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PENA-DIX, BEATRIZ, MARIA

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## Abstract

### **Developing Intercultural Competence in English Language Teachers: Towards Building Intercultural Language Education in Colombia**

Beatriz Peña Dix

This research is a qualitative exploratory, constructivist study that aims to investigate Colombian (public sector) English language teachers' existing or prospective intercultural communicative competence (ICC) to understand their teaching profiles and then to be able to build upon them. To achieve my aims, teachers' perspectives on culture and interculturality are explored based on the underpinning assumption that there is a need to transform language education in Colombia and move forward from the «cultural turn» to the «intercultural turn». Within this vision of language teaching, teachers can become, in a near future, intercultural mediators who enlarge the objectives of contemporary language teaching to build Third Spaces for dialogue and negotiation through English. This study is motivated by one main research question: **how do Colombian English language teachers' current practices, beliefs, and professional self-concepts relate to an envisaged profile of the intercultural English language teacher?** This question is embedded in the research aim of providing a comprehensive understanding of current English language teaching in Colombia, including teachers' experiences and perspectives on culture and interculturality. While exploring the literature on ICC, insight was gained into how the teaching of languages becomes a natural scenario to develop ICC and the transformed role of the language teacher as an agent of change and pedagogical progress in transnational and global contexts (Crozet, 2017; Guilherme, 2002, 2007; Porto & Byram, 2015; Risager, 2000, 2007; Sercu et al.,

2005). The empirical findings show that teachers feel positively disposed to intercultural competence English language teaching (IELT), but their approaches to culture are mainly essentialist and nationalist, based on communicative language teaching (CLT) approaches. Despite efforts and infrequent demonstrations of IELT, their profile does not meet yet the expectations pertaining to the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are desirable for IELT. However, they have a positive disposition to advance towards IELT. Based on these findings, a tripartite model and a statement of philosophy were proposed to help English language teachers move forward towards ICC. Finally, this investigation provides valuable insights into the status quo of ICC and ELT in Colombia and has practical implications for ELT education programmes, teachers and policy makers who are interested in reanalysing ELT in Colombia.

**Developing Intercultural Competence in English Language  
Teachers: Towards Building Intercultural Language Education  
in Colombia**

By

Beatriz Peña Dix

**In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctorate in Education**



**School of Education**

**January 2018**

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## Abbreviations

<b>CA</b>	Cultural awareness
<b>CCA</b>	Critical cultural awareness
<b>CEFR</b>	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and Evaluation
<b>CLT</b>	Communicative language teaching
<b>ELT</b>	English language teaching
<b>ELF</b>	English as a Lingua Franca
<b>FLT</b>	Foreign language teaching
<b>ICC</b>	Intercultural communicative competence
<b>IELT</b>	Intercultural English language teaching
<b>MEN</b>	Colombian National Ministry of Education ( <i>Ministerio de Educación Nacional</i> , by its Spanish acronym)
<b>PNB</b>	Bilingualism National Plan ( <i>Plan Nacional de Bilingüismo</i> , by its Spanish acronym)

## **Declaration**

I confirm that this Ed.D. thesis is my original work. It does not include material previously presented for the award of a degree in this, or any other university.

## **Statement of Copyright**

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.



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## **Dedication**

To God Almighty, the Owner of all.

To my son Alejandro, whose bright smiley eyes gave me the everyday strength to complete my doctoral studies.

To the constellations of stars and troop of angels supporting me emotionally from heaven: My parents and friends who rest today in the peace of the Great God Almighty. In my heart. I always knew you were sending me all the good energy and protection.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### Towards intercultural English language teaching in Colombia:

### Challenging roles and tasks in the English language classroom

In a world where racism, different kinds of discrimination, and injustice are on the rise, time spent at school should contribute effectively to prepare students to be real *interculturalists* who can question these phenomena and act critically, ethically, and responsively.

**Dervin, 2016, p. 2**

Teachers find themselves faced with the challenge of promoting the acquisition of intercultural competence through their teaching. This is true for teachers of a diversity of subjects. It is definitely true for teachers of foreign languages. Foreign language education is by definition intercultural. Bringing a foreign language to the classrooms means connecting learners to a world that is culturally different from their own. Therefore, foreign language educators are now encouraged to exploit this potential and promote the acquisition of intercultural competence in their learners.

**Ryan & Sercu, 2003, 101**

*Me pregunto cómo puedo yo hacer algo así con mis estudiantes [se refiere a desarrollar ICC en el aula de inglés]. Claro, primero yo debo aprender a ser intercultural, pero, ¿de dónde, cómo, qué dirección sigo?" (PIT13).*

I wonder how I can do something like this with my students [developing ICC in the EL classroom]. Of course, I should first learn how to become an intercultural individual, but from who? How? Which direction should I follow?

**Participant in service teacher 13, March 30, 2016**

This research is an exploratory interpretive study that aims to develop a profile of intercultural language teachers in Colombia and to explore how they may build on current English language teaching practices to include more global-oriented intercultural language teaching approaches. The aim of this approach is that it will lead to intercultural dialogue (Ganesh & Holmes, 2011) and the construction of global / intercultural citizens, making both teachers and students conceive themselves as “critical citizens of the world” instead of cohabitants of a specific community of shared meanings (Byram, 2006, p. 116). Accordingly, this research aims to make sense of English language teachers’ current practices in the Colombian classroom and for them to be able to research their own conceptions and demonstrations of intercultural competence so that they can understand how intercultural approaches may assertively enrich ELT in Colombia. This goal is important as ELT in Colombia has remained very much the same for the last three decades; it has been taught within communicative approaches that restrict the vision of language and culture as instrumental and see communication with native speakers in socially and culturally appropriate ways.

### **1.1. Key assumptions underlying this research**

This research is founded on what English language teachers demonstrate, believe, think and see as possible in terms of building an intercultural approach to ELT. The whole inquiry process was underpinned by four key assumptions. The first is that, nowadays, intercultural language teaching seems to significantly enrich English language teachers’ practices because it is based on a flexible view that helps learners understand and experience how language and culture shape peoples’ worldviews (Byram, 1986, 1997; Crozet et al., 1999; Crozet, 2017; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). Secondly, the current position of English challenges traditional teaching approaches. As such, this investigation aims to foster ELT development to construct

dynamic cultural spaces in the language classroom that are the result of mutual negotiation (Baker, 2012). These goals are supported by Kramsch's views (2009, p. 190) when she claims for action in the teaching of languages as the practice's objectives have dramatically changed:

The goals of traditional language teaching have been found wanting in this new era of globalization. Its main tenets (monolingual native speakers, homogeneous national cultures, pure standard national languages, instrumental goals of education, functional criteria of success) have all become problematic in a world that is increasingly multilingual and multicultural.

Taking this into consideration, language teaching necessarily entails an understanding of culture as non-essentialist and dynamic (Baker, 2009, 2009a) and where culture is perceived as an emergent, negotiated resource for communication which moves between and across local, national and global contexts (Baker, 2009a).

Thirdly, today, intercultural encounters are an inevitable part of the globalised world, and therefore, "our duty as educators is to strive towards developing a suitable pedagogy for this experience" (Gupta, 2003, p. 171). Although developing intercultural competences is not exclusive to the arena of language teaching, as English teachers, the challenge increases if the language classroom is seen to have its own ecology (van Lier, 2004) and as a natural arena for Third Space constructions. A fourth key assumption is that an intercultural approach to ELT prompts teachers to re-examine the most basic assumptions about what language does and what a language course should seek to achieve (Corbett, 2003, p. 1): ICC teaching should attribute a compulsory reflective sphere to teaching practices.

Bearing these four assumptions in mind, it is possible to envisage that forthcoming language policies and ELT in Colombia may soon face the challenge to update its

communicative views into intercultural perspectives. As a result, Colombian teachers should be ready to transform their own ways of learning and teaching English; however, the question emerges as to their preparation and willingness as well as the support they have for this shift.

Currently, a proposal to teach English nationwide in public education has contemplated the need to develop intercultural competence and skills. There have, however, been no suggestions provided for further training (MEN, 2016, pp. 30, 45; 2016a). According to the developments of ELT in Colombia, and in my experience, policies come first. Preoccupations regarding how teachers can cope with their implementation follow. This situation perpetuates both disempowerment and feelings of frustration for English language teachers, so readiness for intercultural competence English language teaching (IELT) is fundamental. Therefore, given the current situation, approaches which can update and strengthen the teaching of English based on teachers' own knowledge and perspectives, as well as promoting more open, global aims, should be encouraged. In this way, teachers can capitalise on culture-and-language, embodied in communicative language teaching approaches (CLT), and then try to move forwards towards IELT.

## **1.2. Gauging the feasibility of the study**

Before teachers can develop ICC in their learners, they must become ICC learners themselves and experience different dimensions of culture in their understanding of teaching in an English language classroom (Nugent & Catalano, 2015). I began an initial exploration of IELT in Colombia during the thesis project phase in 2011. I conducted an informal semi-structured interview with a group of six teachers in Colombia who volunteered to take part. I posed two questions to them: are they familiar with concepts such intercultural language teaching, intercultural communicative competence, intercultural awareness or any related topic? The

second question depended on the response to the first. If they answered positively, they were asked whether they had applied these concepts in the language classroom and how they had gone about it. Rather unsurprisingly, three teachers were vaguely familiar with the first question and added some comments on classroom methodology in association with the word *communicative* and the inclusion of some cultural topics. The other three teachers partially acknowledged the terms; however, when it came to the explanations, they reduced the terms to the teaching of culture of the target language, history, current events and the reading of some literature.

Accordingly, the challenges identified here indicated that further research was necessary in this field to explore English language teachers' perceptions of the importance of culture teaching. Even though no major conclusions could be drawn from this initial survey, the exploratory findings gave rise to the research problem and gradually helped shape the following question: **how do Colombian teachers' current English language practices, beliefs, and professional self-concepts relate to an envisaged profile of the intercultural foreign language teacher?** A related research question emerged in Sercu's and colleagues' (2005) transnational quantitative investigation: to what extent it is possible to speak of an average culture-and-language teaching profile, which is shared by teachers in 7 different countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Poland, Mexico, Greece, Spain and Sweden. This question particularly inspired me because it made me wonder if Colombian English language teachers portray a current or prospective profile that can gradually contribute to the construction of IELTS in the country.

Exploring English language teachers' beliefs on culture and interculturality was, therefore, seen as a feasible possibility to explore their openness and readiness to embrace more critical ways of teaching through developing ICC in the English language classroom. It



is believed that this will lead to the mediation of intercultural communication and dialogue, successful intercultural encounters, and building global, intercultural citizenship (Byram, 1997, 2012; Guilherme, 2002; Porto & Byram, 2015; Risager, 2007). Accordingly, eliciting and understanding the voices of English language teachers was essential to make sense of their own approaches to language and culture teaching and as step towards IELT.

### **1.3. The context of the study**

Constitutionally speaking, Colombia is a multicultural, diverse country with different ethnic groups and languages coexisting together. Although the concept “interculturality” is known in Colombia, its understanding is limited. Article 7 of the Colombian Constitution recognizes and protects the ethnic and *cultural diversity* in the country, which, in theory, should serve to foster teachers’ intercultural awareness. However, in practice, monolingual, monocultural Spanish-speaking dominated views on culture predominate and diversity is seldom celebrated. Interculturality has generally been associated with indigenous groups and is used as a descriptive category to refer to the spaces and contact relations between indigenous populations and mestizo populations (Walsh, 2013). This narrow understanding of interculturality is restricted to the field of ethno-education or formal education for ethnic minorities (General Law of Education, 1994; Castillo, 2008). Instead, interculturality should be acknowledged in its broader sense: as the relationships established between people belonging to different ethnicities, social groups, professions, genders, etc., but also among groups within the borders of the same community. From this broader understanding of interculturality, it is easier to understand how the teaching of languages—English in the case of my research—naturally involves the relationship with a cultural Other that teachers should competently foster as they develop ICC in the English language classroom.

Three important aspects serve as background to the teaching of English in Colombia. First, and with notable exceptions, as be discussed in Chapter 2, communicative language teaching has predominated for almost three decades. In this way, teaching philosophies in ELT pre-service and in-service programmes, curricular design and instructional materials have been influenced by functional approaches that underscore the importance of the instrumental value of language that enables communication with native speakers within culture-as-a-nation borderlines, and for this reason, according to Porto and Byram (2015, p.11), teachers have taken this intuitive perspective and have focused on communication “as their main and perhaps only purpose.”

Second, in Colombia, English language teachers are attributed some responsibility for students’ low English language proficiency levels in the public sector (A1 for students; A2-B1 for teachers (Sánchez-Jabba, 2013); The British Council (2015) wrote that their knowledge of the language and about the language, in addition to their pedagogical skills, need to be reconsidered. Third, there has been a succession of language policy reform proposals to improve the situation that sometimes lack articulation and continuity. This has caused scepticism, frustration and disempowerment in English language teachers who complain that there is insufficient teacher participation in policy making, policy consistency and teacher support.

Last, one major need expressed by Colombian language teachers is to become “reflective practitioners” (González, 2003, p. 158) as is discussed in chapter 2. This contrasts with the Colombian reality in which there is centralised political control of the ELT profession, and as Byram in Risager (2007, p. x) purports, “an attempt to make teachers follow the ‘guidelines’ of central authorities.”

#### **1.4. Suggestions from other international research**

Initial reading at the international level led me to a study by Sercu, Bandura, Castro, Davcheva, Laskaridou, Lundgren, Ryan (2005). Their research pointed to the need for in-depth qualitative studies that inquired into teachers' concerns about language-and-culture teaching. They stated that teachers from countries, beyond their focus (Belgium, Bulgaria, Poland, Mexico, Greece, Spain and Sweden), should understand their "deepest convictions and concerns regarding language teaching in general and intercultural competence teaching in particular" (p. 170), as well as teachers' predisposition and profiles associated with interculturalising language teaching.

Similarly, with regard to understanding of intercultural competence and pedagogical practices, research conducted in Taiwan (Cheng, 2012, p. 164) advocates that "relatively little qualitative research has been conducted on EFL teachers' beliefs and their effects on classroom practices." Concomitantly, Piątkowska's (2015) and Polish and Li's (2016) Chinese perspectives suggest that it is important to pay attention to the challenges of language teachers who must be prepared and competent to teach intercultural communicative competence. With these aims in mind, my research aims to further explore teachers' perceptions and experiences regarding culture and intercultural language teaching in English language classes. In this way, it will be possible to unveil Colombian teachers' own realities about ICC English language teaching in Colombia.

#### **1.5. Colombia entering post-conflict times**

Educational discourses in Colombia are now being challenged by the reconstruction of a war-free country. Developing ICC in education in general can also lead to the strengthening of discourses of mutual understanding, tolerance and intercultural dialogue by building Third

Spaces for negotiation, peace and harmony while the peace treaty and post-conflict processes are being implemented in Colombia. As Holmes (2014, p. 1) advocates, “«intercultural dialogue» is now in wide currency and offers much hope to peace and harmony among nations.” Within this context, the government advocates that the teaching of English can indeed contribute to economic growth; notwithstanding, “without peace or harmony, economic and environmental sustainability are also threatened” (De Leo, 2010, p. 4). If there are initiatives to interculturalise ELT, they may be followed in other curricular areas. As a natural arena for intercultural education, ELT can serve as a cornerstone for an educational transformation in the country, not only by promoting ICC but ultimately by favouring intercultural dialogue and understanding.

Since ICC is not restricted to the teaching of languages, its reach and significance has the potential to impact the whole education system:

Since the purpose of education for intercultural understanding is to promote peace and social harmony, both within countries and more broadly, learners need to develop understanding and knowledge about other cultures, and learn the values of mutual respect, tolerance, a peaceful and accepting orientation towards others, care, compassion and empathy, by experiencing themselves in the shoes of others, flexibility, as well as openness and generosity of spirit (De Leo, 2010, p. 15).

This principle of tolerance, peace and social dialogue that comes from intercultural education may also entail motivating positive interactions amongst learners of diverse additional cultures, learning conflict resolution skills, fostering understanding, forgiveness and reconciliation (De Leo, 2010). This is Colombia’s current challenge after signing a peace

treaty with the main guerrilla organization after half a century of conflict. By promoting an intercultural experience in education, Colombians may build on an intercultural self-recognition and citizenship that involves co-operation with the own national communities and with others (Byram, 2008).

### **1.6. The research objectives**

The aims of this investigation are directed towards providing a comprehensive understanding of current English language teaching in Colombia, including teachers' experiences and perspectives on culture and interculturality. This research aims to understand the current thinking of Colombian EFL teachers in relation to existing or prospective interculturality. More specifically, the concrete objectives are the following:

1. To understand how English language teachers perceive and describe their English language teaching practices, particularly their language-and-culture teaching (if they do at all).
2. To make sense of teachers' conceptions and appraisals of interculturality and English language teaching.
3. To explain to what extent current language teaching practices are directed towards accomplishing intercultural language teaching.
4. To explore the teachers' degree of willingness and readiness to interculturalise foreign language education.
5. To propose a provisional Intercultural English Language Teacher Profile, which might detail teachers' on-going and future development in the field of foreign language teaching.

## **1.7. The research questions**

The overview of issues and challenges presented in this introductory chapter predominate in Colombia as a country that begins its process of understanding and developing incipient ICC in the teaching of English. Accordingly, there is an urgent need to explore and analyse the ways in which teachers of English make sense of the cultural and intercultural dimensions in their teaching praxis, and how this reflection helps them to envisage their own intercultural profiles in their language teaching. Thus my central research question emerged:

**How do Colombian English language teachers' current practices, beliefs, and professional self-concepts relate to an envisaged profile of the intercultural English language teacher?**

Subsidiary research questions (RQ) were designed to extrapolate a deeper understanding of this overarching guiding question as follows:

**RQ1.** What are Colombian English language teachers' conceptions and beliefs about teaching language and culture in the English language classroom?

**RQ2.** What are Colombian English language teachers' conceptions and beliefs about the term "interculturality" and "intercultural language teaching"?

**RQ3.** Do teachers include interculturality in their teaching practices? If so, in what ways?

**RQ4.** Are teachers prepared and willing to adopt an intercultural approach to English language teaching? If so, how?

**RQ5.** Which principles could be helpful in developing an IELT model in Colombia?

These questions have been underpinned by two key assumptions. The first is that, nowadays, intercultural language teaching seems to significantly enrich English teachers'

practices as it provides an understanding and experience of how language and culture shape both one's and others' worldviews (Byram, 1997; Crozet et al., 1999; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). The second assumption is that forthcoming English language policies in Colombia will challenge the traditional and communicative views on ELT with their new focus on intercultural perspectives. In order to explore and answer research questions, it is necessary to establish the philosophical and methodological approach of the study, which will be discussed in the methodology chapter. (see chapter 4, section 4.1).

## **1.8. Definition of key terms**

Having presented the research focus, rationale, objectives and research questions, this section presents the study's key concepts, which are: culture; interculturality; intercultural competence (ICC); cultural awareness, critical cultural awareness (CCA) and intercultural awareness; and intercultural citizenship.

### **1.8.1. Culture**

Culture in the context of this research is necessarily seen as *a contested zone* [with] *various cultural realities* (Moon, 2002, p. 15. author's own emphasis.); these realities interact through shared stated and *unstated assumptions* (Triandis, 1994, p. 16, author's own emphasis) that coexist in permanent tension and co-construction. In this way, according to Shu-Xi (2005), culture is a wide concept that is not exhaustive or conclusive but open and developing (p. 59); not stable or homogeneous, but dynamic and creative (p. 55). Bearing this in mind, approaches to culture that emphasize the underlying nature of constructivist thinking seem suitable for the development of this research. This study adopts Stead's (2004, p. 392) definition: "culture is a social system of shared symbols, meaning, perspective, and social actions that are mutually

negotiated by people in their relationships with others.”

### **1.8.2. Interculturality**

The concept is based on a type of intentionally-established relationship between cultures that promotes dialogue and interaction based on the mutual recognition of their own values and way of living and on the principle of “an encounter with otherness or a meeting of different cultures” (Lavanchy, Gajardo and Dervin, 2011, p. 12), Interculturality involves the identities of the individuals (from various cultures) which do not merge into a single identity, but are creatively and empathetically strengthened and enriched. Interculturality does not exclusively relate to languages (native or additional) and the cultures embedded in them, but it instead pertains to members of society building their everyday reality in constant dialogue and mutual negotiations with peers, whatever their background and affiliations. (Dervin, 2016).

### **1.8.3. Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in English language teaching**

Intercultural competence implies awareness that cultures are relative, and there is no one *correct* or *established* way of doing things, but that all behaviours are culturally malleable and variable (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Bennet, 2015). In this research, ICC is “the set of attitudes, skills, knowledge and behaviours which are required for appropriate and effective interaction and communication with people who are perceived to be from a different cultural background from oneself.” (Barret, 2011, p. 1). I would further add Kramsch’s (1998, p. 27) view on ICC to this definition, which underscores that ICC is not only about knowledge (not primarily knowledge about a specific culture), but “shared rules of interpretation” that are thoughtfully applied to familiar and new contexts to make sense of the world.



#### **1.8.4. Cultural awareness (CA) and Critical cultural awareness (CCA)**

These concepts are fundamental in this research as they encompass the spirit of skilful judgement that is contained in the continuum from the cultural to the intercultural turn. The cultural awareness (CA) “moment”, as Dasli (2011, p. 23) and Baker (2012) call it, equates culture to paradigms of modern language education that have provided learners with opportunities to familiarise themselves with the culture of a particular country or of a group of countries depending on the language taught (Byram, 1986, 1989, 2000, 2012a). In this research, I will frequently refer to CA as a concept used to describe culture knowledge from communicative approaches (a previous stage to critical cultural awareness, CCA). CA promotes a “sympathetic approach towards other cultures and civilizations” (Dasli, 2011, p. 23) and is rooted in a national conception of culture and language that has been developed around the monolithic nature attributed to culture:

CA can be defined as a conscious understanding of the role culture plays in language learning and communication (in both first and foreign languages) [...] Conceptions of CA also stress the need for learners to become aware of the culturally based norms, beliefs, and behaviours of their own culture and other cultures (Baker, 2012, p. 65).

The second notion, CCA, is originally embedded *in savoir s’engager* within the framework of ICC (Byram, 1997, 2000, 2008, 2012). It encourages language educators to create learning opportunities to turn individuals into critical thinkers who are aware of interconnections between classroom lessons and real-world issues (Nugent & Catalano, 2015). Byram’s (1997, p. 53) model defines CCA 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." This means that students develop the skills necessary to participate in local and global communities because they are proficient in cultural awareness and understanding.

CCA is a desirable goal for foreign language education in which the language curriculum needs to take on a more critical dimension in both its content and instruction practices. (Guilherme, 2002). Both Byram and Guilherme advocate for more political stance or political education in ICC. Byram, however, emphasises the abilities and skills needed to evaluate critically and participate in local and global communities. Guilherme (2002) advocates for cognitive and political participative commitment that leads to action and change and cautions that the "intercultural speaker" is not a cosmopolitan being omnipresent over cultures, but someone who is committed to turning intercultural encounters, "the way each culture views the other in the mirror of itself" (Kramsch, 1998, p. 26), into intercultural relationships (Guilherme 2000).

