cultures other than their own.

[Research study #11: State of the art. Lines 1-5]

Instead of reading the story in a congratulatory and ahistorical way, the student became very critical when she explained that patriarchal power still prevails in contemporary societies in which marginalized women live under men's offensive control through intimidation and fear.

[Research study #11: State of the art. Lines 31-37]

In this way, reading multiple types of texts that display the culture allows students to

understand the cultural practices as well as make connections and comparison between the target

culture and their own culture acquiring a critical point of view when reading the material

provided. On the other hand, data indicated that students were asked to do a very low number of

creative writing activities where they could explore their imagination and use the language they

have acquired.

For this particular activity, students were asked to reflect upon the topic discussed during the face-to-face sessions and write a short post about it. Then, they were asked to read at least two of their classmates' posts in order to encourage discussion.

[Research study #4: State of the art. Lines 19-24]

(..) asked them to write a short Christmas story including their family tradition (...) School students wrote their stories and share them with their classmates with an enthusiastic attitude.

[Research study #7: State of the art. Lines 12-21]

In the questionnaires, learners wrote that this topic was an important deep cultural issue that enhanced their ICC because they were influenced by their cultural and personal views on marriage.

[Research study #5: State of the art. Lines 31-33]

Thus, data showed that most of the writing activities were journal entries as students

need to make reflections on what has been done in the class with the ICC approach and

multicultural material and write about how they felt developing the activities that the teachers

proposed.

Students were asked to write a journal after the literary analysis of each story was completed. I also collected their response papers (artifacts) about the analysis of the stories which took place once students had shared their opinions orally with the whole class. Those responses consisted of answering a question of what had been debated in class so that they provided their own views and conclusions individually based on the class discussion.

[Research study #14: State of the art. Lines 2-10]

In the first workshop students used local and foreign newspapers as cultural products in order to find cultural similarities and differences between the two products with the intention to foster students' conception of local and foreign cultures through the comparison. Then they wrote a reflective journal entry to record their experiences.

[Research study #8: State of the art. Lines 1-10]

Participants also wrote brief critical response papers about the topics addressed in class for each story, dealing with aspects of interculturality as the ones described in Table 1.

[Research study #11: State of the art. Lines 2-6]

This kind of source allowed participants to produce reflective opinions related to the experience. Learners were required to write three journal entries during the pedagogical intervention, all of them anonymous entries.

[Research study #15: State of the art. Lines 26-30]

As it is demonstrated, reading and writing skills were developed in the classroom however, the reading skill had more emphasis as the students were exposed to multiple types of texts that allowed them to improve their language skills and also gained cultural knowledge. Besides, the writing skill was mostly used in the journal entries that were a reflection on the student experience, only a few researchers allow students to explore creative writing in the activities.

Lack of nonverbal communication. This subcategory refers to the nonverbal communication neglect evidenced in the ICC interventions within the EFL classroom. This sort of communication is understood as "the use of paralinguistic expressions and bodily movements such as body posture…, gestures, eye contact, body contact, and facial expression... one might even suggest that every nonverbal signal of human beings is a potential medium of communication" (Elfatihi, 2005). Subsequently, data illustrated that researchers and the population recognize that acquiring a nonverbal skill is relevant to be proficient, as well as culturally aware of social practices. Nevertheless, none of the research compilation includes nonverbal activities. The following fragments displayed the aforementioned description.

[Candidate teacher journal entry] "Well, in this case we need to keep in mind that the language do you speak change the way you think, so it is necessary to be aware that...I think that we should teach, for example, non-verbal communication change in different countries. So, if we are going to travel abroad, we respect those cultures."

[Research study #1: State of the art. Lines 4-6]

Students needed to improve their knowledge about differences in verbal and nonverbal communication skills from other cultures. For instance, students could improve their knowledge about differences in the way Colombian people apologize and other cultures do in specific situations.

[Research study #10: State of the art. Lines 1-4]

The EFL learner must learn to discover the differences and similarities between their interlocutor's nonverbal behavior system and their own, to explain their own nonverbal behavior system, and to negotiate a nonverbal behavior system that is satisfactory for themselves and their interlocutor. (translation by authors)

[Research study #12: State of the art. Lines 10-16]

In this way, although nonverbal communication is considered a fundamental part of the ICC, researchers, and teachers have limited its integration within intercultural activities. Even, there is an acknowledgment of its beneficial implementation since it encourages a critical exercise of comparison between one culture and another one permitting the negotiation of meaning; nevertheless, it has not been executed enough in the EFL classroom.