#### **1.8.5. Intercultural citizenship**

In this research, intercultural citizenship is considered as a major aim of IELT (Byram, 2008, 2009, 2011; Guilherme, 2002; Osler & Starkey, 2005; Porto & Byram, 2015). I understand it as the ultimate goal of ELT even when it is not envisaged in Colombia yet. Porto and Byram (2015, p. 23) provide an ample definition useful for my research: "[intercultural citizenship is] the ability of individuals and groups to live and dialogue with individuals and groups of other identifications." Porto (2014, p. 246) also advocates that:

The intercultural dimension of foreign language education thus favours the development of certain abilities or skills which are crucial in intercultural citizenship education, namely comparative interpretation, consciousness-raising, reflection, critical thinking, critical reflexivity and critical cultural awareness.

Intercultural citizenship fosters or creates experiences from which the qualities of being intercultural are developed (Byram, 2008), and individuals are able to act and think in a complex and diverse world (Porto & Barboni, 2012). For this reason, intercultural citizenship (Byram, 2008, 2011, 2013) combines the aims of language teaching with those of citizenship education in a synergy of improvement for both.

### **1.9.Organisation of the study**

In this first introductory chapter, a general overview of the key assumptions, the feasibility and context of the study, the research topic and research objectives have been examined vis-à-vis ELT concerns in Colombia. The research questions have been addressed as they aim to shed light on existing or prospective IELT in Colombia by exploring English language teachers' conceptions of culture and interculturality and their applications in the EFL classroom. Also, key terms have been clarified to show my own positioning about the subject of study. The second chapter addresses English teaching in Colombia, its background, language policies and research on intercultural language teaching. The third chapter provides the theoretical background to this study and discusses how these theories help answer the research questions; it presents international studies on language education and the theories and approaches that have provided a foundation to our understanding of interculturality and intercultural competence within language teaching. Chapter 4 explores the ontological and

methodological foundations of the study that were important momentum to understand the philosophical foundations of this research and the lenses through which the cultural phenomena of ELT in Colombia are perceived as well as the methodological design that was followed in this qualitative research.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 present the findings of the study. Chapter 5 presents the empirical findings that are related to the first research question: what are Colombian English language teachers' conceptions and beliefs about teaching language and culture in the English foreign language classroom? as well as the subsidiary questions derived from the enquiry as to the definition of culture, its role in English language teaching and the way that teachers introduce culture in their lessons. Chapter 6 answers three research questions related to interculturality by exploring what Colombian English language teachers' conceptions, beliefs and teaching practices are regarding the terms "interculturality" and "intercultural language teaching." In Chapter 7 I draft an emergent model for intercultural English language teaching in Colombia, drawing on what participant teachers considered relevant to advance interculturality and ELT (as discussed in chapters 5 and 6). This teacher-based proposal will provide initial directions towards interculturalising English language teaching.

Finally, Chapter 8 concludes this research. A summary of the research findings is provided, and then I offer a triadic model of ICC for English language teachers which aims to develop their intercultural reflections in the ELT classroom from the perspective of Byram's ICC proposal and postulates of critical thinking and reflective teaching practice. Subsequently, theoretical, methodological, educational and pedagogical contributions and implications are examined, and the limitations of this study and some directions for further research are discussed.

## CHAPTER 2

### **Teaching English in Colombia: Language policies and research on culture and intercultural language teaching**

This chapter situates the research topic and discusses the language policies and initiatives that have helped shape English language teachers' perceptions and beliefs on how to teach English, their methodologies and professional identities. This critical account highlights the current limitations of English language teaching in Colombia with respect to IELTS in English language classrooms: the main research goal in this research. First, I discuss Colombia's linguistic situation followed by foreign language educational policies, and how the English language in Colombia became an indisputable component of the national agenda. I also discuss some influential aspects of ELT in Colombia, such as the strong influence of CLT, language education with regard to reflection and criticality, and the MEN's position on language and culture teaching and learning. Finally, I review some empirical studies relevant to the current study.

#### **2.1. Colombia's linguistic situation and education system: An overview**

Colombia, the third most populous country in Latin America, is located in the northwest corner of South America. With approximately 42.888.592 inhabitants according to the 2005 national census, Colombia's linguistic heritage is rich and diverse; this is far from its mistaken label of being monolingual and monocultural due to the predominance of Spanish (González, 2010). From a sociolinguistic approach, minority language groups in Colombia generally speak Spanish as a second language and have a minority community language as their mother

tongue: either a native Amerindian language or an English or Spanish-based Creole (Islander and *palenquero*) (Bartens 2003; Bonilla & Tejada, 2016; de Mejía, 2004; Dieck, 1998; González & Rodríguez 1999; Landaburu 1999; Lipski, 1994; Montes, 1985; Patiño Roselli 1992; Spolsky 2004). Both English and Spanish-based creoles are often wrongly considered as badly-spoken English or Spanish and are part of the Colombian cultural heritage that needs to be preserved (de Mejía, 2004).

English is taught as a foreign language because it holds no official status in the country, and it is not a local medium of communication either; however, it has considerable prestige (Byram, 2008). EFL is usually learned in environments where the language of the community and the school is not English. In this research it will also be used to emphasise different theories and authors using this term explicitly (e.g., Buttjes & Byram 1991; Byram 1989a, 2008; Byram, Holmes & Savvides, 2013; Castro, Sercu & Méndez García, 2004; Deardorff, 2011; Kramsch, 2008, 2013; Li, 2016; Porto, 2015; Sercu, 2006). Despite criticism on the appropriateness of the term “foreign” in the light of globalization (Canagarajah, 2007; González Moncada, 2010; Guilherme, 2007; Mufwene, 2010; Sewell, 2013; Sowden, 2012), I will use EFL to highlight its external nature to the Colombian culture. Important to mention that in most official documents and publications, the term EFL appears and has been long accepted as the correct term for the teaching of English or any other modern language different from Spanish in Colombia.

About the general education system, Colombia has an eleven-year scheme of elementary and secondary education, consisting of five years of elementary education, four years of intermediate secondary education and two years of upper secondary education. There are three levels of university studies: *profesional* (professional/undergraduate), *maestría/magister* (master’s degree), and *doctor* (doctoral/PhD). There are also non-

university higher education degrees, *técnico* (technician) and *tecnólogo* (technologist), offered at technical institutions as well as university level institutions. The Ministry of Education (MEN) regulates all levels of education. The 32 states in Colombia has its Secretariat of Education (*Secretaría de Educación*) which administers education in accordance with the Ministry's regulations and guidelines. Public education in general is Spanish-speaking dominated. Public elementary and secondary education is organized around school subject curricula taught overly in Spanish. Bilingualism with English, however, has taken on a new role in Colombia: in 2004, the Ministry of Education launched the National Bilingual Program, adding English as a foreign language to the overall education agenda (see section 2.2 in this chapter).

English in Colombia has become mandatory in both public and private education as the National Ministry of Education has ruled it as a priority in the national agenda (Vélez-Rendón 2003). However, as Gonzalez (2010) highlights, proficiency in English may vary considerably due to the difference in quality between public and private education. This breach that negatively affects public education incorporates a significant sector of English language teachers whose foreign language proficiency ranges from upper low to lower intermediate (A2-B1) (Sánchez-Jabba, 2012, 2013). The dominant position of English in Colombia is congruent with Rajagopalan's (2006) view on the prominence of English in South America.

Today English can be considered a pillar in Colombian education. Undergraduates from many universities need to demonstrate English language proficiency by taking an international examination (TOEFL, IELTS) as a requirement to graduate. Employers at almost every level are requesting a basic or intermediate command of English. As explained by Vélez-Rendón (2003) and echoed by de Mejía (2004, p. 392), "Career advancement in

Colombia is dependent to a large degree on English language proficiency.” As such, language educational policies have been designed to shape the State’s goals and promote proficient English speakers as a part of the international economic strategy towards advanced globalisation (Alesina & Farrera, 2005; Fairclough 2006).

Other local languages in Colombia have been systematically taught inside the users’ minority communities under the label of *ethnoeducation*. The idea of a differentiated education in Colombia began in 1976, when the MEN, through Decree 088, manifested for the first time its concern to generate respect towards indigenous cultures and restructure the educational system with the purpose to give aboriginal minorities the opportunity to have their own education and develop their own curricula (Rojas Curieux, 1999). Ethnoeducation in Colombia has been defined as a social process immersed in the culture of the (indigenous) groups concerned, which allows individuals to exercise their social decision-making capacity, through knowledge of their culture, allowing the relationship with other cultures and with the hegemonic society in terms of mutual respect (Bonfil Batalla, 1987). According to Bonfil Batalla (1987), subalternity—a notion created to speak of the condition of subordination in the context of capitalist domination (Modonesi, 2014)—underlies this definition, thus reducing ethnoeducation in Colombia to *differentiation*. This differentiation results in education that meets special educational needs to preserve minority cultures’ heritage and knowledge, but excludes them from the social collective participation as Colombian citizens (Artunduaga, 2008).

Interestingly, in 1994 the MEN re-introduced the concept of ethnoeducation adding *interculturality*: ethnoeducation was then defined as the process of permanent social reflection and collective construction, through which indigenous peoples and Afro-Colombians (e.g.,



Rroms or Gypsies (*Gitanos*), and Raizales from San Andres and Providencia Islands were later included) to strengthen their autonomy within the framework of interculturality. According to MEN's documents (2001, par. 1):

The objective of this policy [of ethnoeducation] is to position intercultural education in all schools and colleges of the country's official and private sector, so that all children and families understand that Afro-Colombian, indigenous and gypsy cultures are part of the roots of our nationality.

Since then, the idea of ethnoeducation has been perceived as a mechanism to allow the socialization of culturally different groups, taking into account their ideologies, customs, beliefs and language, and how these diverge from the majority culture (Artunduaga, 2008). Although no larger explanation of the concept *interculturality* is evidenced in the MEN's documents ruling ethnoeducation, intercultural empathy or the ability to be culturally empathic is perceived. Colombian Law 115 of 1994 in Decree 804 advocates for cultural mutual understanding and respect for other Colombian cultures' plan of life that "is born from the particular needs of each of the communities, based on its territory, identity, worldview, and customs in a framework of interculturality." (MEN, 2001a). Cultural empathy acknowledges that these groups have their own separate cultural identity while being aware of and accepting the cultural values and beliefs of the people with different cultural backgrounds. In this sense, according to Zhu (2011, p. 117), "one doesn't need to agree with those values and beliefs to understand them and one doesn't need for his culture to be like that culture to have empathy".

In this strong attempt to preserve the cultures of minorities, ethnoeducation, in practice, advocates for an ethnocentric perspective creating imbalanced and biased

relationships with the Other (Hamel, 2008). In ethnoeducation, the traditional and the autochthonous are highlighted over traditional school subjects. This differentiated education, however, has led communities abandoning ethnoeducation programmes which, according to them, do not seem useful to achieve further progress. Instead, the Western school model of the Spanish speaking-dominant culture offers the knowledge of the majority's culture, as the one that brings individuals the most benefits and enjoyment of other environments outside the community (Bedoya, Granada & Zuluaga, 1999). For example, indigenous parents interviewed on their expectations of ethnoeducation responded that it was necessary to teach Spanish and mathematics because the own culture could be taught at home. Accordingly, many indigenous people do not believe that preserving their culture and traditions is the best way to improve their situation, but contrarily, ethnoeducation is perceived to perpetuate hierarchical, culture divisions (Gros, 2000).

Ethnoeducation is intercultural by nature, and despite limited understandings of the concept of interculturality in ethnoeducation, if properly approached, interculturality should be seen as a basic principle of ethnoeducation and democracy. This implies taking into account elements of transcendental importance, such as cultural dialogue; cultural respect; mutual enrichment that occurs if there is a biunivocal opening of otherness, and cultural tolerance (based on the recognition of the Other as an important part in the construction of knowledge).

## **2.2. Understanding language educational policies in Colombia**

Attempts to design language teaching policies in the country can be traced back to colonial times when, as a part of the colonisation of the New World, Catholicism imposed Spanish, Greek and Latin upon the indigenous population (Rivas Sacconi, 1949; Zuluaga 1996). Around 1580, Muisca (an indigenous language from the Chibcha family) was officially taught

to seminarians and priests to continue with the evangelisation process of Central and South America (Gómez, 1971) because using Latin and Castellano (early Spanish) to indoctrinate and educate indigenous people proved inadequate. In this way, and contrary to what happens today in Colombia, Muisca, being a local native language, became a second language taught in Colombia and was valued as a tool to permeate ideology and beliefs. In 1770, speaking indigenous languages was forbidden by royal decree as a sign of vertical power relationships, and Spanish became the dominant language for social, religious, economic and political purposes.

After the Second World War in 1945, English and French were systematically taught at secondary school level (de Mejía, 2004). These were the first official attempts to teach and learn languages in Colombia and were not part of a well-structured or planned language policy but the product of decisions being made due to political pressures rather than educational considerations (British Council, 1989). Thus, arbitrariness and political-emphatic decisions determined language education in Colombia, which was, at that time, seen as a succession of norms, political and diplomatic commitments and reformation policies (Helg, 2001; González, 2010; García *et al.* 2007).

### **2.3. English language teaching as a national agenda**

There have been a series of proposals that have endeavoured to consolidate English language educational policies. All have contributed to the consolidation of English as the most predominant additional language in the country. However, tensions and criticism towards these policies are included in Shohamy's (2006) discourse, as endorsed by Cadavid, McNulty and Quinchia (2004) and Fandiño (2011, p. 13) in that "most FL [Foreign Language] policies,

educational reforms, and government regulations are imposed without consideration of the needs and wishes of those who are either affected by them or expected to carry them out.”

Key language policies have been implemented in Colombia over the past two decades: The English Language Syllabus, (1982, *Programa de Inglés*); the COFE Project, (1991-1997, *Proyecto COFE*); the General Law of Education, (1994, *Ley General de Educación*, ley 115); the Curricular Guidelines for foreign languages, (1999, *Lineamientos curriculares para lenguas extranjeras*); Bilingual Colombia (*Colombia Bilingüe*), and the National English Programme, 2015-2025 (*Programa Nacional de Inglés, 2015-2025*). These policies are not “finished products”, and they do not appear to follow from each other. Instead, some of them were abruptly stopped and replaced by new proposals due to political changes (British Council, 2015). In the next section I provide a brief overview of these policies’ most salient features, their aims and problems to show how they have permeated Colombian teachers’ views on ELT.

### **2.3.1. The English Language Syllabus, 1982-1990 (*Programa de Inglés*)**

As a seminal initiative, the English Language Syllabus (*Programa de Inglés*), established in 1982, was the first attempt to support and articulate the presence of the English language in Colombian education with guidelines provided by the British Council and the Centro Colombo Americano: two of the most renowned binational language, educational, and cultural institutions with a long tradition in Colombia (Valencia, 2007). This reform tried to end the long tradition of the audio-lingual method that was based on grammatical encyclopaedic knowledge, drilling and memorisation. Instead, the communicative method (Communicative Language Teaching or CLT) was promoted (Usma, 2009; Valencia, 2007). Many teachers, however, lacked sufficient oral abilities and were not ready for a radical change in their

teaching approach (The British Council, 1989). The English Language Syllabus did not seem to address the inclusion of culture or cultural awareness to any degree. Colonial views on the imposition of teaching methods and the marketization and consumption of ELT were major criticisms (González, 2007; González Peláez, 2008; Macías, 2010, 2011; Osorio & Insuasty, 2015; Sánchez & Obando, 2008; Valencia, 2007).

### **2.3.2. The COFE Project, 1991-1997 (*Proyecto COFE*)**

The COFE Project —Colombian Framework for English— was a collaborative binational partnership between the governments of Colombia and the United Kingdom to improve English language teacher education programmes across the country. From the very beginning, international cooperation was a contentious issue, and critique was acute and frequent due to the increase of consumerism as the country's ELT needs were conveniently supplied by Anglo-speaking ELT markets (Rubiano, Frodden & Cardona, 2000; Usma, 2009). The main aim of COFE was to originate a qualitative change in English language teachers' initial education and implement permanent training programmes in the public sector (Rubiano, Frodden & Cardona, 2000).

English language teachers were placed at the core of the project since they were considered to be the agents of change and educational improvement. For this reason, I found some of the COFE project's values useful for my research as there was a major focus on English language teachers' professional update and growth (Rubiano, Frodden & Cardona, 2000). Positively, it empowered English language teachers through research and participation and systematic revisions of ELT curricula (González, 2007; 2010; Rubiano, Frodden & Cardona 2000; Usma & Frodden, 2003;). In the end, the cooperation project was seen to

reinforce the apprentice-expert model roles as being predominant in power relations (Day, 1993; Rundle, 2012).

### **2.3.3. The General Education Law or Law 115 of 1994 (*Ley General de Educación*)**

The General Education Law governed both public and private education systems, and its main objective was to update the Colombian education system (Ocampo, 2002; Valencia, 2007). With regard to languages, it highlighted “The need to promote at least the acquisition of a foreign language from primary school” (MEN, 1994, 15), and, as Rey de Castro and García (1997, p. 5) acknowledge, “The new law gives clear signs of official recognition of the importance of English to support: (i) the development of the Colombian economy; (ii) the education systems to enhance Colombian opportunities in the era of globalisation.” This discourse legitimated the instrumental, neoliberal model of education (Gonzalez, 2007; Gonzalez & Ocampo, 2006; Guadarrama, 2006; Ocampo, 2002; Usma, 2009). By including English in Colombian education policy, the General Education Law was indirectly envisaging the construction of a new Colombian citizen able to cope with global challenges.

### **2.3.4. Curricular Guidelines for Foreign Languages (*Lineamientos Curriculares Lenguas Extranjeras, 1999*)**

As the General Education Law language policy was being consolidated, languages — principally English— became mandatory in the school curriculum (General Education Law, MEN, Articles 21, 22, and 23, 1994). As a result, in 1999, the national education authorities designed and published what might be considered the specifics of the language policy, which were derived from the General Education Law and the Curricular Guidelines for Foreign Languages (*Lineamientos Curriculares Lenguas Extranjeras*) (MEN, 1999; currently being

updated, MEN, 2016, 2016a). This document formulated desired proficiency outcomes, language approaches, methods, teaching and learning strategies. A major criticism was that it was said to limit and restrict teachers' autonomy and professional growth (Ocampo, 2002) due to its "one size fits all" nature (Ayala & Alvarez, 2005; Cadavid, McNulty & Quinchia, 2004; Usma, 2009). No guidelines with regard to culture teaching and learning were explicitly proposed in the first document (1999). The 2016 update deals with some concepts of culture and interculturality that are limited and somehow taken for granted.

### **2.3.5. The National Bilingual Colombia Programme (*Plan Nacional de Bilingüismo (PNB), Colombia Bilingüe*)**

*Bilingual Colombia* or the *National Bilingual Colombia Programme 2004-2019* (PNB) was the result of the Educational Revolution (*Revolución Educativa*) which aimed to increase the country's productive capacity by implementing educational advances, critical thinking and lifelong learning (Light, Manso & Noguera, 2009; MEN, 2002; Roux, 2012). *Bilingual Colombia* aimed to make Colombian citizens bilingual in Spanish and English by the year 2019 based on the international standards provided by the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). (Alesina & Farrera, 2005; MEN, 2005; 2006, 2006a).

In partnership with the British Council (and remembering criticisms of the COFE Project), the Ministry of Education designed a "State of the art" research (MEN, 2005; The Guardian, 2006) based on three diagnostic studies. In the first study, 3,422 teachers were evaluated in their communicative competence; in the second study, they tested pedagogical and content knowledge of 243 teachers. In the third one, 2,467 students in public schools and 1,293 in the private sector (not including bilingual schools) were tested in their English language proficiency. Conclusions from this research were worrying (MEN, 2005; Usma,

2009, p. 128; 2009a): according to the scales proposed by the CEFR, although teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge were satisfactory, only 1.8% of them had an advanced level of English (B2); 32.8% had an intermediate level (B1), and 65.4% a basic level (A1-A2). With regard to learners, consultants concluded that only 6.4% of students finishing high school could be considered as intermediate (B1), whereas an overwhelming 93.6% were considered as having a basic level (A1). Particularly striking was the absence any relationship between language and culture, despite the CEFR being at the core of the programme (Byram & Zarate, 1997; Byram, 1997).

Other criticism pointed at the reductionist vision of English-Spanish bilingualism in addition to the adoption of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) as a framework developed in a foreign context with a different cultural setting, needs and goals. By using the CEFR as a guideline, the PNB negates the identities, diversity and pluralism of many of Colombian citizens: it fosters exclusion. It ignores the country's 69 indigenous languages and constitutes a reductionist vision of the notion of bilingualism (Bonilla & Tejada, 2016; de Mejía, 2011; Guerrero, 2008; Peñafort, 2002; Usma, 2009; Valencia Giraldo, 2007). Interestingly, other countries such as Australia share these same feelings of language stratification between prestige languages and the repression of immigrant and indigenous languages as a common feature due to imported discourses and practices at the expense of local knowledge (McBeath, 2011; Usma, 2009;). Finally, some perceived that the PNB was a type of linguistic imperialism, marketization of ELT materials (McBeath 2011; Phillipson, 1992) and "a gatekeeper to education, employment, business opportunities [...] where indigenous languages are marginalized." (Qiang & Wolff, 2005, p. 55).

Criticism about the adoption of the CEFR in Colombia was congruent with scholars worldwide (e.g., from China and Australia) on the appropriateness and suitability of this



framework in local contexts (Weicheng, 2012; Normand-Marconnet & Lo Bianco, 2013). Other critiques on the CEFR and PNB addressed the need for language teachers to be trained in understanding, analysing, and using the CEFR (Virkkunen-Fullenwider, 2005). Arguments against the CEFR were also predicted by members of the Intergovernmental Forum of the Council of Europe (2007, p. 13) who observed that:

There are consistent signs that the CEFR is susceptible to being misused in a number of ways: [...] misunderstandings regarding the CEFR's status which, where no contextualization takes place, may result in a homogeneity contrary to this instrument's goals; shortcomings in the training process [...] which may result in superficial use and even poor understanding of the tool, sometimes leading to its rejection.

More recently, Law 1655 of 2013 included a stronger basis for the PNB to include effective communication and understanding of English. However, efforts undertaken over the past two decades in Colombia in terms of teaching and learning English have not been sufficient for important publications such as the *Handbook of World Englishes* (Kachru, Kachru & Nelson, 2006), more exactly the chapter dedicated to English in Latin America (Rajagopalan, 2006), "South American Englishes", to record any information on developments. Rajagopalan (2006, p. 153) arrives at predictable conclusions about English in Latin America: "English is today securely established as the continent's number one foreign language. More than a language, it is a sign of power and a divider between the rich minority that has access to education and the vast majority of people who do not."

### **2.3.6. Project for Strengthening Foreign Language Competency Development (*Proyecto de Fortalecimiento al Desarrollo de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras*, PFDCLE)**

The Project for Strengthening Foreign Language Competency Development (*Proyecto de Fortalecimiento al Desarrollo de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras* (PFDCLE), a complementary strategy to the PNB, aimed to boost English language proficiency by addressing academic, cultural, and economic dynamics (Colombia Aprende, 2014, paragraph 4). These strategies seemed to answer a more systematic need to include culture teaching and ICC language teaching. Similar to COFE and the major focus of my research, PFDCLE placed particular emphasis on English language teacher education. Postgraduate education and continuum education programmes are offered to improve the ELT profiles though many teaching programmes are still grounded in positivist thinking. Additionally, since 2014, the English Teaching Fellowship Programme brings English speakers from different countries to work on co-teaching processes with local English language teachers. This project is one of the scarce examples of ICC initiatives taken by the government, which aims to “generate culturally motivating environments; promote pedagogical dynamics allowing students to use English at school and facilitate learners’ successful communication in English.” (Colombia Aprende, 2015, par.2). However, despite being an opportunity to foster ICC, host teachers complained their foreign partners lack “skills to relate with students”, which I understand as intercultural communicative competence.

PFDCLE lacked the rationale, philosophy and clear objectives of the English Teaching Fellowship Program. Some sessions were reduced to cultural topics and the history of cultures; as such, learners can be at risk of learning reduced views of culture susceptible to stereotyping and bias. Part of the scaffolding English language host teachers complained they did not have could be provided by creating the conditions to develop critical teaching and learning

environments through the development of ICC: a wider vision on the English language classroom as real intercultural encounters could have been experienced, developed and mediated by establishing intentional relationships between cultures. This is proposed in the *Intercultural Education Resources for Erasmus Students and their Teachers* (IEREST, 2015), which provides direct training for the development of ICC in teaching and learning settings.

### **2.3.7. National English Language Programme (*Programa Nacional de Inglés, 2015-2025*)**

The MEN (2014, p. 4) estimates that in the next ten years, 12,000 English language teachers will be taught and trained, and the numbers of students with an intermediate-high level of English will increase from 55,000 to 140,000. This new language educational programme called *English for diversity and equity* has gained experience from PNB and has tried to change the “English for a few” message to a more inclusive English for the majority. Human development, coexistence, constructing a national identity and integration with the world are given a major prime scope (MEN, 2016, p. 15). Despite important changes, however, the goals have once again focused on communication (as in the communicative approaches) so that learners should attain competence levels to become “citizens able to communicate in English with internationally comparable standards” (MEN, 2006, p.3). To reiterate, the proposal highlights the importance of teacher education as teachers will lead the teaching of English through specific actions (MEN, 2016).

A very thought-provoking axis of the new programme proposal is the acceptance of an urgent need for change. To transform the reality of teaching and learning English in Colombia, more serious actions are required, such as the implementation of “a systemic integral model guaranteeing an effective structural transformation” (MEN, 2014, p. 35). These new premises overcome mere linguistic goals and open windows of opportunity for an

investigation into the inclusion of intercultural English language teaching (IELT) as a way to reshape language teachers' practices and language instruction (Fandiño, 2014)—the focus of my study.

The development of these ELT policies and English teaching criteria in Colombia over the last three decades indicate that teachers' professional identities have been influenced by top-down guidelines and unquestionable regulations that pursue neoliberal development goals for the country, in which English is “a bounded commodity traded in borderless commerce, realised in education and training and authorised in official discourse.” (Lo Bianco, 2008, p. xii). Historically, when English language teachers have chosen their language teaching career, they have frequently been taught the language uncritically by using a series of methodologies they tend to replicate; these place linguistic features and native like competence communication at the core and perpetuate culture as either factual or knowledge-based information about Anglo-speaking countries. This has tended to result in unsuccessful attempts to integrate culture-and-language teaching and build on ICC in teachers' lessons.

Each of the above-mentioned language policies have contributed significantly to the development of ELT in Colombia. The teaching of English has been mainly focused on language skills and communication with native speakers. This biased view perpetuated by English teaching programs has given rise to a limited perspective that sees the language within the communicative and instrumental approaches. The role and importance of culture has been limited and little has been discussed about the intercultural relations that are expected in a globalized world and that can be made relevant in the language classroom through communication processes in English through IELT—one of the main objectives of my research that challenges the long tradition of CLT in the country.

As the tensions on policies and language education have been discussed, I now briefly explore on issues such as criticality and reflection, which endeavour to enhance teacher quality education, culture teaching and the incipient perspective on ICC. I also explore the Ministry of Education's position on teaching culture and developing ICC in both teachers and learners and give an overview of local research on culture and ICC in ELT as they constitute important pillars for teachers developing ICC in their praxis.

#### **2.4. Influence of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in Colombia**

Porto and Byram (2015, p. 227) advocate that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) “pushed language teaching into the utilitarian direction and, in modified versions, is now dominant in most teaching situations”. CLT is the most acknowledged method in the different levels of ELT education in Colombia (González, 2007; Macías, 2010; Sánchez & Obando, 2008). For three decades CLT has had a profound impact on teachers' views on what teaching English should be and how to approach culture. Accordingly, CLT belongs to the modern language paradigm in which English is learnt to communicate with native speakers and learn about aspects of the foreign language culture. This latter is associated to traditional definitions and national views (Hiep, 2005).

González Peláez (2008, pp.86-87) advocates, based on her research into English language teachers' beliefs about communicative competence and their relationship with their classroom practices in Colombia, that teachers “do not take into account all of the components of communicative competence when they work on developing it in the classroom.” There is also evidence of a very high rate of traditional practices that have been found to masquerade as “communicative” in the teaching of English (González, 2003, 2007; Linares, 2011); for instance, from their research on the same topic based on interviews with 34 EFL Colombian

teachers, Osorio and Insuasty (2015) found that teachers and learners of English pursue an overall instrumentalist communicative style without much reflection on culture, although a few exceptions revealed that teachers' understanding of CLT is accurate in reference to the goals of promoting learners' communicative competence beyond grammatical or language knowledge (Kim, 2014).

Finally, a major concern of my research addresses the fact is that CLT has become a comfort zone in ELT in Colombia which constrains the language to instrumental approaches that restrict the ability to experience cosmopolitan encounters. My research thus advocates that because language is fundamental to participation in society, developing intercultural competences with language allows intercultural participation and interaction: "It extends relationships, evokes new sentiments, weakens stereotypes, and crumbles prejudices. It provokes new questions and stimulates reflection and introspection." (Fantini, 2012, p. 276).

## **2.5. Developing language teacher education that fosters reflection and criticality**

Initial language teacher education programmes or *Licenses* and on-going teacher education should be taught through reflective practices and criticality across curricula (Bolton, 2005; Jackson, 2014; Ohata, 2007; Sánchez-Jabba, 2013). A major need expressed by Colombian English language teachers is the need to become "reflective practitioners" (González, 2003, p. 158) and as critical and reflective thinkers (Richards, 1998) able, among many skills, to motivate learners to engage in dynamic learning processes; this contrasts with research findings on what Colombian ELT teachers usually do in the language classroom (Caicedo, 2008; González, Montoya & Sierra, 2002; Jerez Rodríguez, 2008).

According to some scholars (Vieira & Moreira, 2008), Colombian ELT programmes should facilitate in teachers' reflective inquiry rather than "constrain reflectivity, authenticity,

dialogical interaction, openness to innovation and autonomy” (Fandiño, 2006, p. 17). Richards (2008) and Porto and Byram (2015) seem to validate this view when advocating that language teachers as educators should instruct in both the skills of communication and in the values of humanistic education and criticality and should become transformative intellectuals able to “engage and act in the world” (Guilherme, 2002, p. 123).

Ying and Ying’s (2012, p. 28) conclusions seem appropriate when they purport that “teachers need to improve their own quality and update their knowledge constantly. [They] should try to enrich their knowledge [and] keep pace with the times, and update their concept of education.” More importantly, they add that, “they need to be able to employ teaching techniques that promote the acquisition of *savoirs* (sociocultural knowledge), *savoir-apprendre*, *savoir-comprendre* and *savoir-s’engager* (culture learning skills), *savoir-faire* and *savoir-être* [..., for] pre-service teacher training does not prepare teachers for this task” (Sercu *et al.*, pp. 177-178).

An interesting concern for this research is that thinking critically as a part of the language curriculum should entail critical cultural awareness or *savoir s’engager* through which teachers need to question and problematize their own and others’ assumptions (Byram, 1997, 2008). However, in Colombia, according to the literature review, there is limited experience with both concepts as a part of the language curriculum. Intercultural language teaching contributes to reflective teaching by placing the teacher in a space that permanently constructs cultural practices, pedagogical identities (for both the student and the teacher) and changing discourses and realities, and consequently, this study aims to demonstrate that ELT and of course teachers should move towards IELT.

## **2.6. The Colombian National Ministry of Education (MEN) and language and culture teaching**

MEN's position about language and culture in ELT is also an emerging theme affecting the development of ICC in language teaching. There is no consolidated language curriculum in Colombia, but there are several national guiding standards based on the CEFR (MEN, 2006), which currently, is a work-in-progress optional curriculum (*Designing a suggested curricular proposal for English in Colombia*, MEN, 2016; *Pedagogical principles and guidelines for a suggested English curriculum, Grades 6° to 11°. English for diversity and equity*, MEN, 2016a). When language policy makers use the term "culture" in these two documents, it is taken for granted as something everyone knows and understands, and that this understanding is "indisputable": "Proficiency in a foreign language (English) is indisputably an ability which empowers individuals and makes them more competitive by giving them more opportunities to access knowledge and other cultures" (MEN, 2014, p. 2). This implies the importance of language and culture teaching, whatever the relationship between the two, but manifests the vague approach to language and culture teaching as well as decision makers' lack of clarity (Barletta, 2009).

As recent advancements, the MEN recognised that ELT should not only focus on language but should also include a broader cultural, transnational dimension as advocated by Risager (2007). As such, language teaching should provide insight into understanding the other and critical cultural awareness (CCA). Despite these advances, no further explanations or guidelines on how teachers should address these ideas have been provided. Sercu *et al* (2005), in their large empirical investigation that explored the cultural dimension in terms of intercultural communicative competence in teachers and learners from seven countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, Poland, Mexico, Greece, Spain and Sweden) found that English language



teachers are “not sufficiently informed about the enlarged objectives of foreign language education” (Sercu *et al.*, 2005, p. 179)—a finding that applies to the Colombian context. This makes the country lag behind others in Latin America that have been progressing towards the ICC English teaching framework, e.g., in Mexico (Ryan & Sercu, 2003), and in Argentina (Porto, 2009, 2013, 2014; Porto & Byram, 2015).

Finally, MEN (2014) has established that within a period of 10 years, twelve thousand English language teachers will be taught and trained. Hopefully, this aim considers the forthcoming educational language proposals and policies, and the emergent challenge of updating and/or re-educating English language teachers in order to transform their way of learning and teaching to include ICC (Jiménez Raya & Sercu, 2007, p. 7). MEN (2014, p. 3) proposes “to rethink what is understood as ‘a good teacher’”, and, consequently, my research becomes relevant as it emphasises a transformation in teachers’ professionalism and the need for a new English language teacher profile that should be encouraged to teach English in a more global, comprehensive way. (Fandiño, 2014).

## **2.7. The Colombian experience: local research on developing intercultural competence in Colombia**

Alvarez (2014) carried out research to interculturality and language teaching in which he selected a sample of 34 published articles. He concluded that the intercultural dimension “is still in its infancy in the Colombian scholarship” (p. 226), although some teachers are already trying to introduce the cultural component in the language classroom through pedagogical experiences or applications of methodological strategies. This major finding confirms other studies’ outcomes, e.g., Ariza (2007) and Quintana Soler’s (2012) findings from qualitative

studies of culture in the EFL classroom and teachers' perceptions on language and culture which unveiled English language teachers' definitions of culture as knowledge or nation-based cultures. Along similar lines, Agudelo (2007) presented a qualitative pedagogical experience by implementing an optional course to demonstrate that an intercultural approach was an effective alternative to developing students' critical cultural awareness. The study revealed some degree of critical cultural awareness in prospective teachers' practices and personal views and suggested the need for systematic training to attain ICC.

Following the same concerns on culture and ELT, Posada (2004), Cruz (2007) and Gómez Rodríguez (2015) explored the significance of giving foreign language learners the chance to become aware of other cultures while becoming proficient in the target language by implementing different types of pedagogical strategies. Álvarez and Bonilla (2009) attempted to describe how the cultural component can be articulated in programmes educating language teachers through on-going cultural projects for assessment leading to the development of critical intercultural competence.

Sharing some of my research interests, Barletta (2009) studied English language teachers' ICC. The teachers referred to culture as something that was either taken for granted or based on essentialist, structural definitions. The notion of intercultural communicative competence was found very few times and was never defined. Ramos Holguín (2013) reported her pedagogical experience with 40 pre-service teachers and analysed how intercultural competence skills emerged after an intercultural component was introduced workshops. Findings revealed that pre-service teachers started to develop intercultural competence by developing skills related to interpreting and contextualizing cultural practices.

Gómez Rodríguez's (2012, 2015, 2015a) qualitative descriptive works have shed light on English language learners' ICC developments through their approach towards deep

culture and textbook analysis approaches to culture. He explored how pre-service teachers addressed complicated topics regarding the target culture and the own culture through reading authentic U.S. short stories to build pre-service teachers' critical intercultural communicative competence (ICC). Findings showed that participants developed some critical thinking, intercultural awareness and ICC through this strategy. Gómez Rodríguez (2015a) and Bonilla (2008) also undertook research on the cultural content in English language textbooks used as instructional resources. Findings indicate that the textbooks contained only static and positive topics pertaining to surface culture while omitting complex and transformative forms of culture.

Not much research in Colombia has studied international sojourns and ICC. Viáfara González and Ariza Ariza (2015) studied a different dimension of ICC by enquiring what impact international sojourns had on ELT Colombian teachers' professionalism. It was revealed that participants' origin, selected programme and contextual circumstances influenced their intercultural learning. As a result, teachers' intercultural awareness, critical understanding of culture and repositioning to build cultural agency suggested the need to connect travelling abroad programmes with undergraduate curricula and previous preparation of ICC development.

Quantitative or mix-method research reported in Spanish has also started to emerge (Ricardo Barreto 2011; Cano Barrios, Ricardo Barreto & Del Pozo Serrano, 2016). Ricardo Barreto (2011) carried out a mixed-method, non-experimental research project in which she analysed the intercultural competences of undergraduate programme virtual tutors. The analysis found that virtual teachers developed an incipient intercultural competence. Similarly, Cano Barrios, Ricardo Barreto and Del Pozo Serrano (2016) quantitatively analysed the intercultural competences of 68 higher education students on online learning courses. The

results showed that a high percentage of students considered themselves proficient in efficacy between diverse cultures, understanding and respect of differences and diversity.

To finish this section, some research has been undertaken based on the key assumption that some English language teachers and teacher trainers are already familiar with and have already developed ICC themselves, so they are able to develop ICC in their learners. ICC pedagogical experiences seem to demonstrate teachers' willingness to approach IELT. Despite important advancements, the question of how EFL teacher trainers build and develop their own ICC remains a moot point. In summary, IELT research in Colombia has mainly explored ICC qualitatively, maybe in an attempt to describe a field seldom explored until now. Previous studies have almost exclusively focused on pedagogical experiences to develop IELT by implementing a series of instructional contents (e.g., workshops, courses, literary analysis). To my knowledge, up to the present date, no prior studies have focused on IELT, more concisely, on Colombian EFL teachers developing an ICC teaching profile. My study aims to develop this understanding further by providing an empirically-based extrapolation of teachers' knowledge, beliefs and experiences in ELT to serve as a bedrock for their development of ICC and its application in the language classroom.

## **2.8. Concluding the chapter**

This chapter has reviewed the teaching and learning of English in Colombia, including the linguistic situation and the consolidation of English as the most important foreign language. Misleading views of Colombia as a monolingual country, disregarding local Amerindian and creoles languages are all indicative of Spanish linguistic superiority and ethnocentrism. Despite this situation, English has been widely accepted—although this has been a debated point—as the most learned and taught foreign language, which has aided economic growth,

professional development, power and prestige. For this reason, ELT policies in the country over the last three decades have consisted of traditional approaches to teaching and shaping teachers' views into instrumental approaches to language; this narrow perspective has impeded on prospective ICC developments in the language classroom. The lack of clarity in terms of MEN's position on culture and ICC in ELT makes the panorama even more confusing for teachers.

Colombian scholars and educational stakeholders advocate for improving the quality of teacher education and more reflective, critical curricula to foster enhanced approaches to ELT (Beltrán, 2004; Cortés, Hernández & Díaz, 2009; Barón, 2010; Barón & Bonilla, 2011). Interest in conducting research in the field of culture learning and teaching and IELT (Barletta, 2009; Álvarez, 2014) has gradually been increasing, and national research advocates the need for further exploration of teaching and inclusion of culture in English language courses (e.g., Barletta, 2009; Ramos Holguín, 2013; Gómez Rodríguez, 2015).

Publications on ICC in Colombia in Spanish are scarce (e.g., Bermúdez-Jiménez & Lugo-Vásquez, 2012; Campo & Bonilla 2007; Fandiño-Parra; Varón Páez, 2009). Research outcomes principally published in English (as was the case with the studies cited above) may restrict sharing this emerging knowledge with teachers who have a basic English language proficiency or with those from other languages, including indigenous languages and Spanish as an additional or foreign language, who might also benefit from a knowledge of how to include ICC in a language programme. Maybe to gain wider readership, in Spain, for instance, research and critical articles are published in English and in Spanish, even when the topic is related to English language ICC teaching and learning (e.g., Álvarez González, 2010; Paricio Tato, 2014; Sánchez Torres, 2014). Using both languages to communicate my research

outcomes can be an effective strategy to share results with other areas of teaching different from English and to achieve a greater impact, number of readers and applications.

My research challenges traditional ELT teaching practices that undermine the value of culture and ICC in ELT. One of the major concerns is that English language teachers can critically reflect upon their own and other cultures, and then develop CCA as they may eventually become intercultural agents to teach IELTS.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Literature review**

#### **The Cultural and Intercultural Dimensions in English Language Teaching**

As earlier stated in Chapter 1, this research aims to develop a (potential) profile of the intercultural language teacher in Colombia and to explore how they may build on current practices in English language teaching to include more global-oriented intercultural language teaching approaches in their praxis. Chapter 2 examined the positioning of English in Colombia and some of the language policies that have shaped ELT practices for decades. Also, a brief revision of national research on IELT was discussed to provide empirically-based knowledge and to demonstrate how my research is necessary and important for the IELT field and in fostering the development of English language teachers' ICC.

To achieve my objectives and answer the research questions, I now examine the literature on the international theories and studies in the ELT field; the relationship between language teaching, culture and intercultural language teaching; teachers' development of ICC; and their willingness and dispositions to achieve IELT.

#### **3.1. Reflections on culture and ELT**

As this research endeavours to understand the current thinking of Colombian English language teachers in relation to culture and interculturality so as to foster more intercultural teaching practices, it is necessary to explore the concept of culture and how influential it is in English language teaching to then be able to move towards interculturality and intercultural language teaching.

A central tenet in my research is that teaching a language requires an emphasis on both the linguistic and cultural components of language (Calderón, 2015; Chlopek, 2008; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Risager, 2007, Sercu *et al.*, 2005). ELT is no longer limited to the linguistic and communicative domain; learning a language has transcended to include more analytical and critical stances that encourage students not only to learn the language but also to become intercultural citizens who are critically aware of the context in which they are learning the language (Bandura, 2011; Byram, 2000b; Choudhury, 2014; Guilherme, 2002; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). One key empirically-based assumption of this investigation is that as a route to intercultural citizenship with the help of language and communication, teaching and learning English in global times requires intercultural awareness and intercultural competences to be developed. Language teaching entails the inextricable relationship between and the importance of culture and language as one inseparable entity (Allen, 1985; Kramsch, 1994, 2009, 2013; Peterson & Coltrane, 2000). This, in turn, needs to be reflected in the English language classroom.

The literature review shows that, from Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1953) to Baldwin, Faulkner, Hecht, and Lindsley (2006), definitions of culture, when combined, evidence the change of social thinking patterns and views of culture as social phenomena: from very structural (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952) and anthropological (Taylor, 1953) views, to more critical, post-structuralist (Faulkner *et al.*, 2006; Kramsch, 2013) approaches. This research takes a constructivist, non-essentialist approach to culture or uses “«anti-essential» dynamic conceptions of culture” (Elsen & St. John, 2007, p. 25). This means that the concept is dynamic and open in nature; generalizations should be abandoned to recognize and understand how groups create communities, participate in social activities and give coherence to the values held and the actions performed in a community through communication, which is



constantly defining and redefining the community (Mantovani, 2000; González, Houston and Chen, 2000).

### **3.2. Approaching definitions of culture**

As stated in the introductory chapter, culture in my research is understood as “a moving target” (Baldwin, Faulkner & Hecht, 2006, p. 24). Elsen and St. John (2007, p. xviii) state: “Cultural meanings are constructed through people’s use of symbols, both verbal and nonverbal. Communication, then, is an ongoing process of reconstructing the meanings of the symbols through social interaction.” Accordingly, Elsen and St. John’s (2007) developed three classifying principles: “essentialist and generalized conceptions of culture” (p. 24), “essentialist and diversified definitions of culture” (p. 24), and “«anti-essential» dynamic conceptions of culture.” (p. 25).

The first, *essentialist and generalized conceptions of culture* is a structural approach, which understands culture as a static phenomenon that relates to homogeneous, large philosophies such as the nation state, ethnicity, geography, language and other aspects (e.g., García-Canclini, 1990; Horton & Hunt, 1984; Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952; Murdock, 1971). In terms of this approach, teaching culture is seen as merely imparting information on the target culture as individuals are taken as something “typical” of the larger domain (Elsen & St. John, 2007), which may be favoured by a transmission model of teaching (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). Within this approach, culture is understood to be a fifth skill; although an idea not accepted by Kramsch (1993), and it favours a contrastive approach that seeks to find cultural similarities and differences to avoid culture shock and communication misunderstandings (Elsen & St. John, 2007).

The second position, *essentialist and diversified definitions of culture*, takes the position that individuals have many cultures that cut across each other to conform a complex net of patterns that run much deeper than simple nationality, ethnicity, religion, etcetera, even though individual identities are considered finished products (Elsen & St. John, 2007).

The third position is aligned with a strong basis in constructivist thinking in that the *anti-essential* or post-structuralist view of culture sees culture is a constant (re)creation that prevails from the reshaping and renewing of social activities. Based on this viewpoint, culture is constantly changing, and is “under construction” (Tornberg, 2001, p. 181, as cited in Elsen & St. John, 2007, p. 25). If culture is seen as “a dynamic process of meaning making” (Elsen & St. John, 2007, p. 25), then intercultural English language teachers’ competence will be about coping with open-ended, unpredictable processes that enhance understanding and perception of multiple realities (Witte, 2011, p. 94).

*Functional and process definitions*, what culture does or accomplishes is also seen as a means to achieve specific aims such as Lewis’s design for living (1966); Barco’s adjustment and coping with the environment (1983); Agar’s everyday life problem solving (1994); and Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell’s sense of belonging (1999), even when there has been a recurrent articulation of structural-functional definitions of culture (Newmark & Asante, 1975). Process definitions focus on the ongoing social construction of culture but also “as an active creation by a group of people” (Baldwin, Faulkner & Hecht, 2006, p. 41).

Having addressed distinctions relating to the definitions of culture, it is fundamental to mention that, in practice, these merge and overlap in the themes, components, approaches and views that are given to culture with regard to the societies that build them continuously.

### **3.3. The inextricable relationship between culture and language teaching**

This section addresses what contemporary scholars have called the “cultural turn” (Byrnes, 2002; Byram, 1997, 2001), which in the field of foreign language education, means the shift from communicative to (inter) cultural language teaching. In this section, I briefly revise the foundations and criticism of culture-and-language teaching to illustrate how the teaching of culture in language education became a desirable standard that has advanced towards intercultural foreign language teaching.