Category #3: Students' perceptions about the ICC implementation in the EFL classroom.

This category exposes the students' perceptions about the implementation of the ICC in the EFL classroom regarding developing critical cultural awareness when interacting with people from other cultures. Accordingly, the studies selected for this state of the art provided information about how the ICC has been implemented and how the students considered the approach of it in the classroom as well as considering the results obtained from the several interventions that the researchers did to enhance the critical and cultural awareness ability.

Certainly, Jones et al. (2021) explained that students' perceptions about the course become important when designing and applying the activities because the students' perceptions are related to motivation, effort, and achievement in the course (p. 1). Notably, the students can become helpful participants in the creation of activities as they would be involved in providing their input and proposing activities that they may like and enjoy developing in the classroom. All in all, three subcategories emerged from this category:

Finding stereotypes, Developing critical thinking, and *Being culturally aware* which will explain respectively.

Finding stereotypes. This category sets out the benefits of ICC enactment in the EFL classroom that lead students to reflect upon the stereotypes. Stereotyping is considered a way to reduce people "to a few, simple, essential characteristics, which are represented as fixed by Nature… Stereotypes get hold of the few 'simple , vivid , memorable…. characteristics about a person , [to] reduce everything… to those traits , exaggerate and simplify them, and fix them without change." (Hall, 1997) In consonance with it, data analysis proved that the participants were able to acknowledge that texts, movies, music, and people's perceptions were crossed by stereotypes, in almost all the ICC interventions. Besides, they were able to remark on the implications it provokes like the following citation displays.

For instance, the news about racism and racial tension in today's US, allowed them to analyze how stereotypes imposed on African-Americans were similar to those imposed on black people in their own country, Colombia: Many American think that blacks are dirty, lazy, and less intelligent than whites. It is a similar opinion we have of blacks in our country (Field notes, March 26).

[Research study #5: State of the art. Lines 6-11]

We can see that students defined stereotypes as false or concepts about a person or group…. students expressed that these false ideas came from the media and our culture… and gave some examples to illustrate the issue. This awareness was evident when they expressed embarrassment about how they reproduced typical stereotypes based on people's appearance.

[Research study #6: State of the art. Lines 2-6]

The student recognized that in many instances human beings discriminate and exclude people from their own cultural or a different cultural background because people have internalized radical prejudices based on social class, economic position, and race.

[Research study #11: State of the art. Lines 13-18]

The student recognized through the story that in many occasions we exclude people from our own or different cultural backgrounds because we depend on unjust prejudices.

[Research study #14: State of the art. Lines 13-16]

Although students are aware of the stereotypes, the data collected lays out a learner's tendency of underestimating their identities when it comes to comparing them with the anglophone cultures. This is concerning since the ICC encourages not to observe the target cultures and their own through misrepresentations.

Jacinto mentioned that during his interaction, via chat, with people from other countries, he observed that other cultures are more motivated and disciplined when learning a language while Colombians are less committed to practice, this affecting the learning process… these statements show the way Jacinto conceives other cultures in general… as superior in terms of discipline to learn, while he attributes the opposite values to his own culture.

[Research study #6: State of the art. Lines 18-20, 4-6]

In the video shown in this activity, students can see the negative stereotypes foreign people usually have about Colombian people. Then, students will know how it feels when other people generalize a particular group and culture, and students will be able to give their opinions about this issue.

[Research study #10: State of the art. Lines 7-10]

Students also interpreted those situations and compared them to situation where they stereotype other people. For instance, when students stereotype in a negative way people from Medellin, Bogota, etc.

[Research study #11: State of the art. Lines 21-25]

To this extent, the revisited documents highlight the importance of the teacher's role to mitigate the stereotypes that students possess about cultures since they become the mediator between learners' identities and other ones, as well as the facilitator of activities that challenge students' cultural preconceptions.