This investigation relies on the assumption that one of the most significant changes in language education has been the recognition of the cultural dimension as a key component in language teaching and learning (Bush, 2007; Byram 1991, 1997; Godwin-Jones, 2013; Kramersch 1993, 2009, 2013; Liddicoat, 2008; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Seelye, 1993; Sercu *et al.*, 2005). Jorden (2000), Lo Bianco, Liddicoat & Crozet (1999) and Liddicoat & Scarino (2013) suggested that this *cultural turn* should necessarily advance towards *an intercultural turn* in language teaching, and in decades to come, it will be possible to gradually envisage intercultural language teaching. This premise underpins my research objectives: ELT aims are insufficient without reflecting on building interculturality. It is thus necessary to explore Colombian English language teachers’ existing or prospective intercultural communicative competence (ICC) to understand their teaching profiles and then to be able to build upon them. Without acknowledging the cultural context in which languages are used and experienced, language teaching and learning are incomplete and biased (Byram 1989a, 1989b; Doyé 1996).

As has been previously reported in the literature, the integration of culture and language teaching has happened under different perspectives; for instance, the pursuit of an intercultural speaker (Byram, 1997; Byram, Gribkoba & Starkey, 2002); the construction of a

Third Space or Third Place (Kramsch, 1993, 1995, 2003; 2009a, 2011, 2013); languacultural competence (Risager, 2000a, 2005, 2006, 2007 2013); the construction of an intercultural citizen (Guilherme, 2002; Byram, 2008, 2011; Porto & Byram, 2015), among others. Due to the complex nature of culture and interculturality, my study is embedded in the notion of constructivist language and culture teaching as an “open, dynamic, energetic, constantly evolving” process (Shohamy, 2007, p. 5, also advocated by Witte, 2011).

The integration of culture and language, however, has not been unproblematised. Graddol (2006) draws attention to the fact that English is no longer understood as a linguistic code or national language in inner circle countries. Due to globalisation and interconnectedness, the English language has played an essential role in creating a “common voice” shared by the great majority of the world’s population (Cavalheiro, 2015, p. 50). This phenomenon is known as English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), a notion that creates a tension between the indivisibility of language and culture understood from structuralist, nation-based perspectives as in communicative language teaching paradigms (Baker, 2015). When speaking of ELF, the relationship between language and culture should be best understood as flexible, situated and emergent. However, the concept of culture in EFL, as Holmes and Dervin advocate (2016, p. 6), arises as part of the intercultural orthodoxy and makes one reflect on its validity and scope (e.g., “what does the concept refer to? Does it refer to the global, the national, the regional, the local? Does it include references to gender, social class, power, language, religion, etc.?”). When English is thought of as a lingua franca, focusing on difference only (and not taking into account the points of convergence), it entails a limited, biased perspective of ELF cultural understanding. Because people build culture in every encounter, “ELF users do not meet cultures, but [they are] complex subjects who “do” identity and culture with each other.” (Holmes & Dervin, 2016, p. 9). As the concept of culture

involved in EFL is multifaceted and constantly changing, there should not be conceptual room for essentialist, reductionist views; this becomes a challenging task for language teachers who frequently understand culture teaching as teaching the culture of Anglophone countries and their lessons are designed around the structuralist idea of one language-one culture-one nation.

In Colombia, as worldwide literature suggests, previous studies have emphasised that there is already a wide consensus on the assumption that language and culture share the same dimension in the teaching of languages (e.g. Agudelo 2007; Cruz, 2007; Barletta Manjarrés 2009; Fandiño, 2014; Cano Barrios, Ricardo Barreto and Del Pozo Serrano; 2016). However, ELT seem disconnected from cultural and intercultural issues (Álvarez, 2014) which make language teaching and learning incomplete and uncritical (further explored in Chapter 6). Renewing and revitalizing language teaching and learning from an intercultural perspective goes far beyond the idea of teaching isolated units based on culture (Byram, 1997, 2000; Glas, 2013; Kramsch, 1993, 1998, 2009; Sercu, 2010; Szende, 2014). Accordingly, my research also targets that teaching culture, according to Sercu (2004, p. 76), should evolve from “familiarity with the foreign culture” to “cultural awareness” to “intercultural communicative competence.” This gradual scaffolding process can encourage progression that leads teachers and students to an understanding of intercultural teaching and learning, “to gain the knowledge, skills, and sensitivity to be cultural [...] mediators, able and comfortable in the role of interpreters among cultures, including their own” (Godwin-Jones, 2013, p. 2).

### **3.4.Culture teaching approaches**

The way English language Colombian teachers approach and teach culture is a fundamental issue in this research, and it can be used to determine their predispositions towards

intercultural English language teaching. For this reason, it is fundamental to make sense of the different tendencies when teaching English in the language curriculum, and how teachers approach it.

In the broadest sense, a first approach relevant to this research is Liddicoat and Kollner's (2012) two directions for the teaching of culture, which have already been touched upon. The first could be termed *cultural orientation*, which privileges knowledge about culture that remains external to the student as a subject matter. The second orientation advocates the intercultural way, which implies transformational engagement and the development of an intercultural identity when encountering another culture: "here the borders between self and other are explored, problematized, redrawn" (Liddicoat & Kollner, 2012, p. 79). An intercultural view of ELT does not undermine what has been capitalised upon during decades of culture teaching. Converse to what teachers may think, advancing towards IELT means implementing an intercultural approach to language; it does not mean that the teacher has to abandon communicative tasks, but rather "these can be adapted to provide materials for raising intercultural awareness" (Corbett, 2003, p. 41). As a result, in the Colombian context teachers need to become aware that the favouritism towards communicative approaches can be a positive standpoint to build upon IELT.

Crozet, Liddicoat, and Lo Bianco (1999) identified four ways to teach culture in language education: 1) the *traditional paradigm*; 2) the *culture studies paradigm*; 3) the *culture as practices paradigm*; and 4) *intercultural language teaching*. A more recent development (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013) has updated and enlarged the concept of the "traditional approach" to "culture as national attributes. The obvious drawback of such an approach to culture is its reductionist vision that may lead to stereotyping, which leads to culture being understood as an "unproblematic and unproblematized" construct reduced to a

label derived from political geography (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013, p. 18). This leads to a positivist, narrow view of culture that limits learners' chances of being critical and having the necessary reflection to foster intercultural insights.

### **3.4.1. The traditional paradigm**

Within the *traditional paradigm*, the literature takes centre stage as a valued artefact for a specific national group. Cultural competence in foreign language education is viewed as the mastery of a canon of literature (Allen, 1985; Crozet *et al.*, 1999; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013) considering that “it was through reading that students learned of the civilization associated with the target language” (Flewelling, 1993: 339, cited in Lessard-Clouston, 1997). In my personal view, however, it is unclear if the study of culture within the traditional paradigm mainly focused on an educated elite who were able to understand the nuts and bolts of a canon and the subtleties of fiction and non-fiction narrative analysis so that relevant conclusions on cultural patterns could be deduced. In this case, culture-and-language teaching and learning would have been successful for some audiences only, dealing just with the “tip” of the iceberg or big “C” manifestations of culture.

### **3.4.2. The culture studies paradigm**

The second paradigm, *culture studies*, has gradually replaced traditional views (Crozet *et al.*, 1999; Lafayette, 1975; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Seelye, 1974). Culture within language teaching and learning was influenced by “a view of culture as area studies – a learning about countries”, including history, geography, and institutions of the target language country or knowledge about the target country. However, when contemplating English as a global language or as an international language, or World Englishes, the native speaker will, in this

context, be a fallacy that cannot be supported under the grounds of a communication *lingua franca* (Canagarajah, 2007, 2011; Decke-Cornill, 2003). Kacru's (1992) three concentric circles—the inner circle, the outer circle, and the expanding circle countries—all have English speakers at different levels and from different origins and backgrounds who embrace culture in all language interactions. Because the *cultural studies* approach deals with a corpora of knowledge that the native speakers should have (Crozet *et al.*, 1999, p. 18), it is unrealistic that individuals are able to manage this huge amount of information.

### **3.4.3. The culture as practices paradigm**

The third paradigm, *culture as practices*, seeks to describe cultures in terms of the practices and values that typify them (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2003, p. 19). It views cultural competence as “knowing about what people from a specific cultural group are likely to do and understanding of the cultural values placed upon certain ways of acting or upon certain beliefs” (Crozet *et al.*, 1999, p. 19). A positive dimension of this approach is that culture is viewed as becoming strongly tied to language as “it sees action through language as central to culture” (Crozet *et al.*, 1999, p. 19). Nevertheless, the drawback comes when trying to interpret the target culture from their own local cultural perspectives, which may result in misleading interpretations and stereotyping. Here again, as my research advocates, IELTS could minimise this

According to Crozet, Liddicoat, and Lo Bianco (1999), the fourth paradigm — *Intercultural language teaching*— or “the intercultural turn” (Byram, Holmes & Savvides, 2013, p. 251; Dasli & Díaz, 2017; Risager, 2005) represents the consolidation of language and culture teaching and learning. Following, I will now discuss this concept, and its implications for and relationship with ELT more thoroughly, as it constitutes the core of this research.



### **3.5. Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC): A brief background and implications for ELT**

In my research, Kramsch's (1998, p. 27) view is valued in that ICC refers to "shared rules of interpretation" that are thoughtfully applied to familiar and new contexts to make sense of the world. However, ICC is a complex concept with little consensus on its definition (Kuada, 2004; Rathjie, 2007; Dervin, 2010). Different authors have intended to approach it from different perspectives; for example, intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997; Crozet, Liddicoat & Lo Bianco, 1999; Fantini, 2006; Porto, 2015), cross-cultural awareness (Knutson, 2006), intercultural awareness (Chamberlin-Quinlisk, 2005) and intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 1993). However, Byram (2009) suggests that, although there are common emerging themes from the research literature, it is impossible to pursue "an agreed and definite definition" (p. 329) due to social changes and the permanent theoretical evolutions.

At the heart of intercultural competence lies the concept of culture, which is "a highly complex, elusive, multi-layered notion." (Furstenberg, 2010, p. 329). Intercultural competence may also be seen, in very general terms, as the ability "to cope with one's own cultural background in interaction with others" (Beneke 2000, p. 108-109). To achieve this competence, Byram (2008; 2009, p. 329) advocates for the transitory validity of models and continuous construction of concepts and endorses that "specific theories or models have the advantage of helping teachers to teach but also have the disadvantage that they must change to meet new societal circumstances and the new demands made of teaching as a consequence." Under this assumption, ICC language teaching is presumed to be experimental and malleable, even for the Colombian context in which English has been prescriptively taught for decades.

Intercultural perspectives have become fundamental to revitalise language teaching and learning in different contexts (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002; Byrnes, 2002; Castro, Sercu & Méndez García, 2004; Choudhury, 2014; Dervin, 2010; Furstenberg, 2010, 2010a; Godwin-Jones, 2013; Guilherme, 2002; Porto, 2015; Porto & Byram, 2015). This fact gave foundations to my research in that, with an appropriate scaffolding gradual process, IELTS could also be a feasible possibility for Colombia to attain more comprehensive English language teaching profiles.

### **3.5.1. Some history in a nutshell**

During the first decades of the 20th century, scholars discussed the importance and possibilities of integrating cultural components into the language syllabus (Byrd, 2014; Dema & Moeller, 2012; Sysoyev & Donelson, 2002). Up until the mid-twentieth century, reading and studying literature was the principal goal of learning a foreign language (Allen, 1985). Flewelling (1993) noted that it could be possible to gain access to the civilisation associated with the target language through the process of extensive reading. Early cutting-edge and challenging proposals such as those of Nostrand (1966) and Brooks (1968) cannot be ignored. The former advocated for “Crosscultural communication and understanding” (p. 4), providing the foundational ideas of ICC. The latter, strongly endorsed by Steele (1989), emphasised the importance of culture, not for studying literature but for language learning itself.

During the seventies, an abundance of work by authors such as Savignon (1972), Seelye (1974), and Lafayette (1975, 1978) was devoted to discussing how the new communicative approach had replaced the audiolingual method of the sixties. However, communicative methods generally view language “as a means of bridging an “information gap” [so] learners will “naturally” develop their linguistic knowledge and skills, ultimately to

the point where they will acquire native-speaker competence” (Corbett, 2003, p. 1). Instructional materials then included sections on cultural teaching for the foreign language classroom, which reflected the goal of achieving target language communication within a cultural context. In this respect, Byram (2000, p. 8) observed that “this «communicative turn» in language teaching, particularly in English as a Foreign Language, tended to emphasise speech act and discourse competence, rather than (socio) cultural competence.” Similarly, Hymes’s (1972), Halliday’s (1979), and Hasan’s (1984) sociolinguistics, socio-pragmatics and socio-semiotics contributed to the social meanings of language, explaining how language teaching and learning inevitably included the wider context of culture, although the view of culture was mainly culture as national perspectives of target language cultures.

ICC can be traced back to some of Hymes’s conceptions of communicative competence; however, it has now become enriched by the existence of people who embody more than one cultural identity and the reality that language (and language users) interact in complex cultural contexts (Byram 1991; Kramsch 1993, 1998, 2008), or their ability to “reconcile or mediate between different modes present” (Byram & Fleming 1998, p. 12). This idea is supported by Corbett in a more nuanced way with respect to language-and-culture teaching (2003, p. 2):

While acknowledging the obvious importance of language as a means of communicating information, advocates of an intercultural approach also emphasise its social functions; for example, the ways in which language is used by speakers and writers to negotiate their place in social groups and hierarchies.

Accordingly, the intercultural approach unites some of the characteristics of earlier trends such as teaching culture in the communicative curriculum (Corbett, 2003) and builds

on *Third Places of dialogue and negotiation* (Feng, 2009; Kramsch, 1998, 2003, 2009a; Lo Bianco, Liddicoat & Crozet, 1999) to finally help construct a world of intercultural citizenship and dialogue (Guilherme, 2002; Porto & Byram, 2015). The foregoing discussion implies that the language and culture teacher and learner are viewed as individuals able to see culture as negotiated social actions shared by people in their relationships with others—competences that need to be further explored in the Colombian context, as advocated in my research objectives.

In the last decades, in Latin America, the term "intercultural education" has become increasingly more popular in the anthropological field to refer to educational programmes for indigenous groups or ethno-education, particularly in Ecuador, Colombia and Peru (Aikman 1997; Bodmar 1990). Specifically, in the Colombian case, *intercultural* has been equated to ethno-education, as well as how indigenous cultural traditions differ from those from the national culture (Aikman 1997; Hamel, 2008; López, 2009). Interculturality with regard to group diversity or other additional cultures (e.g. regional, national diversity; youngsters' urban cultures) and languages within the same country (e.g., palenquero, creole, Romani) has seldom been explored.

Worldwide research into intercultural education—and intercultural language education—can be understood, according to Aguado and Malik (2006), as a holistic approach based on respect and appreciation for cultural diversity, which conveys equal opportunities for all, fosters dialogue, communication and intercultural competence, and overcomes discrimination, racism and exclusion. Along similar lines, Dervin (2010, p. 158) propounds that intercultural competence, which is the expected outcome of the insertion of interculturality in language learning and teaching, is a vital competence in our contemporary world in the field of language education (as also advocated by Barany, 2016; Buttjes & Byram

1991; Byram 2008, 2009a; Lo Bianco, Liddicoat & Crozet, 1999). Dervin adds that, “If one introduces this competence in one’s teaching, one needs to develop ways of making sure that it is *developed*” (Dervin, 2010, p. 158, italics in the original), and that it does not only exist on written proposals, (MEN, 2016, 2016a), as it seems to in Colombia.

The understanding of intercultural competence vis-à-vis this research starts with what ELT teachers and learners should bring to an intercultural encounter. Byram’s model for ICC (1997) presents, defines, and clarifies the importance of preparing students with the attitudes, knowledge, and skills needed to participate in intercultural relationships and in intercultural encounters throughout the individuals’ life. Nevertheless, organising the basic elements of intercultural competences (e.g., Byram, 1997; Guilherme, 2000; Deardorff, 2009; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013) is just the first step in understanding and developing Byram’s critical cultural awareness. ICC and intercultural teaching and learning should develop in both teachers and learners an understanding of their own language (s) and culture (s) in relation to the target language (Barany, 2016; Liddicoat, Papademetre, Scarino, Kohler & Wood, 2003; Porto & Byram, 2015).

### **3.5.2. Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) vis-à-vis language teaching**

IELT purports that “adding a language and culture to an individual’s repertoire expands the complexity, generates new possibilities, and creates a need for mediation between languages and cultures and the identities that they frame” (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013, p. 23). As suggested by Kramsch (2008, 2011), the teaching of any language should surpass the teaching of a linguistic code to inclusively teach meanings which do not replace traditional foci, but broadly add to them. This idea is strongly echoed by Liddicoat and Scarino (2013, p. 2) who

advocated a strong relationship between language, culture and learning and the synergy among them:

Teaching meaning involves recognizing that as part of learning any additional language the learner inevitably brings more than one language and culture to the processes of meaning-making and interpretation. That is, there are inherent intercultural processes in language learning in which meanings are made and interpreted across and between languages and cultures and in which the linguistic and cultural repertoires of each individual exist in complex interrelationships.

Byram, Holmes and Savvides (2013, p. 251) state it simply by explaining the importance of teaching languages interculturally: “teachers and learners now need to be «aware» of other people’s «cultures» as well as their own.” This explanation helps inexperienced audiences (such as teachers in Colombia where ICC is still incipient) understand the concept of ICC. In short, the process of becoming interculturally competent requires certain attitudes, knowledge, and skills that are not necessarily innate and need to be promoted (Feng, Byram & Fleming, 2009; Griffith, Wolfeld, Armon, Rios, & Liu, 2016; Guilherme 2000), in addition to linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse competence.

### **3.6. Preconditions to achieve intercultural perspectives in ELT**

Because this research focuses on the intercultural perspective of English language teaching in Colombia, it is essential to discuss Liddicoat & Scarino’s (2013) principles that can be understood as preconditions to achieve an intercultural perspective for the teaching of English (Liddicoat *et al.*, 2003; Liddicoat, 2008; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). These preconditions are not intended as theoretical, pre-established categories of analysis, but they are of importance

for this research, which assumes that English language teachers in my country have capitalised on a long history of experience from communicative approaches. These may add to a background of experiential knowledge that can serve as a bedrock to develop IELT. Liddicoat & Scarino's (2013) preconditions to IELT include: active construction, making connections, social interaction, responsibility and reflection. In this section, *reflection* (something that comprises *reflective teaching*) will be more carefully examined from other perspectives since the concept plays an important role in this research, and it is considered to be at the core of the proposed model (see Chapter 7, section 7.2.2). Because this research advocates for progression and gradual growth to develop ICC and IELT, examining preconditions in teachers can help see their potential towards the process.

### **3.6.1. Active construction**

This means offering opportunities to explore the cultural implications of people's language experiences. In my view, this should become a mandatory component of language education, which sees prospective English language teachers able to establish dynamic nets of relationships as they learn the language and methodologies to teach it in a classroom. It also entails the development and exploration of every language experience that is potentially open to interpretation (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013).

### **3.6.2. Making connections**

This refers to the overarching postulate that languages and cultures are not acquired or experienced in isolation: a fact that has been long acknowledged worldwide and also in Colombia. When interacting with a new language and culture, a learner-teacher is able to articulate the new to what is already known or the *intracultural* experience they bring to the

learning (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013, p. 57). This represents a first point of connection between the learner and the new experience, which provides a first interpretive position in relation to the new.

### **3.6.3. Social interaction**

This acknowledges that “learning and communication are social and interactive” (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013, p. 57); intercultural communication and interaction entail the development of an individual’s understanding of the connection between one’s own framework of language and culture and that of others. Social interaction is comprised by “negotiating understandings, of accommodating or distancing from understandings presented by others, of agreeing and disagreeing with the understandings of others, and understanding of the nature and causes of such agreements and disagreements” (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013, p. 58).

### **3.6.4. Responsibility**

My study formally acknowledges Guilherme’s (2007) and Liddicoat and Scarino’s (2013) position that English language teachers should be made accountable for contributing to cosmopolitan citizenship education. Guilherme (2007, p. 78) states that either as a subject or as a transversal topic in the curriculum, “English is a powerful medium of different identifications and representations and therefore the teaching/learning of EGL [English as a Global Language] needs to include the responsibility for preparation of cosmopolitan citizens.” This enlarged ethical dimension of ELT makes teachers as intercultural speakers responsible for developing intercultural sensitivity and intercultural understanding (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013).



As this responsibility is related to an ethical component, Ferri (2014) establishes the dual dimension in ICC and ethics by expressing that, “responsibility adds an ethical layer to intercultural interaction”. Thus, it follows that ethically, the interlocutor assumes the responsibility of understanding what others say and of understanding what is meant in saying something and in seeking to be understood by others. “The intercultural is therefore manifested as and through an ethical commitment to the acceptance and valuing of language and culture within and across languages and cultures.” (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013, p. 59).

### **3.6.5. Reflection**

Reflection is an important component of a teacher’s growth and empowerment, and it leads to the development of more critical teaching and IELT, which can result in critical cultural awareness (CCA) as advocated in my research. “Reflection [...] brings before me something that otherwise happens behind my back” (Gadamer, 1976, p. 38). Reflective teaching or critical reflective teaching and becoming a reflective practitioner (Bartlett, 1990; Bengtsson, 1995; Calderhead, 1989; Gore, 1987; Parker, 1984; Richards & Lockhart, 1996; Zeichner, 1987) has been a desirable goal in language teacher education. Reflection is a core concept that is a common thread throughout this research and one of the preconditions proposed by Sze (1999) to develop ICC, therefore, examining it is fundamental. Much literature about language curricula and language teachers’ education quality and advancement focuses on the need for reflective practice (Bolton, 2005; Fandiño, 2006; Jackson, 2014; Ohata; 2007; Porto & Byram, 2015; Richards, 2008; Sánchez-Jabba, 2013).

Liddicoat and Scarino (2013, p. 58) define *reflection* in intercultural language education as, “the capacity of decentring, of stepping outside one’s existing, culturally constructed, framework of interpretation and seeing things from a new perspective”. Thus,

teacher learning through reflection means, “becoming aware of how we think, know, and learn about language (first and additional), culture, knowing, understanding and their relationships as well as concepts such as diversity, identity, experiences and one’s own intercultural thoughts and feelings” (Liddicoat, 2013, p. 58).

Focusing on IELTS, Sercu and St. John (2007), and Sze (1999), Richards and Ho (1998) advocate that the implementation of reflective activities that value teachers' practices and encourage reflection in various ways is fundamental. In my research, English language teachers’ shift towards interculturalising ELT are briefly examined according to three orientations: reflective teaching as *thoughtful practice*, as *a model of teacher preparation* and as *organised professional development* (Sze, 1999).

As *thoughtful practice*, reflective teaching is more than *thinking* about something (Griffiths & Tann, 1992, p. 71). It is about approaching, understanding, maintaining and changing courses of action chosen by individuals (Archer 2010; Ryan, 2015). Sze (1999, p. 133) notes that: “It is a disposition to think about one's teaching practice, instead of passively following routinized procedures that one has established over the years.” Wallace (1996, 1998) contributes to the debate by stating that observing and thinking need to be followed by actions leading to critical reflective teaching that have a positive impact and can be seen in the classroom. This thoughtful practice is in line with major postulations within ICC and language teaching, and for this reason, a necessary component in this investigation’s main objectives. In a previous work, Byram, Gribkova, and Starkey (2002, p. 34) made a direct relationship between reflection and the intercultural dimension by asserting that:

What language teachers need for the intercultural dimension is not more knowledge of other countries and cultures, but skills in promoting an atmosphere in the classroom which allows learners to take risks in their thinking and feeling.