Teachers are called to "help students to rethink their preexisting opinions" (p. 178). Hence the importance of creating and maintaining an environment of trust in class, where there is the possibility of openly expressing the beliefs we have and where it is possible to recognize our own prejudices, stereotypes, ethnocentric attitudes and lack of empathy. (translation by authors)

[Research study #3: State of the art. Lines 8-12]

Teachers are called upon to find alternatives so that they help prospective EFL teachers to reduce false misrepresentations of other people through more pertinent materials in which cultural conflicts, behaviors, and ideologies can be discussed.

[Research study #13: State of the art. Lines 1-10]

That being so, the ICC application has helped students to realize the

misrepresentations they acquired of various communities and their own; however, some

learners conserved stereotypes of their culture, contradicting the ICC's intentions. Therefore,

the teacher's role is crucial to direct students to unlearn stereotypes to encourage tolerant and

respectful interactions with people from different sociocultural backgrounds.

Developing critical thinking. This subcategory expounds on the critical thinking that

students could develop during the classes and its implementations. Heard et. al (2020)

explained that critical thinking demands recognizing problems, gathering information,

recognizing assumptions and values, interpreting, comprehending, and using language,

drawing conclusions, and finally, reconstructing patterns of beliefs in light of personal

experiences (p. 12). This means that students use their experiences and knowledge to

comprehend, use, understand, and recollect information to build a system of beliefs and

thoughts. In this case, it has become a significant part of the EFL to approach critical thinking

using the ICC, which can be noticed in the next fragments.

Indeed, it is essential that they become efficient, critical, and active participants in cultural exchanges, being aware of their and others' attitudes, beliefs and behaviors.
[Research study #1: State of the art. Lines 1-2]

From the design of materials it is possible to promote in our students a critical thinking that allows them to question their cultural identity, it is in this questioning that this identity can be recognized as a multifaceted construct in constant transformation (translation by the authors).
[Research study #3: State of the art. Lines 28-30]

The concepts also argued for the relevance of reflecting upon cultures by assuming critical positions and not merely displaying a passive acceptance of promoting certain knowledge without considering its veracity and reliability.
[Research study #2: State of the art. Lines 16-19]

In such a way, data evidenced that students can foster critical thinking ability through the ICC implementation. Students were able to express themselves by assuming a critical position when being exposed to cultural practices, through the use of authentic materials they made comparisons and contrasted their own culture with the target culture.

However, it is also important to assume a critical perspective regarding one's own culture, values, and traditions. (...) In a specific post made by a couple of students (see Figure 5), it was possible to see how they critically analyzed typical aspects of their own cultures (Colombian and German) and addressed aspects that, to their view, are both positive and negative.

[Research study #4: State of the art. Lines 6-8 & 13-18]

In general, this finding showed that learners interpreted and evaluated critically controversial themes and values from other cultures associated with power, discrimination, gender, and marriage.

[Research study #5: State of the art. Lines 34-36]

On that basis, students discussed topics such as chauvinism, prejudices, stereotypes, and discrimination. Through these activities, they realized they were perpetrating those behaviors in their culture and assumed a critical position to unlearn these practices or replace them.

This argument shows that learners critically discussed important social issues such as the concern that when people are prejudiced, they are forever tarnished and condemned to keep that disgraceful condition, and it is very difficult for them to demonstrate that they can change.

[Research study #11: State of the art. Lines 13-19]

This response shows how participants were able to produce personal critical views about the situation of women in Latin American societies and about the situation of Cleófilas as an immigrant woman in the U.S. from the multicultural piece they had read.

[Research study #14: State of the art. Lines 1-6]

(..) the questions led them to construct critical analysis. Field notes show that the questions enabled learners to engage in discussion-based classes in which almost all students contributed significantly to the negotiation of meaning when giving their interpretations of the story.

[Research study #15: State of the art. Lines 12-18]

As demonstrated, data illustrated how the EFL students were familiarized and exposed to critical thinking with the implementations of ICC. They studied such topics as prejudices, discrimination, and chauvinism to make relations between their own and the target culture assuming a critical position in their behaviors as well as being able to identify those practices in the material given in the classroom.

Being culturally aware. This subcategory elucidates the awareness that students had or gained during the ICC application in the EFL classroom. As Quappe and Cantatore (2005) explain, cultural awareness involves the ability to become aware of our values, beliefs, and perceptions as well as contrasting the negative and positive aspects of the cultural differences that exist. In agreement, through the selected studies, students foster cultural awareness in their classes implemented with the ICC, as the next extracts display.