Such skills are best developed in practice and in reflection on experience. They may find common ground in this with teachers of other subjects and/or in taking part themselves in learning experiences which involve risk and reflection.

*As a model of teacher preparation*, “reflection must form a crucial part of a training methodology, which must incorporate the elements of choice, decision-making, and ownership of ideas” (Williams, 1994, p. 218). This entails a fundamental shift of paradigm in English language teacher education programmes from a prescriptive to more flexible, constructivist approaches. Wallace (1991, p. 55; 1998) purports that since “received knowledge” tends to be a prescriptive corpus of methodologies set by experts in the field of ELT, it is external to a teacher’s experience and, therefore, insufficient to aid teacher practices.

*As organised professional development*, English language teachers’ in-service learning and professional growth can be enriched by reflection (Ghaye & Ghaye, 1998; Parrott, 1993; Schön, 1983; Ur, 1996; Wajnryb, 1992), especially if they have not been trained into reflective practices during initial education programmes. My research finds grounds with Sercu and St. John’s (2007, p. 53) in that, “the process of reflective teaching supports the development and maintenance of a teacher’s professional competence, [...] the willingness to reflect on ourselves analytically, to question our own convictions, to challenge our own assumptions, prejudices, ideologies, and current classroom practices.” Concomitantly, the reflective practitioner (Schön, 1984) describes the reflective teacher as someone “who is discovering more about their own teaching by seeking to understand the processes of teaching and learning in their own and others’ classrooms.” (Wajnryb, 1992, p. 9). My study is underpinned by the assumption that teachers becoming reflective practitioners helps

understand how ICC can enrich ELT by promoting criticality and reflection when establishing relations with cultural Others.

These three potential perspectives on reflection (as thoughtful practice, as a model of teacher preparation and as organised professional development) offer teachers a first step to reconsider important changes in their teaching methodologies and their *personal epistemologies* (Ryan, 2015, my italics). Because academic or professional reflection generally involves a conscious and stated purpose (Moon, 2006), personal epistemology should be interpreted as an individual philosophical stance on cognition regarding knowing and knowledge; this has an influence on and is influenced by the social and teaching/learning environments. This personal epistemology involves ways of knowing and acting from the individual's previous experiences, capacities and negotiations with the social and sensory world, which, in turn, shape how one learns (Billett 2009; Brownlee *et al.* 2011; Ryan, 2015).

In order for Colombian English teachers to change their ELT approaches, they will require a willingness to interconnect and use knowledge to set personal action goals (Dasli, 2011; Ryan, 2015;). Personal epistemologies are then not only core to the process of individual learning (as teachers learn to become intercultural), but also to the transformation and re-making of culture and social structures as individuals engage in different ways and at different levels in different social and cultural environments (Billett, 2009; Ryan, 2015).

### **3.7. Critical Cultural Awareness (CCA)**

Critical cultural awareness (CCA) is a compelling topic when approaching ICC in ELT. According to Breeze (2017, p. 38), "The importance of developing critical cultural awareness in order to build effective intercultural relationships is undisputed in today's globalised world." Seminal contributions have been made by Byram (1997), who believes that it is

fundamental to include CCA in language education objectives. He defines CCA 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.*” (p. 53. Authors’ own italics). CCA, which is at the core of *savoir s’engager* and implies “interacting vigorously and critically with knowledge and experience” (Byram, 1997, p. 90), integrates politics into language education. As a result, because education is never neutral, language teachers should assume social and political responsibilities in the classroom (Byram & Feng, 2005; Guilherme, 2002). Byram (1997, p. 35) uses the term CCA to highlight the need for a reflective and analytical stance towards culture (one’s and others’), which leads to the relativisation of cultural appraisals that expand their interpretative frameworks beyond mono-culturalism and ethnocentricity.

Byram (2000, 2011) also theorizes on the synergic relationship of cultural awareness (CA) and CCA in the context ICC in terms of the contribution it makes to the development of critical assessment of culture dynamics in one’s own and other cultures (Byram 1997). CA equates culture to knowledge from communicative approaches or paradigms of modern language education that familiarise learners with the culture of a country or of a group of countries depending on the language taught (Byram, 2000, 2012a). According to Risager (2000), an important dimension of CA is the concept of reflexivity, that leads the individual from ethnocentrism to relativity. As one step forward, CCA encourages language educators to create learning opportunities to turn individuals into critical thinkers who are aware of interconnections between classroom lessons and real-world issues (Costa Alfonso, 2011; Nugent & Catalano, 2015).

The importance of Byram’s CCA, and the CA-CCA continuum in my research is that it provides critical and reflective stances Colombian reseach outcomes (e.g., Fandiño, 2006; González, 2003; Ramos Hoguín, 2013) claim ELT requires to advance towards the future.

One assumption in this research that aims exploring IELTS profiles in Colombia is that gradual advances towards teachers' CCA may lead to IELTS. The notion of CCA may also empower Colombian teachers to assume new roles in the classroom, more pro-active roles "in the creation of a critically aware and reflective citizenry for the future." (Guilherme (2002, p. ix). Through the teaching of English, teachers can encourage learners build new spaces for exploration, cultural mediation and dialogue with the language. This will make an important shift from the *cultural* to the *intercultural* ELT in my country.

### **3.8. IELTS pedagogies and the intercultural language teacher**

Central to this literature review discussion, the justification for an intercultural component in language curricula and in language teachers as prompters of language and culture experiences in the classroom is presented as a response to the transformation of local and global communities; consequently, learners become better prepared for appropriate participation in intercultural conversations (Kramsch, 2004; Sinicrope *et al.*, 2007; Stewart, 2007). In Colombia, the intercultural turn in ELT (discussed above) leads to the necessity to inform teachers and the teaching profession of these approaches in ICC, and concomitantly, the perception of what teaching languages means and implies.

#### **3.8.1. ICC language teaching pedagogies**

Liddicoat (2008) advocate for two dimensions to conform an ICC language pedagogy: the first of these is that an intercultural pedagogy engages with the interrelatedness of language culture and learning and with the multiple languages and cultures present in the classroom. This contrast with theoretical developments on ICC language teaching that have often demonstrated how language and culture are seen as separate objects of study. Glas (2013, p.

65), for instance, in view of what mostly happens in Colombia, criticises the reality experienced in language classrooms where, “there is a focus on language function learning; consequently, [...] cultural contents [...] are in practice often neglected and might never become an important feature in class.”

This recurrent idea has been shared before by Madricardo (2001, p. 327), who concluded in his research findings based on a survey of 370 teachers of different languages that language and culture “appear as two distinct objects of study.” This leads to the potential conclusion that, for some teachers, culture is still the sum of encyclopaedic knowledge that is to be taught: something to be memorized or simply something that is occasionally provided. Similarly, Guilherme (2002), in her investigation into teachers of English in Portugal and how they feel about culture teaching, found that despite widespread interest in the teaching/learning of culture in language classes, “its inclusion is often carried out with reservation and, in the worst cases, with some lack of seriousness” (p. 174).

The second dimension for an interculturally-oriented approach to language teaching and learning to happen, according to Liddicoat (2008), has to do with the recognition that there are always at least two languages at play at every moment: the target language and the first language(s) of the students. In this way, “each language constructs the world in particular ways and carries embedded understandings of the nature of that world.” (Liddicoat, 2008, p. 280). This view totally apposes monolingual target language environments as in CLT, which attempts to exclude the learners’ own language in the classroom as a much as possible because it is seen as problematic for the acquisition of the new language. In terms of intercultural language teaching, this neglects of the identities and cultural realities of both the teachers and the learners (Liddicoat, 2008).

Marczak (2010), strongly echoed in Piątkowska (2015), makes a more general comparison between intercultural teaching and traditional, knowledge-based approaches, a position akin to that of the current Colombian context. While intercultural teaching focuses on CA, CCA and systematic, trained skills, knowledge-based teaching emphasises the acquisition of facts about the target language culture. Intercultural teaching pays attention not only to the target language culture, but also to the home culture or any other international cultural references (Marczak, 2010). This reconceptualization of ELT (Garrido & Álvarez 2006) clearly establishes that the outcome of IELT is not teacher-centred target language and culture or native speakerism but a variety of cultural outcomes (Marczak, 2010). IELT aims at guiding teachers and learners develop ways of enquiring about their own and the target culture by noticing, describing and analysing their ideas and experiences, as they also develop their awareness. This means they engage with interpreting self and other's meanings. In doing so, Liddicoat (2008, p. 282) adds,

The ongoing exchange of meanings in interaction and reflecting both on the meanings exchanged and the process of interaction are an integral part of life in our world. As such, intercultural language learning is best understood not as something to be added to teaching and learning but rather, something that is integral to the interactions that already and inevitably take place in the classroom and beyond.

The limited exploration on systematic culture teaching, particularly in the Colombian context, confirms the need for a transformation of ELT, as Guilherme (2007, p. 79) advocates, into a robust component of ICC in language teaching:

The effective study of foreign languages, EGL[English as a Global Language]/EFL in particular, implies cultural, cross-cultural and intercultural



learning. This process involves the acknowledgement not only of facts [...] but also of the complexity of hidden meanings, of underlying values, and how these articulate with the micro- and macro-contexts in which they/we exist.

For Guilherme (2002, 2007), and for my research, the role of the language teacher as an agent of change and pedagogical progress are central. Therefore, efforts to guide them into exploring ICC in language classrooms is important as language teaching pedagogies advance towards more comprehensive goals.

### **3.8.2. The intercultural language teacher**

In my investigation, IELT implies that teachers should become intercultural themselves with constructivist views of social phenomena and should understand the new challenges of ICC language education (Li, 2016; Piątkowska, 2015;). Intercultural language teaching as a desired aim offers feasible relations with issues such as human rights and citizenship education (Cheng, 2012; Dervin & Gross, 2016; Guilherme, 2002; Risager, 2007) which are part of the cultural complexity that learners cannot just “pick up by themselves when they go to the foreign country” (Liddicoat, 2008, p. 278). It is the responsibility of language teachers to provide learners with the analytical tools to promote ICC. This leads to the necessity of a systematic reflection of English language teachers’ roles and profiles being questioned to address the new complexities of teaching languages in Colombia and countries in which languages are taught academically.

IELT remakes teachers’ profiles and bolsters reflections on ELT and the role of culture in the language curriculum (Trujillo Sáez, 2002). Developing IELT coincides with a general shift towards international educational goals, which recognise that, “through the process of

learning a new foreign language [...] students [and teachers] are also encouraged to get involved in the construction of the world around them (Vez, 2001, p. 17). In this way, the process of overcoming the instrumental vision of learning languages involves teachers and learners in the on-going transformation of the self: “their ability to communicate, to understand communication within one’s own culture and across those of others and their languages, and to develop the capability for on-going reflection.” (Liddicoat *et al.* 2003, p. 1).

ICC language teachers view language as a culturally grounded meaning-maker (Liddicoat, 2008; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013) and as a complex net of related abilities that are needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself (Byram 1989a; Doyé 1996; Fantini 2006; Risager 1998, 2007). It is about “seeing the world through others’ eyes” (Sercu 2005, p. 14), knowing that individuals cannot be reduced to their collective identities. In this way, establishing open-mindedness, tolerance of difference, and respect for the *Self* and the *Other* is part of promoting ICC in the IEFL classroom (Skopinskaja 2009). This underscores the importance of preparing individuals to engage and collaborate with a global society by discovering appropriate ways to interact with people from other cultures (Guilherme, 2002; Sincrope, Niorris & Watanabe, 2007).

Regarding English language teachers’ learning and their becoming prepared for interculturalising language teaching practices, one branch of research suggests that teachers should engage in immersion experiences in a cultural context other than their own as an essential step in being able to develop intercultural competence (Merryfield, 2000; Sleeter, 2007). Accordingly, Merryfield’s research with eighty teacher educators, which gave special value to “lived experience” and writing with “retrospective meaning making” (p. 431),

suggested the importance of being perceived as the Other. However, mere *exposure* to another culture is insufficient to consciously achieve a *third place* or acquire intercultural competence. Challenging the aforementioned position, other research (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002; Witte, 2011) defends the idea that direct exposure (full immersion) to the foreign culture is desired but unnecessary; they state that this does not necessarily mean a failure in achieving a *third place* and a high degree of intercultural competence:

The crucial condition for developing genuine third places is an ongoing awareness and reflectivity about the cognitive, affective, and psychological changes in the development of subjective third places that take place in the process of learning a foreign language and culture (Witte, 2011, p. 100).

As suggested by Parmenter (1997, p. 28), “the media, education, and other forms of indirect contact can also provide opportunities to gain knowledge and understanding of other nations and cultures.” This means that *in situ* or indirect experiences are particularly relevant in triggering ICC teaching views and competence (De Jaeghere & Cao, 2009). This is particularly valuable for public sector Colombian teachers whose economic conditions do not always permit training abroad.

Some scholars advocate that in the field of teacher development, further research and investment are needed for teacher training with regard to the teaching of (inter)cultural learning in the language classroom (Bastos & Araujo é Sá, 2014; Schulz *et al.* 2005). On this topic, Cushner and Mahon (2009) do not believe that developing intercultural sensitivity and competence is achieved by the cognitive-only approach to learning as some of the literature and research suggests. It is also achieved through experience and the affective domain within

cognition; through “impactful experiences” (p. 316) people are challenged to understand and accommodate differences and plausibly understand similarities.

A fundamental theory to inform understanding of ICC teachers was Sercu’s (2006) advocacy for the Foreign Language and Intercultural Competence teacher or the *FL&IC teacher* who may offer broader possibilities to promote a more international approach and teacher/learner world citizenship (Sercu, *et al.*, 2005; Sercu, 2006). The author makes claims about the existence of specific characteristics that constitute a proficient profile of a good foreign language and intercultural competence (FL&IC) teacher (2006, pp. 57-58):

They should know both what stereotypes pupils have and how to address these in the foreign language classroom. They should know how to select appropriate content, learning tasks and materials that can help learners become interculturally competent. With respect to skills, we stated that teachers should be able to employ teaching techniques that promote the acquisition of *savoirs*, *savoir-apprendre*, *savoir-comprendre*, *savoir-faire* and *savoir-être*. [...] They should be able to select appropriate teaching materials and to adjust these materials [...] In addition to being skilful classroom teachers, teachers should also be able to use experiential approaches to language-and-culture teaching.

FL&IC teachers’ main challenge is to do much more than lecture about culture. They understand that intercultural competence teaching is not another trend in teaching foreign languages. FL&IC teachers should be favourably disposed towards the integration of intercultural competence teaching in the foreign language classroom in terms of both language learning and intercultural competence acquisition and should also analyse, evaluate and adapt teaching materials to evaluate to what extent they serve the purpose of promoting the

acquisition of intercultural competence. In the same way, FL&IC teachers should be ready to make sense of their students' perceptions and attitudes regarding cultures as a starting point to design more successful learning processes (Willems, 2000; Sercu, 2006). Teachers can first learn themselves in the classroom and then help learners develop "ways of finding out more about the culture they are learning about by analysing their experiences and developing their awareness" (Liddicoat 2008, p. 280).

Last, in my research, Colombian English language teachers' knowledge and experiences are considered pre-stages of a profile to develop IELTS. This investigation is built on the underpinning assumption that "today's teaching professionals may be the subject of a demand to changing their profiles" (Savu, 2014, p. 111), and for this reason, English language teachers developing ICC and becoming intercultural teachers can significantly enrich their knowledge, skills and teaching praxis as their understandings and appraisals of their own and other's languages and worldviews will reshape traditional language classroom developments.

### **3.9. Research on ICC language teachers and teaching**

Existing empirical studies on English language teachers, and how they make sense of their own ICC development in language teaching is fundamental to evaluate tendencies and research directions on the topic with regard to my research. In the realm of the intercultural language teacher, there is a significant amount of research on developing on developing general teacher cultural competence (e.g., Dooly, 2010; Menard-Warwick, 2008; Nazarenko, 2015; Tang & Choi, 2004). Meanwhile, studies on language teachers' ICC and their general competences are not particularly abundant. The existing ones, however, suggest the necessity to systematically develop the intercultural competence of pre-service and in-service language teachers (e.g., Atay, 2005; Bektaş-Çetnkaya & Börkan, 2012; Byram & Risager, 1999;

Guilherme, 2002; Li, 2016; Polat & Ogay Barka, 2014; Sercu, 2005; Sercu, 2006). General findings include the necessity to widen teacher knowledge to integrate intercultural critical aspects into practice and teacher education (Bektaş-Çetinkaya, 2014; Dogancay- Aktuna, 2005; Garrido & Alvarez, 2006; Paricio Tato, 2014; Piątkowska, 2015; Sercu, 2007; Risager, 2006, 2012).

### **3.9.1. On pre-service and in-service teachers' cultural and intercultural awareness**

An important quantitative study with a wide transnational impact was on preservice teachers in Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Mexico, Poland, Spain and Sweden (Sercu *et al.*, 2005). It concluded that, on average, teachers have a FL&IC (Foreign Language and Intercultural Competence) teaching profile, but this profile did not coincide with the envisaged FL&IC profile expected in their research (Sercu, 2005, pp. 161-162). Although substantially different in the methodological research paradigm, Sercu's *et al.* informed my research objectives about language teachers' beliefs and conceptions on culture and interculturality and also shed light on ideas of willingness to advance towards IELT. Of particular interest were the research outcomes derived from Mexico, as the only Latin American country participating. These findings served as a benchmark for my own findings as will be discussed in chapter 6.

Another study on pre-service teachers in Finland aimed to gain preliminary insights into how much attention was paid to cultural issues during language teachers' initial training (Larzen-Östermark, 2009, p. 405). They concluded that culture in language teaching has not been properly addressed in teacher training programmes, as, among other reasons, "little advice is given for the realisation of the cultural dimension in practice" (p. 417). Within the same Finnish context, based on the analysis of a focus group discussion with three intercultural communication teachers, Dervin and Tournebise (2013) enquired as to how teachers

conceptualize, construct and negotiate the “intercultural” when they talk about what they teach and how; they unveiled *turbulences* and concluded on the need for a paradigm shift in the field of intercultural communication (Dervin & Tournebise, 2013, p. 533). Their findings relate to a “renewed interculturality” (p. 541) or embracing changes such as fighting biases or putting justice at the centre. Studies of the Colombian context (e.g., Barletta, 2009; Ramos Holguin, 2013; Álvarez, 2014) indicate that Colombia is not yet at this stage: it does not have intercultural communication teachers; and ICC language education is still incipient: both are awaiting development.

### **3.9.2. ICC in preservice education and practicum abroad**

A number of authors have recognized the importance of ICC development in pre-service programmes, including practicum and short sejours abroad (e.g., Dooly & Villanueva, 2006). Tang and Choi (2004) examined intercultural competence development case studies for four primary education English-Mandarin preservice teachers based mainly on their self-reported experiences. The findings shed light on “the development of student teachers’ personal and intercultural competence in cross-cultural experiences” (Tang & Choi, 2004, p. 50) with different levels of cultural awareness and knowledge.

On the same topic, Dooly and Villanueva’s pilot project (2006) dealt with education to build citizenship through intercultural communication practice and reflection with the participation of 160 undergraduate students from eight different European countries studying at eight different universities. The outcomes pointed to student teachers’ awareness of the need to develop their own intercultural awareness and communication skills to better prepare themselves for future teaching. Along similar lines, Li (2016) discusses the status quo of Anglo speaking culture teaching and learning in Chinese colleges. He arrives at the conclusion

that many language teachers have a very vague idea of how to promote students' intercultural awareness. Both studies, Dooly and Villanueva's (2006) and Li's (2016) share similar concerns to those articulated via my research objectives on how ELT and teachers' praxis can be enriched by ICC from different perspectives.

### **3.9.3. Research into in-service teachers' understandings of culture and the intercultural**

Research carried out in Denmark and Britain (Byram & Risager, 1999) makes similar claims to this investigation: it manifested the development of frameworks in both countries and a significant awareness of the need to include cultural competence for teaching in language classrooms. Among many other important findings, Byram and Risager (1999, p. 104) acknowledged that teachers' understanding of the concept "culture" appeared to be lacking in depth and complexity, but despite the lack of training, they often saw the significance of the cultural dimension. Byram and Risager's earlier developments show the importance of eliciting teachers' concept of culture as a vital core concept to make sense of their existing or prospective ICC language teaching. One of the research questions serving as a bedrock of my investigation directly addresses English language teachers' definitions and appraisals of culture, and how these conceptions are made evident in their ELT praxis.

In her study on upper secondary school teachers of English in Portugal, the major purpose of which was to investigate motives, definitions and models of critical cultural awareness, Guilherme (2002) concluded: "intercultural training in general has often been invisible in foreign language/culture classes at all levels and also in teacher development programmes" (p. 214). More recently, Atay, Kurt, Çamlıbel, Ersin and Kaslioglu (2009) researched 503 EFL Turkish in service teachers using questionnaires to examine their opinions and attitudes on intercultural competence teaching to determine how and to what extent these



opinions and attitudes were reflected in their classroom applications. Atay *et al.*'s findings were consistent with Sercu *et al.*'s (2005) and Li's (2016) in that many language teachers were well-aware of the importance of culture and language teaching and intercultural competence for communication, but the objectives of language teaching were focused on the acquisition of the ability to use the language for practical purposes. Teachers appeared not to be frequently integrating culture-related classroom practices in their own classes, although they reported to have positive attitudes towards the role of culture in language education.

A few studies have examined the development of preservice teachers' cultural awareness without direct, overseas experience (Fox & Diaz-Greenberg, 2006): what De Jaeghere and Cao (2009, p. 440) identified as "site-based professional development initiatives". Fox and Diaz-Greenberg (2006) conducted a qualitative study with 22 English language American university teacher candidates to investigate how critical pedagogy and multicultural education helped them gain multicultural perspectives. Their findings indicated that candidates evidenced "a deep understanding of culture" and "a strong awareness of the importance of integrating culture and infusing it into their work on an ongoing basis" (Diaz-Greenberg, 2006, p. 411, 415). In a similar project, De Jaeghere and Cao (2009) examined the effect of "site-based professional development initiatives" informed by Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (and then the school's own adaptation of it) for 86 elementary school teachers' intercultural competence. The results suggested a significant change in teachers' ICC development when a school district implemented an intercultural training initiative (De Jaeghere & Cao, 2009, p. 444). These two examples point to the possibilities for and value of site-based ICC professional development initiatives, which counters the myth that ICC in ELT can only happen with abroad, direct experience with other cultures.

To conclude, language teachers require training at every level in order to integrate the intercultural dimension into their professional practice (Bastos & Araújo e Sá, 2014). This was also suggested by Cushner and Mahon (2009, p. 304) when they asserted that developing ICC “requires a core of teachers and teacher educators who have not only attained this sensitivity and skill themselves but are also able to transmit this to the young people in their charge.”

### **3.10. Concluding the chapter**

In this chapter, I have provided fundamental background for the current study. The literature review has highlighted the importance and necessity of culture and language teaching approaches (Calderón, 2015; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Sercu *et al.*, 2005, Risager, 2007). However, the shift from the cultural to the intercultural turn in ELT seems to be a major worldwide concern despite the fact that they are two converging spheres that interrelate to prompt language teachers’ ICC in action (Crozet, 1999; Bandura, 2011; Choudhury, 2014; Guilherme, 2002; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013).