Communication is not a simple exchange of information, it involves sharing emotions, that is, being able to create a relationship of empathy. Communication leads to the ability to feel the emotion that another person experiences and is essential in many interpersonal relationships. Empathy is required for a better understanding of "the other" (translation by the authors).

[Research study #12: State of the art. Lines 10-14]

Culture is part of identity, and this is an element that every learner must know and maintain when immersed in another culture.

[Research study #1: State of the art. Lines 10-12]

Thus, data shows how the students were able to comprehend, gain cultural awareness through the multiple activities that were developed in the classroom. These activities included authentic material that gave the opportunity to approach the cultures in an open way understanding the differences and valued them.

(...) it was possible to identify that participants considered this competence as an ability required to be learned through an interaction with other cultures. (...) It was possible to identify that the participants considered it necessary to develop the ICC with the aim of learning and interacting with people from other cultures or from other countries.

[Research study #2: State of the art. Lines 4-6 & 15-17]

We identified that many of the activities associated with this dimension allow the student to recognize that thought is susceptible to transformation and that it is possible to change thanks to interaction with the other; that it is possible and desirable, for the sake of human coexistence, to move from the axis of one's own beliefs. (translation by the authors).

[Research study #3: State of the art. Lines 28-29]

According to the results students developed the ability to evaluate critically different perspectives in their own culture and other cultures. They reduced the use of stereotypes and prejudices.

[Research study #10: State of the art. Lines 9-11]

(...) one of the most enriching experiences of the implementation given that sharing about taboo topics (e.g., minorities, education and health issues, racism, gender issues, etc.) (...) It was decided to include such topics in order to encourage discussion that contributed to students' awareness regarding difference and to a more positivist perception of it.

[Research study #4: State of the art. Lines 1-5]

For instance, students recognized prejudices, problems, and stereotypes in both the

target culture and their own culture, acquiring sympathy for the situations that other people

might encounter due to their cultural background.

Clearly they wanted to express their ideas about the relationship between language and culture and the importance of using the intercultural communicative competence in their foreign language learning and use.

[Research study #8: State of the art. Lines 7-13]

This comment becomes resistant and disruptive thinking against traditional cultural constructs imposed by patriarchy. This and the previous examples also evidence that learners created positive attitudes of sympathy and readiness to understand the commonality topic mediated by the multicultural short story.

[Research study #11: State of the art. Lines 9-15]

Most students identified problematic representations, analyzed stereotypes they hold of other cultures, could determine the origin of other cultures' received ideas, expressed willingness to know more about other cultures through interaction, and showed autonomous curiosity about them and improved their communicative competence while discussing complex matters.

[Research study #6: State of the art. Lines 7-11]

These units of analysis demonstrate that learners recognized that the topics discussed in class helped them to create and strengthen responsiveness, sensitivity, and understanding to

aspects of culture and literature. The creation of attitudes such as empathy, curiosity, tolerance, and openness constitutes one of the major achievements in this research experience.

[Research study #14: State of the art. Lines 37-43]

However, cultural awareness in the ICC has not been fully developed in most contexts

as some researchers may agree. As a result, students do not have the appropriate space to

foster this ability.

This was also the opportunity to recognize that these participants have not had enough opportunities to become involved in situations more favorable to develop the ICC since their classes at university were approached toward other aspects of the communicative competence.

[Research study #2: State of the art. Lines 17-20

(...) there is a vague knowledge of the didactic strategies used for interculturality, this is due to the fact that the teachers in training do not see them explicitly in the syllabuses or in the classrooms, yet it can be said that some of them know that these didactic strategies for interculturality are of great importance to apply in their pedagogical practices (translation by the authors).

[Research study #9: State of the art. Lines 22-23 & 1-2]

(...) they need to be guided to acknowledge the significant role culture and intercultural awareness play in the process of communication and as part of their training to become teachers in the future.

[Research study #13: State of the art. Lines 18-21]

As it is displayed, data revealed that cultural awareness has been fostered in the EFL

classroom through the ICC and students have shown successful results in gaining sympathy

and openness to approach a different culture. However, some studies showed that the ICC and

cultural awareness still does not have enough space to be developed due to the reduced paths

to integrate interculturality inside the English classroom.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

As stated in the previous chapters, this state of art aimed to portray and analyze the documents that dealt with the role of ICC in the EFL classroom during the last ten years in Colombia. Accordingly, this final chapter presents the conclusions of the study as well as the implications that arose from the research, the limitations faced and some further research suggestions.

Conclusions

This qualitative state of the art aimed to analyze documents that reported information on the ICC implementation in order to describe what has been done in the EFL classroom. The research question that guided the study was: How has Intercultural Communicative Competence been approached in the EFL classrooms at university levels in Colombia during the last ten years? The research objectives that guided the study were:

1. To identify the strategies and methodologies that have been used to approach the ICC in the classroom.

2. To examine the language skills that have been developed with the ICC and its approach proposal in the EFL classroom.

3. To determine students' perceptions about the implementation of the ICC in the EFL classroom to enhance critical thinking and promote cultural awareness.

In response to the first specific objective of this study, data revealed that various methods, materials, and strategies were used to develop and enhance the ICC in class, being explicit in the use of multicultural texts as the first strategy. Students should be able to explore different mindsets and world views when exposed to the correct literary selection and

in accordance with the activities developed in class. However, due to the lack of activities with the multicultural texts that promoted critical thinking, awareness, and discussions, students did not fully develop the ICC as they remained to study the surface cultural aspects and maintained prejudices towards other cultures and their own.

The second strategy clarified that cultural products are a great tool to integrate ICC within the EFL classroom. Data showed that most of the pedagogic interventions tend to use movies, series, news, music, videos, and images to introduce cultural content to the students since they are authentic material that represents various realities from target cultures. Likewise, the mentioned products also motivated students and encouraged them to participate in class activities.

As to the methodologies, data clarified that due to the flexibility of the multiple methods, the inclusion of ICC in the class can be done with various approaches such as relational teaching, phenomenology, intercultural approach, the interaction of contact zones, and engaging in debate. This selection is based on the specific objective that the researcher/teacher aimed to achieve in the class with the diversity of activities.

Concerning the second specific objective of this study, it is elucidated that two tendencies were observed in the approach of the ICC in the class: speaking and listening, and reading and writing, which led to facilitating communication with the target culture. In the first instance, data showed that discussion groups are one of the most used activities to improve speaking and listening as it allows students to use the language in an authentic situation focusing on the message and the path it is transmitted rather than fixating on the grammar aspect.

Secondly, the research reports that the ICC application fostered the reading skill at a superior level as students were exposed to multiple sorts of texts with the purpose of analyzing culturally the literary context and content. On the other hand, writing was restricted

to journal entries feedback, with only a few exceptions where students could produce creative writing products.

Notably, it was found that non-verbal communication becomes relevant to proficiency, to encourage a critical exercise and negotiate meaning in the target language as well as acquiring knowledge of the cultural practices. Nonetheless, specific activities to develop non-verbal communication were not implemented in the classroom.

In response to the third specific objective of this study, data displayed students' thoughts on ICC's cultural and critical implications. Firstly, students were able to realize the stereotypes they had about other communities and their own, however, some students still perpetuated those behaviors even after the implementation. That being said, the teacher's role is crucial to help students unlearn the misrepresentations and encourage them to gain a tolerant and respectful point of view.

In this line, ICC integration strengthens the critical thinking of students through diverse activities in which they assume a critical position to discuss deep cultural topics such as prejudices, discrimination, and chauvinism. Consequently, this permitted them to reflect on their practices to analyze their cultural practices and preconceptions to improve their intercultural skill.

Lastly, the ICC application demonstrated that cultural awareness was guided through activities of identifying stereotypes, prejudices, and issues people face due to their cultural background, and fostering empathy for them. Moreover, it was evidenced that cultural awareness does not have enough space to be carried out in class.

As seen previously, ICC represents a change in teaching English paradigm as it encourages students to communicate effectively; highlighting cultural differences and mindsets that cross the language usage; all of that intending to enhance intercultural mediator English speakers. ICC is a relevant construct in the classroom that provides the necessary

tools to become critical and culturally aware speakers when interacting with people from the target language; however, as data demonstrated, ICC is usually focused on aspects of the surface culture limiting the knowledge students could gain.