Conceptions of interculturality and intercultural language teaching have emerged as a necessity to approach language teaching and learning from dynamics relating to globalisation and the construction of global citizenship (Guilherme, 2002), which is mediated through language, to develop cooperation and dialogue with other people and take action to address common problems in the world or, what Porto and Byram (2015, p. 27) have called, “taking action beyond the classroom.” Concomitantly, reflective teaching and CCA issues are at the core of developing IELT (Sercu & St. John, 2007). For these reasons, the ELT profession needs to be reconsidered together with the new roles of the language teachers. Sercu *et al.*’s

(2005) FL& IC teacher leads to the reshaping of traditional teacher profiles based on their own reflections on IELTS and the role of culture in the language curriculum.

In my investigation, Colombian English language teachers are central actors and have new professional demands: they have to be equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes required to accomplish IELTS goals in appropriate ways, International research on language teachers, and how they develop ICC offered me deeper insights into the manner in which ELT processes in Colombia can make sense of and learn from international advances towards IELTS.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Methodological approach**

Given the contextual and theoretical backgrounds presented in Chapters 2 and 3 and having introduced the research questions (at the end of chapter 1), this chapter details the methodological approach used in this study. The approach recognises the importance of qualitative and interpretive research (Creswell, 2007) to help answer the question: how do Colombian English language teachers' current practices, beliefs, and professional self-concepts relate to an envisaged profile of the intercultural English language teacher? The different sections in this chapter focus on concerns such as (1) the research framework; (2) choice of qualitative research; (3) the overall research perspective; (4) the nature of the research questions; (5) methods of data collection; (6) the research field; (7) the data analysis strategies and procedures; (8) researching multilingually; (9) ethical considerations; and (10) trustworthiness of the study.

#### **4.1. The research framework**

The ontological and epistemological approaches—worldviews, as Creswell (2007) denominated—employed to undertake the current study are contextualized and explained to help answer the research questions and to address the research aims. Subsequently, social constructivism and an interpretive approach provide the grounds to be able to understand my field of study, perceptions of reality, the research questions, the methodology, how the aims of the research are met, and how to interpret my data. In brief, they function as a basic set of beliefs that guide action (Guba, 1990). In my research, English language teachers' existing or

prospective ICC was considered a permanent co-construction of reality that constantly shapes them as they gain ICC and explore the implications in the classroom.

My research takes an ontological position based on social constructivism (or *constructionism*, as opposed to *objectivism*, Bryman, 2012, p. 33). Hinged on this worldview, I, as a teacher and researcher, seek understanding of the world in which I live and work (Creswell, 2007, p. 20). Social constructivism purports that human development is socially and culturally situated, and knowledge is constructed through interaction with others (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Schwandt, 2000). Social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished and reconstructed by social actors (Seidman, 2006) and they are in a constant “state of revision” (Bryman, 2012, p. 33). Evidencing the socially constructed multifaceted reality represented in my central research question, Colombian English language teachers co-build possibilities every day in permanent edification of an unstable changing relative truth that is dependent on culture. They reflect on their current practices and on how to advance towards becoming interculturally competent to gradually become “critical and resourceful citizens who might contribute to a global society” (Bonilla & Tejada, 2016, p. 186). Schwandt (2000, p. 197) advocates that:

We invent concepts, models, and schemes to make sense of experience, and we continually test and modify these constructions in the light of new experience. Furthermore, there is a historical and sociocultural dimension to this construction. We do not construct our interpretations in isolation but against a backdrop of shared understandings, practices, language and so forth.

The interpretation of this research from a social constructivist ontological viewpoint can be seen every time English language teachers reflect on, analyse and revisit their teaching praxis

and their role (s) in the language educational scenario. They are constantly renewing and updating their teaching of English to co-construct emerging realities. The teaching of English can be seen as an unfinished picture under constant examination, continually being accomplished and transformed by teachers as social actors. Accordingly, my role as a social constructivist researcher following a qualitative, interpretive inquiry is, then, to make sense of the meanings Colombian English language teachers have about their teaching practices and how they approach culture to build on IELTS.

Epistemology, which poses the question, “how do I know the world?” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 157), refers to how knowledge is generated and validated (Bryman, 2012), and “the possible ways of gaining knowledge of social reality” (Blaikie, 2000, p. 8). This research is based on interpretivism (or *subjectivism* as opposed to *positivism*) whereby “interpretive researchers assume that access to reality (given or socially constructed) is only through social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, and instruments” (Myers, 2008, p.38). Using an interpretivist researcher perspective, focus on meaning is central, and, for this investigation, various approaches are employed to shed light on the research aims and questions.

Finally, aligned with the ontological and epistemological views is the qualitative approach paradigm that seeks to understand the research problem from the individual’s own perspective of action.

#### **4.2. The choice of qualitative research**

As explained in the previous chapters, this research is an exploratory interpretive study that responds to current enquiries about the importance of enriching ELT by promoting teacher ICC that can later be taught in the classroom. The research was undertaken based on the

underpinning assumption that interculturalising ELT in Colombia can be beneficial to foster critical approaches towards the teaching and learning of English. As a result, this may promote fundamental advancements in the teaching of languages towards more contemporary, global goals. As such, a description and understanding of teachers' current ELT practices in the classroom and their own demonstrations of interculturality in this context need to be researched. Due to the descriptive nature of enquiry, a qualitative research paradigm is appropriate. Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p. 3) define qualitative research as:

... a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible. These practices [...] turn the world into a series of representations including fieldnotes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

Accordingly, this study is socially and culturally situated, where knowledge is unpredictably and permanently co-constructed through face-to-face and distance interaction (Schwandt, 2000). In this way, the following all belong to a particular reality that is conceptual in nature: examining the teaching of English in Colombia, how teachers understand and assume their own praxis in light of their culture and the intercultural, and what they express about the possibilities of advancing into the future of ELT. These are all products of the teacher's own personal "baggage", which is shaped by values and the relationship that is built based on experience (e.g., a person, a product, an event). In this way, one of the aims of this qualitative

research is to “approach the world ‘out there’ [...] and to understand, describe and sometimes explain social phenomena «from the inside»” (Angrosino, 2008, p. viii; Czarniawska-Joerges, 2004; Flick, 2009; Josselson, 2013).

### **4.3. The overall research perspective**

The teaching of English should be understood to be a process rather than be seen in static terms. Observing, describing and making sense of English language (cultural and intercultural) teaching in Colombia and the importance of the participants' frames of reference is an issue that is central to this study. Similarly, how teachers intervene and permanently change reality by teaching English on a daily basis in their communities and the (mis) understanding of their practices are important issues (Aneas & Paz Sandín, 2009; Dawn & Spencer, 2003). The research focus, interculturalising ELT in Colombia, is clearly culturally situated, and it has strong foundations in the *emic* perspective of participant language teachers: their beliefs, perceptions, the meanings they give, and their interpretations of socially constructed worldviews in foreign language-and-culture teaching practices (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Hatch, 2002; Atkinson, 2005; Bryman, 2012; Cortazzi & Jin, 2013).

### **4.4. The nature of research questions**

My research questions (see chapter 1, section 1.7) presuppose an understanding of existing or prospective interculturality (Dawn & Spencer, 2003) and are “open-ended, evolving, and nondirectional questions” (Creswell, 2007, p. 107) concerned with “what”, “why”, and “how” of the social phenomenon to be studied (Agee, 2009; Ormston, Spencer, Barnard & Snape, 2003). They are exploratory and explanatory questions (Marshall & Rossman, 2006) that enquire into the way English language teachers understand and interpret their particular



context and practice in order to investigate potential possibilities for the interculturalisation of ELT in Colombia.

#### **4.5. Methods of data collection**

To achieve a deep understanding of the phenomenon being researched, the following methodological tools for data collection were selected: an on-line written questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and classroom observations. These methods were supplemented by post-interview and post-observation notes, and my own researcher journal entries. Next, a brief description of each.

##### **4.5.1. The on-line written questionnaire**

The purpose of first sending an on-line written questionnaire composed of exploratory attitudinal questions—to find out what people think (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010) (see Appendix 3)—was to gather primary information to explore the general context of Colombian English language teachers in terms of culture and interculturality. Questions concerning culture, culture teaching and interculturality provided ideas on how to design the interview guidelines and the specific aspects that should be asked. The questionnaire being on-line allowed participants to reply at their leisure (Brown, 2001; Holliday, 2010), and they had the opportunity to answer at their own pace over the duration of a week. They responded with 12,000 words of raw data.

##### **4.5.2. Interviewing**

Qualitative interviewing or *in-depth interviewing* (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2016) was selected as a main data-gathering tool for this research. As expressed by some scholars

(Garvis, 2015; Søreide, 2006; Watson, 2006), it is through the processes of telling their stories that people narratively construct, and continually re-construct, who they are. Interviews have been referred to as nondirective, unstructured, non-standardized, and open-ended interviewing. This means “face-to-face encounters between the researcher and participants directed toward understanding participants’ perspectives on their lives, experiences, or situations as expressed in their own words” (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2016, p. 102). The main objective in undertaking face-to-face semi-structured interviews with the participants was to gain a deeper insight into the research questions and look closely at complementary emerging perspectives. Interview questions addressed issues on culture, interculturality, culture and language teaching pedagogies in the ELT classroom (see appendices 4 and 5).

Choosing face-to-face interviews was important because, for Colombians, face-to-face communication and eye contact are synonymous with openness and trust. Eye contact in a research interview setting means emphatic communication and is a sign of showing interest and respect to what the other is saying. It is a “decentring from yourself and concentrate[ing] on the other person” (Guillham, 2005, p. 33). Two audio recorders were used to minimize misunderstandings and possibilities of malfunctioning in addition to limiting the note-taking to a minimum. After each interview, I spent about 15 minutes writing up the research journal regarding the impressions, thoughts and queries that came up during the interviews (see Chapter 4, section 4.6.6).

Angrosino (2008), Brinkmann (2013), Harklau (2011) Kvale and Brinkmann (2008), Saldaña (2011) and Seidman (2006) promote the importance of interviewing because it helps unveil an individual’s or group’s perspectives, feelings, opinions, values, attitudes, and beliefs about personal experiences and social world, in addition to factual information about participants’ lives. Opting for semi-structured interviews seemed more suitable when adhering

to an interpretive constructivist approach in which both the researcher and the participant meet as part of a collaborative enquiry. Probing, or “responsive encouragement”, was very important for this research. According to Gillham (2005, p. 32) probing means “getting the respondent to tell you more about something that you sense there is more to be told”, which is part of the permanent construction or meaning making that cannot be anticipated, even when the researcher may perceive hints leading to probing. Therefore, during the interview, I probed for detailed examples and clarification to be sure of exactly what the participant means (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2016).

### **How to prepare an interview guide**

Following Kvale & Brinkmann (2008) and Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault (2016), I used an interview guide—a list of general ideas or guidelines—to ensure I explored key topics with all the participants. The interview was designed based on a supportive, receptive, or responsive approach (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) which was also appropriate to establish better rapport and take advantage of the participant’s social clues such as voice, intonation, body language, etc. (Bryman, 2012). These gave me a lot of extra information that was added to the participant’s verbal answer of a question (Opdenakker, 2006; Brinkmann, 2013).

The guidelines addressed three general themes: teachers’ English learning processes, the concept of culture and the teaching of English, and the concept of interculturality and the teaching of English (see appendix 5 to read the full interview guide including the bilingual version and corresponding probes).

### **4.5.3. Short-term qualitative observations**

Short-term qualitative observations (Lichtman, 2006), as an *in situ* approach to reality, were considered to be particularly valuable. These observations were fundamental in determining, along with the face-to-face interviews, one of my research questions: What are their [English language teachers'] current teaching practices (if any) with regard to culture and interculturality?

According to Adler and Adler (1994) and Angrosino (2008, p. 37), “observation is the act of perceiving the activities and interrelationships of people in the field setting through the five senses of the researcher.” For this investigation, a non-reactive (or unobtrusive) mode of observation, in which I avoided intervening in the action I was observing, (Angrosino, 2007) was selected. However, I became a participant observer in the post-observation stage (see Appendix 7) when my voice was made explicit. This, in turn, promoted a more constructivist, horizontal participation in the research by eliciting information and mutual interpretation of the class experience with regard to culture and intercultural ELT practices. As suggested by Lichtman (2006, p. 141), this position reflects “the new thinking about power and privilege and the relationship between those being studied and those doing the studying.”

For this research, teachers were first asked to volunteer to be observed (Taylor & Tyler, 2012) Those who did were asked to “invite me to a couple of their English classes in which culture was made relevant.” Based on this general request, teachers invited me to two of their teaching sessions, each of 45-50 minutes (one-lesson period). Ahead of the observations, they were also asked to tell me about the lesson’s aims with regard to culture and to provide a draft of the lesson plan. After each observation had taken place, both teacher and researcher spent 15 to 20 minutes discussing what had happened in the lesson with respect to its main aim related to culture or the intercultural, the procedure, activities, etc. (Angrosino, 2007; Wragg,

1999). This post-observation session was carried out based on the underpinning assumption that teachers tend to view observations as an opportunity to reflect on their practice rather than as a “gotcha” moment (*Evaluation and Support: Strategies for success*, 2015). The end product of short-term qualitative observations had three dimensions: (1) the generation of a set of written field notes collected in a rubric (see classroom observation template in appendix 7) that recorded specific classroom events; (2) selective transcriptions (Gillham, 2005) from the English lesson in which culture and/or intercultural aspects were made relevant; and (3) selected transcriptions from the post-observation teacher-researcher dialogue.

#### **4.6. The research fieldwork**

Having explained the methods of data collection, I now describe the three phases of the fieldwork. The first phase, carried in June 2014, was an initial exploration of the topic in which a first approach to the field was established, as were prospective participants. The aim of second phase, during April 2016, was to pilot the proposed data collection method and data gathering instruments. In the third phase, the main data collection was conducted between April, May and June 2016. Next, the fieldwork is elaborated as it took place in accordance with these phases as follows: access to the field, the pilot study, establishing rapport and trust, sampling strategy, participant recruitment and formal interview procedures.

##### **4.6.1. Access to the field**

Gaining access to participants was fundamental for the study. Flick (2007, p. 33-34) points out that an important step is to “to identify a field in which the experiences are made that you want to study or in which the people you want to access can be met.” Although finding access to fields, institutions or people can be a difficult and long process (Flick, 2007), being an

insider meant that I had some familiarity with the field. However, a strict protocol was followed in order to validate a rigorous research process. After talking to deans of education faculties, explaining my research topic and aims, and requesting help to access English language teachers, they gave their formal consent and introduced me to the direct gatekeepers who aided my access to possible participants.

Gatekeepers played a crucial role in accessing the field; after explaining the study's expectations, purpose, questions and discussing some of my research's potential outcomes, they vouched for my legitimacy within the setting and introduced me to the people I need to meet, interview and observe (Lunsford Mears, 2009). They suggested names of teachers who were interested in similar topics, and in one of the faculty meetings and by word-of-mouth they even motivated teachers to volunteer as participants. As a result, several teachers contacted me directly expressing their desire to participate in the research to share their understandings and teaching experiences on the topic.

#### **4.6.2. The pilot study**

In a broader sense, a pilot study is a mini-version of a full-scale study or a trial run that is undertaken in preparation of the complete study (Polit, Beck & Hungler, 2001, p. 467). Conducting a pilot study was necessary to obtain “first-hand, «real world» experience with the issue studied” (Kezar, 2000, p. 385) and try out a particular research instrument (Baker 1994, pp. 182-183): for this research, the on-line written questionnaire, the semi-structured interview and the observation rubric format (see discussion in the above section 4.4 and appendixes 3, 4 and 7).

The pilot study was conducted in February 2016, and included draft versions of the on-line questionnaire questions, the interview guide and the classroom observation rubric (see

Table 1.). The on-line written questionnaire (see Appendix 3) was, at first, only released to a group of six colleague English teachers, four of whom agreed to give me their feedback on the questions and their experience on answering them on-line. After answering a short biodata questionnaire, the participants were then asked the questions (see Appendix 4). Some general reactions were that: (1) it was short, so they felt time was not a problem, especially because no word limit was given for the answers; (2) the impersonal character of the medium made them feel comfortable while answering the questions as no time or additional content restrictions were added; and (3) they found that the questions on culture were clear and straightforward.

However, two of the teachers thought that questions on intercultural language teaching were difficult as they were knowledge-based questions. Despite this, as one of the major aims of the research was to explore the concept of interculturality held by teachers, and its relationship to English language teaching, asking about interculturality and ICC was fundamental to establish appropriate questions and probes for the development of the interview guideline. As such, the instructions were changed, and emphasis was made on the nature of answers based on what teachers thought or believed and not on “specialized knowledge.”

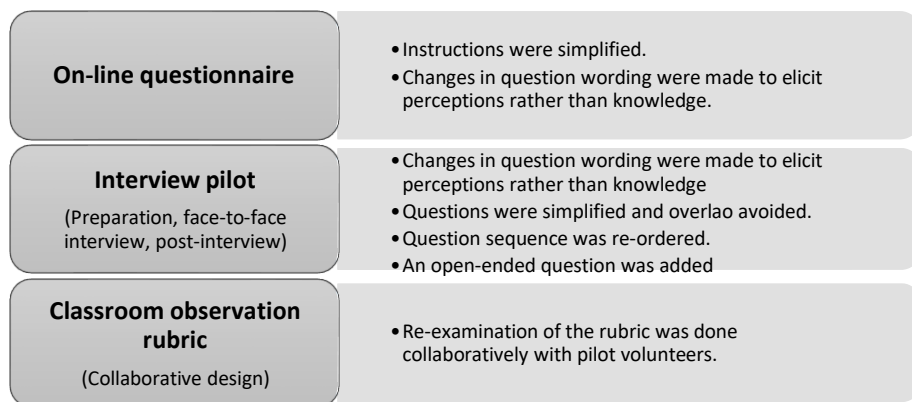


Figure 1. The pilot study with changes after participants’ feedback

Regarding the interview pilot phase, 4 English language teachers volunteered: one had previously participated in the questionnaire activity. I visited these teachers at their place of work. The average time was 46 minutes. The first interview sounded too formal; accordingly, I was reminded of one of Taylor, Bogdan, and DeVault's premises (2016, p. 102), which stated that interviewing "is modelled after a conversation between equals rather than a formal question-and-answer exchange." Other flaws were that I often tended to return to the interview guide and once interrupted the interviewee. However, the participant answered questions without much issue and asked for minimum clarification. Some overlap and repetition that I was able to redirect with the probing was also an issue.

After having piloted the interview questions, the following major changes were made to refine the questions and procedure. First, changes in question wording were made to make them sound more as perceptions, and not knowledge-based. Second, there were changes in question focus. Questions were simplified so as to make them straightforward, and accumulation of two questions together was avoided. Third, overlapping questions that led to similar answers being elicited were reformulated or omitted. Last, question sequence was reordered, as in well-constructed interviews, according to Gillham (2005, p. 74) "facilitating flow of narrative response questions need to be adjusted to ensure a "tie-up" or lead in from the previous one." As I noticed frequent digressions from the main subject (sometimes related to the subject of study but not directly related to the research), a last open-ended question was added to the interview due to the pilot study: "Would you like to add something more or share any particular thought about culture, interculturality or ELT in the Colombian context?" This last open-ended question was particularly important as it gave participants the opportunity to reinforce their perceptions and viewpoints, and freely build on new emerging topics. The 5



interviewees used the question as a means to further express their appraisals, queries or any other emerging topics.

The classroom observation rubric and procedure pilot followed Lichtman's (2006) suggestions: a planning stage followed by the observation itself. The instrument was then re-examined and slightly modified after the first two observations. Primarily, cooperation from two volunteer EFL teachers was requested in order to build the rubric collaboratively; the purpose of this was to observe any issues relating to English language and culture teaching. As Chesterfield (1997, p. 5) suggests, "researchers who conduct observations may also engage the teacher as a collaborator in the research, where observations are shared and the reasons for certain behaviours or activities observed are discussed." This gave a more collaborative, constructivist approach to classroom observations. During the observation itself, a teachers' copy of her/his lesson plan was considered to provide the lesson draft and for me to become aware of any classes that were previously related to language and culture teaching. Teachers' procedures, methodologies, teaching strategies, lesson contents, and possible (inter)cultural aspects were identified, described and explained as the lesson developed. Then full audio-recording of the session was considered to be more effective than only note-taking and later partial transcriptions, especially those related to culture and language teaching. The post-observation was brief and straightforward, and it centred on what teachers had done in the classroom; I sometimes asked for clarifications of different procedures or had specific questions on the lesson plan as participant teachers reflected on the lesson development. This information, although not extensive, was also audio recorded and later transcribed for decoding and analysis.

### **4.6.3. Establishing rapport and trust**

Establishing trust and a respectful rapport was critical (Lunsford Mears, 2009) for my research. For this reason, the relationship between participants and me was central as it was undertaken based on a social constructivist viewpoint in which cooperative knowledge construction is fundamental (Vasilachis de Gialdino, 1992, 2006, 2011). For these reasons, creating appropriate conditions to interact with participants was necessary to ensure an adequate research process, and, according to Josselson, (2013, p. 143), “to find a pathway into the participant’s experience.” For this reason, and whilst maintaining a mainly formal approach, the face-to-face interview was selected to offer friendly visual cues such as smiling or maintaining good eye contact; these are frequently associated with gaining and maintaining rapport (Bryman, 2012).

Another interesting way of establishing rapport was taking advantage of shared experiences because, according to Seidman (2006, p. 89), “sharing experience in a frank and personal way may encourage the participant to continue reconstructing his or her own in a more inner voice than before.” Building on Saidman’s view, Holmes’ (2014, p. 110) narrated what one of her participants expressed in the post-reflection analysis of her doctoral research: “I think the researcher should be act as friends to the person being research[ed] [...] Once you get trust from him or from her you can get the information.” As with Holmes’ experience, it was paramount for my own research to build a friendly and respectful atmosphere of trust.

A step to gaining trust was contacting gatekeepers and providing them with all information necessary to understand the investigation focus, aims and questions (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault 2016). In addition, my status as an insider awarded me some trust by gatekeepers, and later, the participants. In this sense, the role of gatekeepers was crucial, for they encouraged prospective participants to take part in the research (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

A copy of the interview transcripts (see Appendix 8) was offered so as the participants could verify that what they had said was accurately recorded and to build trust, in addition to starting a process of member checking (Angen, 2000; Creswell, 2007). Once I gained access to participants, face-to-face and online questions were responded about the research before interviews and observations were carried out. The interview schedule was arranged according to participants' time availability. All interviews and observations were performed in their workplace. Finally, it was possible to infer that rapport and trust had been built based on some of the participants' attitude towards my research: they were willing to suggest other potential participants and engaged in snowballing (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Josselson, 2013).

#### **4.6.4. Sampling strategy**

In order to carry out this study, participants with specific characteristics needed to be reflected in the sample in order to adequately address the research question. In this way, prospective participants were to be contacted. The selection of participants was mainly gathered from personal contacts and from networking at work, and they needed to meet one criterion: they were expected to be either final semester pre-service, or in-service English language teachers from the public sector. As the aim of this study was to make sense of Colombian EFL teachers' current thinking in terms of culture and interculturality in their teaching, it was necessary that the English language teachers shared their views and experiences about the topic.