Implications

The Colombian context is becoming a multicultural environment where diverse cultures coexist owing to the emerging globalization in the country. Therefore, Intercultural Communicative Competence acquires relevance as students need to be able to communicate effectively with respect towards others and experience a cultural approach to the language within the EFL classroom in higher education. Initially, the implications of the school curriculums to integrate the ICC will be discussed. Further, the teacher's role in the English classroom as a cultural mediator and promoter will be displayed. Finally, several actions will be highlighted concerning the EFL students' implications when approaching the ICC.

To begin with, the higher education system plays a crucial role in ICC integration within the EFL. Hence, if its application reaches to be successful, it is necessary to propose bilingualism programs where interculturality is acknowledged as one of the core objectives. This can be pursued through didactic materials that motivate students to analyze, observe, and understand distinct worldviews, lifestyles, and cultural dynamics. Furthermore, authentic and cultural products should be promoted and allowed in the English classroom curriculums, taking into consideration that they depict realities that most students don't get to meet outside the classroom. Now, ICC does not neglect language skills since through the activities proposed one could amalgamate writing, reading, speaking, and listening. However, the main focus of activities should be directed to the ICC revision and the grammar should be learned inductively.

The teacher's role is also significant for ICC development in the university English language lesson. To guarantee a fruitful inclusion of the competence, it is fundamental that the teacher assumes the position of cultural mediator between the learners' culture and the target language. In agreement, their role ought to motivate students to become intercultural speakers through diverse activities and methodologies used in the classroom. Teachers can promote motivation and willingness to learn about the deep culture, provoking students to develop their knowledge autonomously. Equally relevant, it is a necessity that teachers also plan activities that enrich the intercultural analysis, proposals that include literature, newspapers, movies, and TV series, this gives the learner a view of the target culture including the deep cultural aspects.

On the other hand, the learner's role is strategically important to integrate the ICC within the English language acquisition. Thus, after the teacher enhances enough motivation of the students to do some extracurricular research on the target language cultures, it is pertinent that the students' approach is crossed through readiness and tolerance toward the otherness. The aim is to encourage critical thinking and cultural awareness among learners. The previous elements represent the skill of being able to observe and analyze communities to become a mediator when communicating and developing a critical point of view of the own and foreign cultures.

For us as researchers, this state of the art was arduous since it implicated an investigation process that lasted several months of compilation and analysis; nevertheless, it was an enriching experience as it widened our teaching perspective related to the intercultural field and its implications with nowadays society. Furthermore, thanks to the ICC revision, we are aware of several teaching strategies and methodologies that we can apply in the classroom to motivate students and make the learning process valuable for them.

Limitations of the study

Now we will turn to the challenges we faced during the state of art project investigation. The experience of developing this study was gratifying and enriching to our professional level as pre-service teachers; however, we faced certain limitations when searching for the documents, such the limited information and time.

In the first place, the document searching was intricate due to the specific sets of requirements that each document had to have. Moreover, the delimitation of the population decreased the number of documents available in our country; further information was found at a global level. Likewise, there was a limitation regarding the target language, reducing the documents since there were several studies emphasized in Spanish.

On the other hand, as we were organizing and analyzing the data, limited information was found. Multiple implementations of the ICC in the EFL classroom were developed with similar material or didactic strategies; thus, they only gave us a partial view of the ICC approach in the class. Besides, a group of researchers keeps the implementation restricted to the surface target culture leaving aside aspects such as power relations, the origin of ideologies, and the actions they perform.

Finally, time also became a limitation to a certain extent due to the number of documents that needed to be read and analyzed thoroughly. Each document was read at least three times to categorize data properly and analyze it in light of the emerging categories and subcategories.

Further research

This research provided important insights to understand the intercultural communicative competence implications on students' apprehension of the language and how learners can develop critical thinking, intercultural competence, and tolerance and become

mediators when interacting with people from diverse origins and cultural backgrounds; in this sense, the study has pointed out new ways that deserve further exploration.

To begin with, taking into consideration the encouraging development of critical thinking, it could be interesting to explore different ways to apply it to diverse universities' contexts, perhaps integrating the EFL classroom with other spaces inside and outside of the institutions such as projects, community initiatives, etcetera.

On the other hand, it would be also enriching to focus on the teacher's use of didactic materials and the activities they proposed with them. This could provide new strategies within the EFL classroom to implement the ICC and foster all the language skills.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1. Rubric 1 for data analysis.

Author/s	Study	Population	Methodology	Instruments for data analysis
Juana Valentina Chambo Torres, Miguel Felipe Cifuentes Cano, Ginneth Vanessa Hernández Pardo and Juan Gabriel Sierra Cumpian	The role of intercultural communicative competence in the EFL classroom	Fifth semester pre-service teachers ages from 18 to 22	Case study	Questionnaires, interviews and observations.
María Teresa Esteban Nuñez	Pre-Service Language Teachers' Knowledge and Practices of Intercultural Communicative Competence	Five female pre-service teachers	Descriptive case study	Documents, semi-structured interviews and a survey.
Alexander Ramírez-Espinosa, Sol Colmenares-Rodríguez, and Marcela Castellanos	Development of the Intercultural Communicative Competence by Working with Literary Works	The course "Tipologías discursos orales" from the bachelor's degree of foreign language	Mixed methodology	Assessment matrix
Laura Lucia Carreño Bolivar	Promoting Meaningful Encounters as a Way to Enhance Intercultural Competences	Six university-level students (three germans, two colombians and one Haitian)	Case study	Written extracts of a forum

Luis Fernando Gómez	EFL Learners' Intercultural Competence Development Through International News	Four Colombian university EFL learners	Qualitative case study	Field notes, artifacts (worksheets), questionnaire
Natalia Alarcón Penagos	Implementing a Critical Intercultural Approach to Foster Adult English Students' Intercultural Communicative Competence	14 students, 9 women and 5 men between 18 to 50 years old	Case study	Questionnaire, Audio and video recordings, samples of student work, journal, and interviews
Liliana Beltrán Guarnizo and Wilson Vela Gómez	An EFL Teacher Candidates Teaching Experience from Action Research and Intercultural Communicative Competence	Five pre-service teachers	Action research	Journals, surveys and interviews
Milton Gerardo Hernández García	Involving University Students in Intercultural Communicative Competence Activities through the Use of Cultural Products and Practices	Elementary English level students who belong to different semesters and university academic programs	Action research	Surveys, reflective journals and focus group interviews
Daniel Alfonso Rodríguez, Christian Arciniegas Calderón and	La formación docente para interculturalidad en el programa de	Language department teachers and 7th-semester students	Qualitative case study	Documentation analysis, field notes, semi-structured interviews.

Luisa Gutiérrez Rodríguez	Licenciatura de Lenguas de la Universidad de La Salle			
Nestor Julián Jaramillo Ante	A proposal to improve intercultural communicative competence through videos in an English program of a private university	Fifty three pre-intermediate English students at a private university in Cali	Case study	Surveys, questionnaires and journals
Luis Fernando Gómez	Relational teaching: A way to foster EFL learners' intercultural communicative competence through literary short stories.	A group of 23 advanced EFL learners of seventh semester, ages 18 to 22	Action research	field notes, three journals, semi-structured interview, participant's response papers
Julián Martínez	An Approach to the Concept of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)	Not available	Essay about the ICC situation in Colombia	Not available
Alba Olaya and Luis Fernando Gómez Rodríguez	Exploring EFL Pre-Service Teachers' Experience with Cultural Content and Intercultural Communicative Competence at Three Colombian Universities	51 upper intermediate EFL students, aged 18 to 22, from three universities	Case study	Questionnaires, individual semi-structured interviews, and documentary analysis of the study plans

Luis Fernando Gómez	Enhancing intercultural competence through U.S. multicultural literature in the EFL classroom	23 seventh semester female and male participants who registered for the course Literatura Anglófona 1	Action research	Field notes, three journals from students, artifacts, and semi-structured interview
Luis Fernando Gómez	Fostering Intercultural Communicative Competence Through Reading Authentic Literary Texts in an Advanced Colombian EFL Classroom: A Constructivist Perspective	A group of 23 advanced EFL learners, ages 18 to 22.	Action research	Direct observations, In-depth interviewing, and Journals.

Annex 2. Rubric 2 for data analysis.