Accordingly, the strategy selected was purposive sampling or "the process of intentionally selecting sites and individuals to participate in research" (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2015, p. 332). As such, "information rich cases" were selected (Patton, 2002, p. 230): they provided a wealth of information for the study because they have experienced the central phenomenon of interest (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2015; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). This

type of sampling typically involves bridging together people of similar backgrounds and experiences (Patton, 2001). To a lesser extent, there was a small proportion of snowball or chain sampling, based on the participants' recommendations to identify other good potential participants unknown to the researcher (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2015; Patton, 2001).

#### **4.6.5. Participant recruitment, background and demographics**

Inter-institutional mutual cooperation was paramount for this research. Many were willing to answer the on-line questionnaire; some also volunteered to be interviewed, but most of the interviewees came as a result of contacting two deans at higher education departments who forwarded the request to key gatekeepers interested in fostering research and advocating potential research alliances between universities. In this way, by following the previously mentioned approaches, around 40 in service and pre-service EFL teachers were initially invited by e-mail to take part in the study. It was anticipated that, in the end, many would not participate.

	Participant	Degree	Duration of interviews
18% pre-service	PPT1	Undergrad. (c)	45'
	PPT2	Undergrad. (c)	56'
	PPT3	Undergrad. (c)	59'
	PPT4	Undergrad. (c)	48'
	PPT5	Undergrad. (c)	55'
82% in-service	PIT6	Ph.D. (c)	63'
	PIT7	Masters	61'
	PIT8	Masters	49'
	PIT9	Undergrad/Licensure	53'
	PIT10	Undergrad/Licensure	57'
	PIT11	Masters	65'
	PIT12	Masters	46'
	PIT13	Masters	51'
	PIT14	Ph.D.	62'
	PIT15	Undergrad/Licensure	70'
	PIT16	Masters	50'
	PIT17	Masters	47'
	PIT18	Masters	63'
	PIT19	Undergrad/Licensure	52'
	PIT20	Undergrad/Licensure	55'
	PIT21	Masters	51'
	PIT22	Masters	55'
	PIT23	Undergrad/Licensure	49'
	PIT24	Undergrad/Licensure	65'
	PIT25	Masters	63'
		<b>Average:</b>	<b>52'</b>

Table 1. Participant recruitment. (PPT=participant pre-service teacher; PIT=participant in-service teacher). (c)= candidate

In total, including the pilot study participants, there were 18 questionnaire respondents, eight classroom lessons observed and a total of 25 interviewees. Teachers who volunteered through gatekeepers were contacted on-line to be sent the formal invitation and description of the research project (see appendix 2). As it is observed above in Table 1, most of these were in-service English language teachers (82%); some were studying to become language teachers (pre-service, 18%). 60% of the in-service participants had a master's degree (some from foreign universities). The average duration of the interviews was 52 minutes (see Table 1 for details).

Other important teachers' demographics concerned gender, age group, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, linguistic situation and type of institutions where they taught (see Table 2). In general, all participants ranged from 20 to 54 years old (average age: 36 years old) and

were mainly female teachers (68%). Forty-five percent of in-service teachers had 15 or more years of teaching experience. Participants in general belonged to Spanish-speaking mainstream White Colombian culture (84%) (very few were Afro Colombian: 16%) and were educated with Spanish as a first language during their schooling. English language was learnt in a consecutive bilingualism process: this “late” English language learning happened after the acquisition of the first language (Baker & Wayne, 2017), or better, during school years as a class subject and as a choice for higher education and licensure studies. Most in-service teachers were from Bogotá, the capital city of Colombia; a few were from other regions (e.g., Boyacá, Antioquia, Meta) but had been living in the city since college and stayed afterwards due to job opportunities. Participant in-service teachers (82%) were all working in higher education public institutions in Bogotá and were either teaching English or training student teachers at the time of the data gathering process.

Similarly, participant trainee teachers (18%) were all from Bogotá and were in their last semester of the Language Education Licensure, with an emphasis in Spanish as a first language and English. All these trainees belonged to one of the best acknowledged public universities which provided them with a prescriptive ELT course syllabus they followed to guide their one-year practicum. These language teacher training pre-practicum workshops consisted of classroom observation tasks and micro-teaching activities followed by the teacher trainer’s feedback. Some of these trainees had been trained by senior English language teachers who were also participants in this research. The practicums occurred in public secondary schools in Bogotá, where ELT is mandatory in school curricula (MEN, Bilingual Colombia, 2004). Classes observed were mainly carried out within these practicums, in the last two grades of secondary school (10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades). Large-size classrooms, learners ranging from 14 to 17 years old and a predominantly White Colombian Spanish-speaking

cultural background (of both teachers and students) characterised the context of the classroom observations.

	Participant	Gender M/F/O	Age	Years of experience	Ethnic/cultural background	Languages
<b>18% pre-service</b>	PPT1	M	22	0	White Colombian	Spanish/ English
	PPT2	F	25	0	White Colombian	Spanish/ English
	PPT3	F	24	0	Afro Colombian	Spanish/ English
	PPT4	F	20	0	White Colombian	Spanish/Portuguese/English
	PPT5	F	21	0	White Colombian	Spanish/English
<b>82% in-service</b>	PIT6	M	36	12	White Colombian	Spanish/English
	PIT7	M	32	8	White Colombian	Spanish/English
	PIT8	F	39	15	White Colombian	Spanish/English
	PIT9	F	45	18	White Colombian	Spanish/Italian/English
	PIT10	F	29	5	Afro Colombian	Spanish/English
	PIT11	M	47	22	White Colombian	Spanish/English
	PIT12	F	43	16	White Colombian	Spanish/English
	PIT13	F	54	26	White Colombian	Spanish/English
	PIT14	F	49	21	White Colombian	Spanish/English
	PIT15	F	48	19	White Colombian	Spanish/English
	PIT16	F	32	9	Afro-Colombian	Spanish/English
	PIT17	M	38	15	White Colombian	Spanish/English
	PIT18	F	36	11	White Colombian	Spanish/English
	PIT19	M	29	5	White Colombian	Spanish/English
	PIT20	M	48	17	White Colombian	Spanish/English
	PIT21	F	37	10	White Colombian	Spanish/English
	PIT22	F	34	10	Afro Colombian	Spanish/English
	PIT23	F	40	14	White Colombian	Spanish/English
	PIT24	F	34	7	White Colombian	Spanish/English
	PIT25	M	36	8	White Colombian	Spanish/English
	<b>68% Females- 32% Males</b>	<b>Average age: 35,92</b>	<b>Average in-service: 13,4 years</b>	<b>Proportion ethnic/cultural background 84% White Colombians; 16% Afro Colombians</b>	<b>Proportions of languages 92% Spanish-English; 8% other</b>	

Table 2. Participants' demographics. (PPT=participant pre-service teacher; PIT=participant in-service teacher).  
(c)= candidate. M= male/F= Female/O= Other.

#### 4.6.6. The formal interview procedure

Face-to-face interviews took place over four weeks in three different public university campuses. The formal face-to-face interviews followed four main stages (see Figure 2):

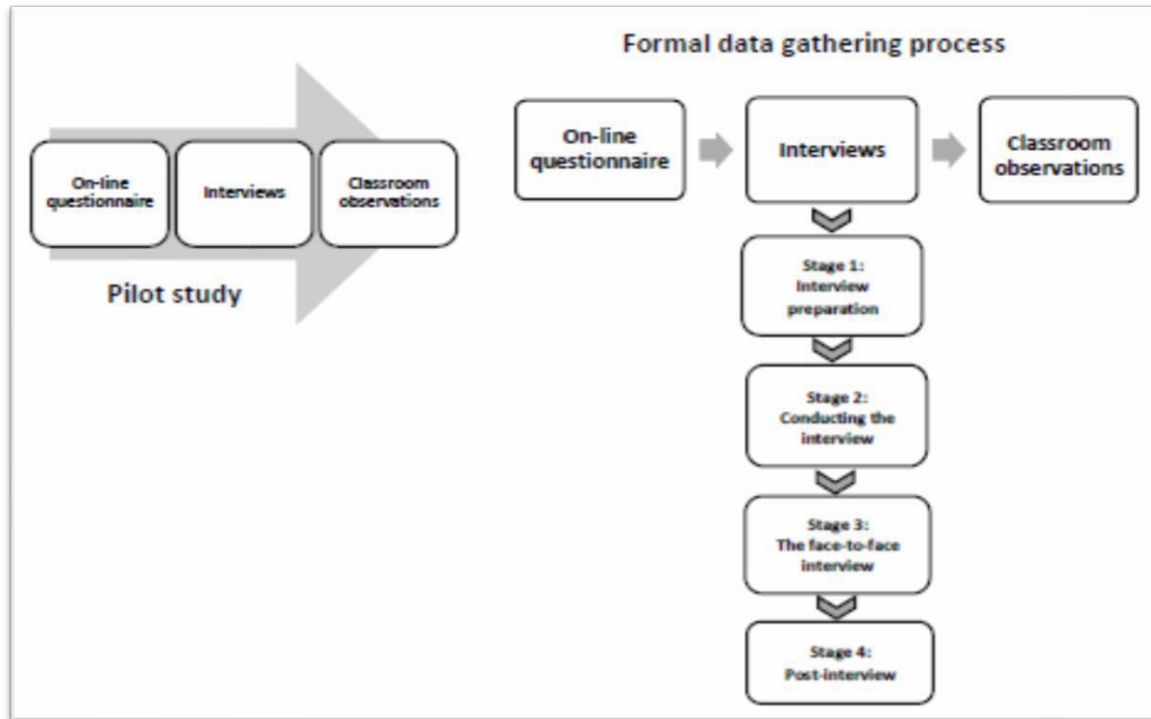


Figure 2. Data gathering process

**Stage 1: Interview preparation.** Gatekeepers were sent the guiding questions for their own record, the information sheet for research participants and the informed consent form (Seidman, 2006). Information sheet and informed consent were later emailed by gatekeepers to volunteer participants so that they could find out about their role, the tasks and research conditions in advance.

**Stage 2: Conducting the interview.** I first introduced myself as a teacher from the Universidad de los Andes and a doctoral student at Durham University. After a brief warm-up greeting, I provided an oral summary of the investigation, the research goals and took some time to answer questions if necessary. This was followed by presenting them the two previously emailed, hardcopies of the information sheet and the informed consent. All



participants understood and accepted the ethical protocol steps; this manifested their willingness to participate and the forms were signed without any further questions.

**Stage 3: The face-to-face interview.** This data gathering conversational strategy (Brinkmann, 2013) was organised into four main parts: teachers' presentation; their own learning processes of the English language; culture and language-and-culture teaching, and intercultural competences and ELT. These four angles aimed to contextualize teachers' practices to encourage them to make sense of their experience. Once the process started, and following a conversational style (Brinkmann, 2013), a brief outline of the interview was given. Each interview roughly followed the thirteen main questions that had been refined after the pilot study, and it was developed through introductory questions, follow-up questions and probing questions (see Appendix 5). At the end of the interview, an open-ended question inviting the participant to add any other idea related to (inter) cultural language teaching was posed: "Would you like to add something more or share any particular thought about culture, interculturality or ELT in our context?" This last question was fundamental because all participants were eager to further contribute to the topic, and they had different concerns, remarks, suggestions and opinions which sometimes led to different emerging themes.

**Stage 4: Post-interview.** I called this stage "3R": a "recall, reflect, record" moment. Right after the end of each interview, a fifteen-minute session was devoted to gathering and reporting my impressions about how the interview had gone (Josselson, 2013). Notes were taken in my researcher's journal (e.g. some aspects of what was said, my feelings about the interview itself and the answers obtained, potential emerging topics I had not thought of, the interviewee's reactions and attitudes towards the interview and non-verbal communication, the interview atmosphere, etc.). This exercise helped provide an early reflection on data before

the chapter was written. All the formal interview conversations were audio-recorded on two different MP4 recorders to guarantee sound quality and minimise recording failures.

#### **4.7. The data analysis strategies and procedures**

The data analysis was a parallel process to data gathering while the fieldwork was being undertaken (Bibbs, 2007; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013; Flick, 2004; Gillham, 2005; Lunsford, 2013; Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2016) so one can inform the other (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Cohen & Morrison, 2011). First, in the **transcription of the data**, or producing a written record from interviews (Gillham, 2005), I identified initial salient topics, but waited until I had completed all the interviews and then transcribed while conducting an analysis “to avoid imposing meaning from one participant’s interview on the next” (Seidman, 2006, p. 113). The interview data were transcribed verbatim in Spanish without translation to ensure data trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Attention was paid to participants’ code switching from Spanish to English, which was mostly related to highlighting ideas and clarifying ELT domain related concepts (Esposito, 2001; Culley, Hudson & Rapport, 2007) (see appendix 8).

Second, I undertook **thematic analysis**, a strategy that deconstructs the data in detail and unveils diverse subjects through interpretations (Ayres, 2008; Bryman, 2012; Boyatzis 1998; Gibbs, 2007; Marks & Yardley 2004; Namey et al., 2008). According to Braun & Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is beneficial to identify, analyse and report patterns (themes) within data. As a researcher, I tried to avoid any preconceived ideas or advance a theory so as not to precondition the research interpretation. Following Josselson (2013) and Lunsford’s (2009) advice, I consciously made an effort that my own experience as an insider would not undermine my ability to see emerging themes and interpret from the perspectives of others.

Concomitantly, data extracts were grouped around relevant research questions as guiding principles (in a theory driven or concept-driven fashion), and data analysis was mainly approached in an inductive, open-ended fashion (data-driven) (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Brinkmann, 2013; Clarke & Braun, 2013; Flick, 2004, 2013), for “inductive designs are particularly well suited to study new and emergent phenomena” (Brinkmann, 2013, p. 54).

However, of course, having conducted the interviews myself, I acknowledged initial codes, topics and potential themes (see Appendix 9). With two theory-driven themes that come from the main research topic, the interests represented in the research questions (see Chapter 1, section 1.7) and no other specific categories in mind, the following steps were followed: reading and re-reading the transcripts according to a first broad bottom-up, data-driven process; key words, expressions and passages were marked; initial codes were noted, and potential emerging topics faithful to the language of the participants were identified (see Appendix 9).

These units, as suggested by Gonzalez and Gonzalez (2004)—whose own research also involves the use of English and Spanish—were kept in Spanish in order to maintain the original language and the richness of the data. Following their advice, the presentation of the data entailed units that were bilingually presented in most cases so that “Spanish-speaking readers understand the exact meaning of the unit and its context” (Gonzalez and Gonzalez & Lincoln, 2006, paragraph 11). Simultaneously, by using a top-down theory driven analysis, I tried to match this information with the research questions and objectives in order to check if these could be answered and attained. The data were thus grouped under the research questions related to culture and interculturality in ELT, their definitions and applications in the classroom, and also linked to those other questions related to the teacher's dispositions to start the processes of interculturalising ELT.

At the same time, I tried to establish a net of relations and interpretations. After collating data into codes and then into potential themes, raw interviews were transformed into more manageable relevant excerpts that were thematically organised (Seidman, 2006) and able to potentially answer my research questions. It is fundamental to remember that the stages of data analysis are not—and in the case of this research were not—necessarily sequential. For this reason, going back and forth in the process was expected and necessary in order to refine the specifics and generate names for each theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Silverman & Marvasti, 2008; Clarke & Braun, 2013).

Taking into account the broad amount of data that was gathered during the process, traditional coding was not a practical option. Computer assisted qualitative data analysis (Seale, 2005) and computational content analysis (Burton, Brundrett & Jones, 2008) were selected, and the ATLAS-Ti, version 7 was used. ATLAS-Ti helps to store, organize, group and retrieve data in such a way that it is less time consuming to manage all data in a singular and cross analytical way. Codes were selected, commented, ordered, filtered, moved, renamed, split, and linked to each other. When browsing the data, they could be viewed in lists, hierarchies, as network views or particular occurrences (instances) (Konopásek, 2008, paragraph 33). Finally, as a result of this process, an initial thematic map of analysis was proposed and later discussed with my supervisor, who advised me to merge and re-order some of the themes. (The final set of themes are presented in Appendix 9).

#### **4.8. Researching multilingually**

Holmes, Fay, Andrews and Attia (2013, p. 294) advocate undertaking research multilingually as there are possibilities of “gaining rich insights” in the research process (see Gonzalez and Gonzalez, & Lincoln, 2006). Concomitantly, constructivist qualitative research sees language

as a powerful thread to articulate the participants' perspectives in order to create knowledge through the interactive exchange between both within discursive settings (Green & Thorogood, 2004). In this study, English and Spanish were used. Most data were gathered and coded in Spanish and then translated and presented in English. This decision was, in addition, endorsed by the concept of doing *research in two languages* (Gerrish, 2003; Gonzalez and Gonzalez, 2004; Gonzalez and Gonzalez & Lincoln, 2006; Green & Thorogood, 2004; Hennink, 2008; Irvine, Roberts & Bradbury-Jones, 2008; Shklarov, 2007; Twinn, 1998), or *researching multilingually*, as explained by Holmes *et al.* (2013, p. 28).

One of the main reasons for using the two languages was that English language teachers would feel more comfortable sharing information in Spanish, for they tend to be frequently reluctant to be interviewed in English because they think they are being evaluated and their language proficiency and performance judged. As Hennink (2008) illustrates by describing studies within Hispanic communities in the USA, it was found that 70% of participants preferred to speak in Spanish despite their having a fair knowledge of English and a significant level of acculturation. Spanish as the interview language for participants was also seen as an emphatic strategy to generate trust and confidence because, as interviewees construct and shape their realities, "language is used in an interpretive way to enable participants to identify their own individual experiences of reality." (Hennink, 2008, p. 24). This fact is widely supported by Irvine, Roberts, and Bradbury-Jones (2008) who, by using Twinn's (1997) assumptions, demonstrate that qualitative methods that enable participants to use their own language are vital to gain insight and understanding of the lived experiences of linguistically diverse populations.

My role as an insider researcher and translator with some understanding of the field, who understands the languages involved (as I am bilingual) and has some bicultural

experience were all fundamental aspects “so that meanings, rather just words, are being translated” (Gerrish, 2003; Green & Thorogood, 2004, pp. 84-85; Temple & Young, 2004) in the data analysis and interpretation processes. Irvine, Roberts and Bradbury-Jones’ (2008, p. 41) testimony was inspiring as they identified a similar experience with focus groups in research that included Welsh and English-speaking participants: “we were able to offer language choice to participants by operating bilingually. This meant that as facilitators, we switched between two languages.” Taking those aspects into consideration, Irvine, Roberts & Bradbury-Jones’ views (2008, p. 44) add that:

Researchers who are insiders and share the language of the participants have access to primary data sources during analysis and thus avoid many of the challenges associated with translation. Insider researchers are able to immerse themselves in the original data and, if bilingual or multilingual, can mediate between linguistically diverse data sets; this may provide added insight and clarity to the interpretative process.

Analysis and interpretation, as well as presentation, were performed in the two languages so as there was an active interaction between them that was used to study a specific social phenomenon. With regard to presenting the research findings, a bilingual presentation of data seemed advisable to ensure transparency and trustworthiness and remark on participants’ realities and contexts (Chen, 2009; Gonzalez and Gonzalez, 2004; Gonzalez and Gonzalez & Lincoln, 2006).

#### **4.9. Ethical considerations**

Constructivist qualitative inquiry raises distinctive ethical issues. It involves individuals in a particular context, and requires an emergent and flexible research design that entails the collection of relatively unstructured data in naturalistic settings, and the production of knowledge for social change (Denzin, 2012; Hammersley & Traianou, 2012;). As Denzin (2012, p. 86) clarifies, “Qualitative research scholars have an obligation to change the world, to engage in ethical work that makes a positive difference.”

Contemplating ethics is crucial to being able to sort out the challenges involved in terms of the representation of multiple, socially-constructed versions of reality and voices contributing to interpretations of the data (Mertens, 2014). For this reason, minimising harm, respecting autonomy, protecting privacy, justice, avoiding deception, and accuracy of data and their interpretation (Hammersley & Mertens, 2014, 2012; Patton, 2015; Springett, Atkey, Kongats, Zulla & Wilkins, 2016) are some relevant considerations that must be established from the very beginning of the research process (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Piper & Simons, 2005). The ethics of researching multilingually was also established (Holmes *et al.*, 2013): to balance power relations, English and Spanish were actively used with clear roles from the very beginning of the research and translations were accurate as I am a professional English-Spanish interpreter. In this research, some of these concerns were taken into consideration from the very first stages when the objectives and research questions were still being drafted (Flick, 2007). As a project, this research passed through two different ethical review boards. The first was the board at the Universidad de los Andes (Bogotá, Colombia) as this is my place of work and any research carried out within it must be ethically approved by an internal committee. In addition, the research was also approved by the Ethics Advisory

Committee at Durham University (see appendix 1 for both ethical approvals minutes). No data was collected before both approvals were ready.

Transparency as a universal concern that increased the credibility and validity of the quality of this qualitative research (Hiles, 2008; Springett, *et al.* 2016) was a guiding principle. It mainly deals with what happens between the means (methodology and methods) and ends (impacts and outcomes) of the research process (Duncan & Watson, 2010). From the recruiting phase onwards, an open, honest relationship with deans, gatekeepers and potential participants was established.

#### **4.9.1. Informed consent**

Informed consent refers to “participants being fully informed about the research and their expected role in it” (Daniels, 2008, p. 124). Participation in my research was voluntary and participants knew they had the right of refusing to take part, withdraw or not to answer questions that made them feel uncomfortable (Christians, 2005). The principle of informed consent highlights the responsibility researchers have to inform participants of different aspects of the research in comprehensible language. Clarifications need to include the nature of the study, the participants’ potential role, the objective of the research, and how the results will be published and used (Piper & Simons, 2005; Sanjari, Bahramnezhad, Fomani, Shoghi & Cheraghi, 2014). Following these considerations, information about my research and about willing participation was made explicit. Informed consent for those volunteering was sent by mail in advance so that participants had enough time to read them carefully. The day of the interview or classroom observation, participants were asked whether they had questions about the research, procedures or their roles. Then, two hard copies of the consent forms were given to each participant, one of them to be signed and returned to the researcher; the other one to



be kept for her/his record. No covert actions nor false information were provided to avoid any sort of deception of the research participants (Christians, 2005, 2011; Hopf, 2004).

#### **4.9.2. Anonymity and confidentiality**

When analysing qualitative data, which includes transcription, analysis itself, and presenting results and excerpts from the data, anonymity and confidentiality are central issues in terms of ethics (Flick, 2007). Confidentiality in the process of conducting the research, respect and the anonymization of individuals being reported (Piper & Simons, 2005) were important concerns that were considered in this research. Confidentiality allowed participants to not only talk confidently, but also to refuse to allow publication of any material that they think might harm them in any way, though not the case of this research after the member check process—“copies of interview transcripts are returned and reviewed together by investigators and interviewees” (Lunsford, 2009, p. 132)—to prevent harm and protect confidentiality.

Also, when data was refined, making participants’ information anonymous and untraceable to future readers was an important endeavour (Bryman, 2012; Flick, 2007; Hopf, 2004). All personal data were secured or concealed and were made public only behind a shield of anonymity to offer some protection of privacy and confidentiality for avoiding potential participant harm (Christians, 2005, 2011; Flick, 2007; Piper & Simons, 2005). Last, to ensure ethical rigour, accuracy of the data and their interpretation was a leading principle acknowledging that, “fabrications, fraudulent materials, omissions, and contrivances are both nonscientific and unethical” (Christians, 2011, p. 66). Finally, there was transparency when using two languages and translation issues as a mechanism to strengthen the rigour of this constructivist qualitative research.