Author/s	Study	Place	Didactic material	Study purpose
Juana Valentina Chambo Torres, Miguel Felipe Cifuentes Cano, Ginneth Vanessa Hernández Pardo and Juan Gabriel Sierra Cumpian	The role of intercultural communicative competence in the EFL classroom	Bogotá, Colombia	Questionnaires, interviews and observations as well as video recordings and transcriptions.	Determining the role of ICC in the classroom.
María Teresa Esteban Nuñez	Pre-Service Language Teachers' Knowledge and Practices of Intercultural Communicative Competence	Tunja, Colombia	Survey, semi-structured interview, observations	Determining the role of ICC in the classroom according to the student's perceptions.

Alexander Ramírez-Espinosa, Sol Colmenares-Rodríguez, and Marcela Castellanos	Development of the Intercultural Communicative Competence by Working with Literary Works	Bogotá, Colombia	Book "Americanah" by Chimamanda Adichie, the materials evaluation rubric and the proposed activities.	Creating and evaluating materials to approach literature and promote the ICC.
Laura Lucia Carreño Bolivar	Promoting Meaningful Encounters as a Way to Enhance Intercultural Competences	Bogotá, Colombia	Videos, articles, guest speakers, virtual sessions (forum), oral test, class presentations, debates and written products.	Develop and promote the ICC in a University class.
Luis Fernando Gómez	EFL Learners' Intercultural Competence Development Through International News	Bogotá, Colombia	International news and worksheets.	Developing ICC through the use of international news to become critical awareness students.
Natalia Alarcón Penagos	Implementing a Critical Intercultural Approach to Foster Adult English Students' Intercultural Communicative Competence	Medellín, Colombia	Videos, images, written texts and students generated materials.	Development of the ICC in an adult english class to promote language learning and critical thinking
Liliana Beltrán Guarnizo and Wilson Vela Gómez	An EFL Teacher Candidates Teaching Experience from Action Research and Intercultural Communicative Competence	Bogotá, Colombia	Audio journals and surveys or interviews.	Determining the students' experience with the implementation of the ICC in their action-research practices.

Milton Gerardo Hernández García	Involving University Students in Intercultural Communicative Competence Activities through the Use of Cultural Products and Practices	Tunja, Colombia	Workshops, newspapers, movie trailers and group discussions.	Foster the ICC with the use of cultural products and practices in an EFL classroom.
Daniel Alfonso Rodríguez, Christian Arciniegas Calderón and Luisa Gutiérrez Rodríguez	La formación docente para interculturalidad en el programa de Licenciatura de Lenguas de la Universidad de La Salle	Bogotá, Colombia	Documental review and interviews with teachers and students of the degree.	To understand how interculturality has been implemented in the university and what didactical strategies have been used.
Nestor Julián Jaramillo Ante	A proposal to improve intercultural communicative competence through videos in an English program of a private university	Cali, Colombia	Movies, series, questionnaires, worksheets.	Implement series and movies in the teaching of ICC awareness.
Luis Fernando Gómez	Relational teaching: A way to foster EFL learners' intercultural communicative competence through literary short stories.	Bogotá, Colombia	Three multicultural short stories.	Using the relational teaching approach and multicultural text to foster ICC in the EFL classroom.
Julián Martínez	An Approach to the Concept of Intercultural Communicative	Bogotá, Colombia	Documents.	To establish the advances and limitations of the ICC in the

	Competence (ICC)			teaching of languages.
Alba Olaya and Luis Fernando Gómez Rodríguez	Exploring EFL Pre-Service Teachers' Experience with Cultural Content and Intercultural Communicative Competence at Three Colombian Universities	Bogotá, Colombia	Documentary analysis of lesson plans.	To find the students' perceptions and attitudes towards the ICC in their classes.
Luis Fernando Gómez	Enhancing intercultural competence through U.S. multicultural literature in the EFL classroom	Bogotá, Colombia	Multicultural text.	Using multicultural literary texts to foster the ICC in an EFL classroom
Luis Fernando Gómez	Fostering Intercultural Communicative Competence Through Reading Authentic Literary Texts in an Advanced Colombian EFL Classroom: A Constructivist Perspective	Bogotá, Colombia	Multicultural texts.	Developing the ICC with authentic literary work using four teaching approaches.