#### 4.10. Trustworthiness of the research

There is a need to establish and assess the quality of qualitative research alternatively to quantitative concepts such as reliability and validity (Bryman, 2012; Flick, 2007, 2013; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Hammersley, 2007; Hennink, 2008; Larkin, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Noble & Smith, 2015; Steinke, 2004; Springett, Atkey, Kongats, Zulla & Wilkins, 2016). Trustworthiness is a primary criterion to assess a qualitative study: it is made up of four criteria, each of which has an equivalent criterion in quantitative research (Miller, 2008). In essence, trustworthiness can be thought of as the ways in which qualitative researchers ensure that **transferability** (which parallels external validity), **credibility** (which parallels internal validity), **dependability** (which parallels reliability), and **confirmability** (which parallels objectivity) act as a way to describe research in ways “that highlight the overall rigor of qualitative research without trying to force it into the quantitative model” (Given & Saumure, 2008, p. 895).

Credibility suggests that “the reader can have confidence in the data and their interpretation” (Savin-Baden & Major, 2010, p. 174). Credibility has been addressed in the present study as follows: (1) first, meticulous transparent record keeping was fundamental to demonstrated a series of responsible decisions ensuring strict ethical procedures to support truthful interpretations of data; (2) rich and thick verbatim narratives of participants’ accounts to support findings were included in the original language of data collection and then carefully translated; (3) participant validation in which interviewees were invited to comment on the interview transcript (member check); (4) similarly, engaging with colleagues and members of the research group to which I actively belong –Bilingualism and Bilingual Education– was an important support in minimizing bias and discussing about the translation of certain major concepts; (5) multi-perspective data gathering and analysis was performed in which different

methods helped produce a more comprehensive set of findings; (8) clarity and transparency were constant in terms of thought processes during data analysis and subsequent interpretations; (9) last, throughout the entire research process, acknowledging biases and ongoing critical reflection of methods was necessary to ensure sufficient depth and relevance of data collection and analysis (Noble & Smith, 2015).

Transferability, “which is itself dependent upon the degree of similarity (fittingness) between two contexts” (Guba, 1981: 81) implies that the results of the research can be transferred to other contexts and situations that are beyond the scope of the study context (Jensen, 2008). Thus, the responsibility is shifted from the researcher to the reader or potential user of the findings (Maxwell & Chmiel, 2014). As transferability is generally considered the responsibility of the one who wishes to apply the results into new contexts (Savin-Baden & Major, 2010), I, as a researcher, generally provided thick descriptions (Geertz & Darnton, 2017), or rich accounts of details that provide potential readers and education stakeholders with corpora for making judgements about the possible transferability of findings to other settings (Bryman, 2012; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose the idea of dependability as a criterion of trustworthiness by taking an auditing approach. This includes, as Jensen (2008a) and Bryman (2012) suggest, having accessible and complete records of all phases of the research process to establish to what extent the proper procedures have been followed (e.g., problem formulation, selection of research participants, fieldwork notes, interview transcripts, data analysis decisions, etc.). This research tried to ensure both dependability and confirmability through formal and informal audit processes such as the supervisor’s guidance and feedback; interview transcripts member check; debriefing meetings in the research group to which I

belong; and presentations of my research advancements in different national events<sup>1</sup>. These mediums not only helped me to communicate partial advancements using the two languages involved, but also to verify the research process, initial findings and interpretations of the data by presenting my research and putting it up for discussion with different audiences. (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Savin-Baden & Major, 2010).

#### **4.11. Reflexivity**

Reflexivity as “the process reflecting critically on the self as researcher” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 210) is essential to the integrity of qualitative research (Hatch, 2002) and represents a core concept in qualitative research that refers to “the politics of positionality” (Soyini Madison, 2005, p. 6) or one’s attention to how power and bias come to bear during all phases of the research (Creswell, 2009; Hammersley & Traianou, 2012; Leavy, 2014, p. 5; May & Perry, 2014). To enhance the reflexivity in this research, a detailed researcher’s journal with a reflexive approach containing notes and memos was kept increasing awareness of how the research process had been shaped by identities, stories, roles, and expectations, as well as the social and political context for the research in Colombia (McGhee, Marland & Atkinson, 2007; Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2016).

Special awareness was placed on power relations in the research as a way to minimise participants’ harm and prevent myself from taking an absolutist position. The power relation in qualitative research, according to Almlund (2013, p. 40) is “a situation in which the

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<sup>1</sup> The 2d. International Symposium of Linguistics and Intercultural Contacts (*Segundo Simposio Internacional Contactos Lingüísticos e Interculturales*), Cali, Colombia, November, 12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>, 2015; the 8th International Colloquium about Foreign Language Research (*Octavo Coloquio Internacional sobre Investigación en Lenguas Extranjeras*), Bogotá, Colombia, May 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>, 2016; Conversations on Interculturality and the Teaching of Second and Foreign Languages (*Conversatorio sobre interculturalidad en la enseñanza de lenguas segundas y extranjeras*), Bogotá, Colombia, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016 and Colombo Symposium 2017: 75 years of Innovative, Inclusive and Inspiring Teaching (*Septuagésimo quinto Simposio Internacional del Centro Colombo Americano: 75 años de enseñanza innovadora, incluyente e inspiradora*), Bogotá, Colombia, September 14<sup>th</sup>- 15<sup>th</sup>.

researcher always sets the agenda and makes the final interpretation.” However, the social constructivist nature of this research proposes there to be a dynamic relationship that is influenced by the specific context and can be seen as a coproduction of researcher and researched (Atkinson & Coffey, 2003). For example, after examining Holmes’ (2014a, p. 107) poststudy reflection on her reflexivity in her doctoral research experience, in which she critically analyses her role as an interviewer, I avoided the role of the «interrogator» with a directive controlling approach during interviews. From her experience, I consciously avoided a high-power distance role and opted for a conversational interview climate, giving importance to the two languages as they emerged.

As my research was conducted, I was an insider with all of the participants and we shared the common bond of the ELT profession. I realised that being an insider, in many respects, research from within the setting becomes more challenging, for it requires overcoming one’s personal lens in order to understand from the other’s point of view. Accordingly, as interviews and informal conversations with participants developed, I had in mind Lundford Mears’s advice (2009, p. 83): “you will need to adjust your level of “knowing” and allow your narrator to teach you. It is the narrator who holds the knowledge that you lack.”

#### **4.12. Concluding the chapter**

This chapter has presented how the ontological, epistemological and the methodological triad directed by social constructionist and qualitative enquiry principles guided this study to gain an understanding of how English language teachers may develop their ICC and then incorporate this into their ELT praxis. The methodological and procedural decisions have been explained and justified with reference to the literature, objectives and nature of this investigation. Accordingly, the overall research perspective that is based mainly on qualitative

semi-structured interviews has been discussed. After describing the method of data collection, a discussion on the fieldwork and its importance followed including the relevancy of the researcher as an insider. Methods of data collection were described and justified depending on the context, and rich data was provided, the analysis of which helped unveil participants' assumptions on culture-and-language teaching and intercultural English language teaching. The field of research and details pertaining to access, sampling, and recruitment, etc. were scrutinized to prove thorough awareness of the research design. Data analysis strategies and procedures were used to explain how emergent themes arising from thematic analysis came to light that were conducive to examination of topics in order to answer the research questions.

Additionally, researching bilingually was a feature of this research as there were two languages involved in the research process: English and Spanish. Using Spanish in the data gathering process permitted participants to narrate their experiences and share their feelings openly and confidently. Code switching was mainly used to clarify concepts or explain specific classroom projects or activities. I paid particular attention to ethical considerations in order to avoid any digressions that could have hindered the research. For this reason, rich information about the research process, my role and participants' roles, as well as confidentiality and informed consent, were part of the strategy to ensure ethical research. Guaranteeing research quality was also safeguarded through a pilot study and by applying considerations such as rapport and trust with the participants in order to openly explore their beliefs and appraisals towards IELTS.

Next, the following two chapters present the research findings and address how Colombian EFL teachers' current practices, beliefs and professional self-concepts relate to the profile of the intercultural foreign language teacher. Chapter 5 addresses the findings vis-à-vis how teachers see and experience culture and language teaching in Colombia. Then Chapter

6 explores issues on existing or prospective IELTS as this constitutes the central issue of my research.

## Chapter 5

### **Teaching English language and culture: Colombian English language teachers' conceptions, definitions and appraisals**

In this chapter, I present the research findings with regard to English language teachers' conceptions and beliefs about teaching language and culture in the English language classroom, and the importance that teachers attribute to it. These findings relate to the first set of research questions: what are Colombian English language teachers' conceptions and beliefs about teaching language and culture in the English language classroom? (What is culture? How important is culture in the teaching of a foreign language? Do you include culture in your lessons?).

From the data obtained, I identify five salient themes from the thematic analysis relevant to the participants' conceptions and beliefs about culture and ELT: 1) participants' definitions of culture; 2) the importance of culture and its role in English language teaching; 3) what culture to teach; 4) reasons and objectives to teach culture in the English language classroom, and finally, 5) how Colombian English language teachers introduce culture in their lessons. From here on in, participant in-service teachers will be identified as **PITs** and participant pre-service teacher as **PPTs**.

#### **5.1. Participants' definitions of culture**

This section focuses on English language teachers' own definitions of culture and respond to one of the research question what culture is with its corresponding probing questions (see appendix 5). This information will also shed light on their understanding of IELT. Taking this



into consideration, next I present and discuss the salient features of culture definitions emerging from data to illustrate participant teachers' different views.

### **5.1.1. Culture as “all” or “everything” and as enumerative lists**

There was a common tendency to denominate culture as a type of “all” or “whole”, e.g., that culture is everything that people have, think, and do as members of a society. In this research participants advocated some similar views:

*La cultura es todo lo que somos y compartimos como grupo social, las costumbres que tenemos, de qué forma somos, cómo actuamos. (PPT2)*

Culture is all what we are, and what we share as a social group, our habits and customs, the way we are and how we behave.

Probing participants to explain what *everything* meant, their understanding turned into essentialist definitions and they categorized culture using structuralist viewpoints: “*Lo que comemos, hacemos, cómo nos vestimos, las celebraciones, etc.*” (PPT, 3: “what we eat, what we do, how we dress, celebrations, etc.”)

These ideas may reflect the structural concept of culture, mostly coming from anthropological views of culture that have predominated in foreign language teacher education in Colombia. One participant recalled Edward B. Tylor's (1871, PIT4) definition of culture and also declared this definition has determined some examples she frequently provides in her EFL classroom. Tylor (1871, p. 1) sees culture as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” This definition of culture as a whole or “*everything*” (Cuzzort, 1969; DeVito, 1991; Horton & Hunt, 1984) was frequent amongst participants, and was sometimes perceived as a shortcut to avoid the complexity and multidimensionality of

the concept (Risager, 2007). In this case, teachers' perceptions of culture seemed to despise its intricate nature (Nieto, 2002).

### **5.1.2. Culture as unique, interrelated blueprints for living**

Following the first position, which seemed to portray culture as *everything*, the common features of the participants' definitions of culture were: culture being related to traditions, habits, behaviours and group membership; as well as lifestyle, gastronomy, history, beliefs and value systems, norms, music, dance and language of a group of people living in a particular geographic region. Generalized perceptions about the definition of culture included:

*Cultura son todos los aspectos que caracterizan una población en un lugar específico, región, ciudad, país, esto incluye sus costumbres, folclore, lengua, tradiciones orales y escritas, celebraciones, fiestas, convenciones sociales, etc. Es el conjunto de creencias, actitudes, opiniones, maneras de pensar, ser, actuar y vivir que comparten los miembros de una comunidad. (PIT12).*

Culture entails all aspects characterizing a specific population in a specific place, region, city, country; these include customs, folklore, language, oral and written traditions, celebrations, holidays, social conventions, etcetera. [Culture] is a group of beliefs, attitudes, opinions, ways of thinking, being, acting and living shared by members of society.

In my journal writing at post-interview stage I reflected on some of the participants' responses (e.g., PITs 1, 7, 11, 25, 17; PPT 1):

Trying to give a definition of culture, these participants took their time in an effort to give an "accurate" definition, perhaps in an attempt to forge a single, inclusive definition [...] to gather/list as many elements of culture as possible. Many of them took their time to create a definition that was as complete as possible, no matter their disciplinary distinctions.

As can be observed, the first and the second groups of definitions appear to favour essentialist-generalized and essentialist-diversified conceptions of culture (Elsen & St. John, 2007).

Culture is seen as a static phenomenon related to the nation state (US, UK culture), ethnicity,

geography, language, and other aspects in which the teaching of culture is merely imparting information on the culture as individuals are taken as typical of the larger domain (Elsen & St. John, 2007; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). On the other, essentialist-diversified conceptions of culture go much further than simply nationality, ethnicity, religion, etcetera, even when individual identities are considered to be finished products:

*La cultura es la identidad de un pueblo, sus tradiciones, su patrimonio intelectual, creencias, valores, el arte, la gastronomía, entre otros aspectos.* (PIT 19).

Culture is people's identity, their traditions, their intellectual heritage, beliefs, values, arts, gastronomy, and other aspects.

From these interpretations, lists of the contents of culture (Baldwin, Faulkner & Hecht, 2006) and a strong tendency to itemise them can be observed in teachers' perceptions; as Franz Boas (1940) described, the term culture can be used to designate a distinctive pattern or configuration of elements, both material and ideational. Earlier works by Adaskou, Britten and Fahsi (1990, pp. 3-4) are congruent with taxonomical definitions, as they called the concept of culture a fourfold dimension containing: (1) The *aesthetic sense* (media, cinema, music and literature); (2) the *sociological sense* (family, education, work and leisure, traditions); (3) the *semantic sense* (conceptions and thought processes); (4) the *pragmatic* (or *sociolinguistic*) *sense* ('appropriacy' in linguistic terms).

### **5.1.3. Culture as a process of differentiation and group membership**

Some definitions gathered from the data collection regarded culture as a process of differentiation and produced group-based meanings, leaving aside the idea of shared understandings among people who see themselves as part of a meaningful collective with

some sense of shared identity and social interdependence (Yūki & Brewer, 2013). In this vein, several participants advocated for the following definitions:

*Cultura es un constructo discursivo colectivo que, a través de los años, identifica una población y se construye desde la misma población. De esta manera, se puede evidenciar a través de las ideas, formas de actuar, formas de pensar, manera de vestirse, de hablar, entre otros que diferencia un grupo de seres humanos de otros. (PIT 6).*

Culture is a collective discursive construct that identifies a specific group of people and, over time, is constructed by them. As such, this can be seen through ideas, ways of acting and thinking, ways of dressing, talking, etc., that differentiates one group of human beings from another.

Some other definitions—even though there was a return to the notion of culture-as-a-nation—emphasised the concept of differentiation:

*Cultura es las costumbres que tenemos, de qué forma somos, cómo actuamos, no es lo mismo cómo es una persona colombiana a cómo es una venezolana a pesar de que estamos tan cercanos; porque eso es lo que nos hace diferentes, la cultura. (PIT 13)*

Culture is the habits we have, the way we are, how we act; it is not the same to be a Colombian or a Venezuelan, no matter how close we are because culture is what makes us different.

It is interesting to notice that participants who expressed these ideas were more inclined for the concept of differentiation rather than similarities or potential shared spaces, as for Lindsey, Robins and Terrell (1999, p. 26) who understand culture as “everything you believe and everything you do that enables you to identify with people who are like you and that distinguishes you from people who differ from you.” Seemingly, some teachers feel culture as a parcel that identifies and differentiates; something external “out there” to be understood and to be tolerant about. This, in my view, is paramount to an ethnocentric power relationship that sees the Other as something that needs to be understood and accepted.

#### 5.1.4. Towards building anti-essentialists views of culture

A few teachers' definitions showed a progression towards the formation of anti-essential views of culture (Elsen & St. John, 2007), which have a strong basis in constructivist thinking; they included interrelationships, which acknowledged the highly complex and dynamic nature of culture (Witte & Harden, 2011). These participants appeared to consciously set aside traditional definitions by trying to capture the essence of more constructivist views on culture (Baldwin, Faulkner & Hecht, 2006):

*La cultura no es algo estático, la cultura no se debe confundir con civilización, la civilización es parte de la cultura y están compenetradas, pero básicamente si tuviera que definir cultura diría que son todas aquellas manifestaciones, ya sean artísticas, literarias, políticas, económicas, de género, todas aquellas manifestaciones en donde se plasman las perspectivas, donde se vislumbran productos, donde se evidencian prácticas particulares de los grupos humanos, que bien pueden ser universales o pueden ser relativas a una civilización, y en las cuales obviamente siempre hay un intercambio y ese intercambio puede o no ser intercultural mediado por el conocimiento de la lengua.(PIT11).*

Culture is not static. It cannot be confused with civilization. Civilization is part of culture, and they are connected. But basically, if I had to define culture I would say it is all those manifestations that capture perspectives from which one may discern products, and show human beings' specific practices—context specific or universal—where interculturally mediated exchanges happen (or do not happen) that are arbitrated by being able to speak a language.

The participants who advocated anti-essentialist definitions provoked my researcher response, recorded in the post interview stage as follows: “*La cultura no es lo que nos enseñaron en la universidad*” (PIT6: “Culture is not what we were taught at the university”); “*hemos sido educados bajo un concepto de cultura restringido*” (PIT10: “We have only been educated with a limited concept of culture.”). These comments may indicate some teachers' critical reflection on this topic based on their educational processes or personal biographies. Trying

to deconstruct the concept of culture can be understood as a first step in making sense of the openness and flexibility of ICC and intercultural dialogue for communication.

Some participants evoked works by scholars such as Byram (1997), probably in an attempt to display their awareness of the shift towards ICC. However, an important tension can be identified because Byram's ICC model (1997) has been criticized for its essentialist nature of the concept of culture that is associated to nation (Belz, 2007), and which Byram re-evaluated in his subsequent works (2008, 2009, 2011). This may imply that even when acknowledging the change of direction in culture teaching, structural definitions stay deep rooted in the mind and have been internalized, naturalized and legitimized by the long tradition of essentialism in English language education programs and pedagogical practices: a sort of "Today in the clothes of yesterday" (Arlt, 2002, p. 18).

Other participants revealed a few isolated definitions of culture. First, culture is erudition or high, specialized, deep knowledge. This refers to the outdated "cultivation" of individuals and groups of people in terms of the "general process of intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic development," and the concept first appeared in the 18th century (Williams, 1983, p. 90):

*La cultura es saber de todo un poco; mientras más se sabe del mundo más y mejor conocimiento para usar como apoyo en las clases. (PPT2).*

Culture is knowing a little about everything; the more you know about the world, the more and better knowledge you have to use as background for your teaching.

In addition, a second isolated definition acknowledges the concepts of big "C" and small "c" culture (Kramsh, 2013; Tomalin, 2008; Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993), or the teaching of culture in ELT as cultural knowledge (knowledge of culture's institution, the big C); cultural values (the "psyche" of the country, what people think is important); cultural

behaviour (knowledge of daily routines and behaviour, the little c); and cultural skills (the development of intercultural sensitivity and awareness, using English language as the medium for interaction) (González, 2003, 2007; Kim, 2014; Linares, 2011; Osorio & Insuasty, 2015). This seems remarkably important in the Colombian context due to the boundaries with structural ELT views of culture and the “native speaker” communicative aims of CLT. According to Holliday (1999, 2013), however, both perspectives, small (micro) and large (macro) cultures are relevant as they can complement each other in actual classroom practice (Naveel, Kantara & Cserző, 2016). From the communicative viewpoint, which puts emphasis on providing the student with the language functions that can effectively be used in a specific context, culture is understood as a source of “carrier content”, i.e., culture with a small “c” (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998, p.11; Osorio & Insuasty, 2015). The following excerpt illustrates this approach:

*Cultura “with small c” es la comida, las costumbres, los platos típicos, la vestimenta típica que es como el “surface”, la cultura superficial que incluso nos lleva a pensar en estereotipos de cada región o de cada país. Por otra parte tenemos la cultura profunda o características que tienen que ver más con el comportamiento de las personas, la forma como ven la vida, la forma como se desempeñan, incluso los valores que pueden tener. Todo este grupo de herramientas o, o “behaviours que, que hacen un país o una persona distinguirse de las otras o diferenciarse de las otras. (PIT20).*

Culture “with the small c” is the food, the customs, traditional dishes, traditional dress, which are components of the “surface” or superficial culture that lead us to thinking of stereotypes from each region or each country. Also, there is a deep culture or characteristics that have to do with people’s behaviours, their way of seeing life, the way they develop and even the values they have. All these tools or behaviours make people from one country different one from another.

Only one participant defined culture as a function, a definition that saw culture as a tool to achieve some end (González, Houston & Chen, 2000). In this case, culture was defined as “*La base contextual para poder enseñar un idioma*” (PIT13: “the contextual base used to

teach a language.”). This means that specific teaching practices can be understood as attempts to provide content-based (Genesee, 1994; Met, 1991, 1999; Stoller, 2002) or task-based instruction (Littlewood, 2004; Ellis, 2003 2003a, 2005), in which tasks are bound together with culture and can be seen as “*Temas interesantes y motivantes para los aprendientes*” (PIT16: “interesting and motivating topics for learners.”).

Finally, one definition of culture was extended, and it attributed some meaning to intercultural competence:

*Cultura es entender quién soy yo, entender quién es el otro y entender cómo nos ponemos de acuerdo (o tal vez no nos ponemos de acuerdo) a pesar de las diferencias. Culturalmente yo tengo una forma de ver el mundo, otra persona tiene una forma diferente de ver el mundo y seguramente en esa diferencia nosotros podemos tener algún punto de encuentro o de entendimiento. (PIT21).*

Culture is understanding who I am, understanding who the Other is and how we can agree (or not) despite our differences. Culturally, I have a way to see the world, and others have a different way to see the world; within difference we surely can find an area in which we agree, or at least have an understanding.

Within this definition, the participant tried to broaden the scope of culture in terms of the issue that created a shared space for intercultural dialogue. An explanation may result from seeing culture as dynamic and complex and associating its competences—sociolinguistic competences, knowledge and attitudes (Kramsch, 2003)— with the dimensions of ICC, such as being aware of the attitudes, knowledge and skills necessary to co-create spaces for intercultural communication.

To sum, findings show that the definitions provided by participants were rich and varied; they ranged from structural, traditional definitions of culture to some that related to anti-essentialist views. This variety of definitions differs from Barletta’s (2009) study led in another city of Colombia (Barranquilla) that shares similar research questions on culture and



ELT from the ones established for this study. She found that teachers seldom defined culture, and, if they did, definitions were conceptualized as “static, structural representations”. (p. 150). In my research instead, a wide range of definitions was obtained, and although the majority is essentialist, those that are not cannot be overlooked; they can be understood to be advances towards more inclusive constructivist views that include social phenomena.

Frequent overlap within the different definitions is evident. Participants’ responses suggest understanding of culture as culture and culture constituents as melting and merging together. It can be concluded that the majority of the definitions provided see culture as a symbolic “whole” or in terms of a system or framework of elements—culture as a *structure* or *pattern* (e.g., ideas, behaviour, symbols, or any combination of these and other elements). Findings suggest that essentialist views are predominant on different levels. These definitions are problematic because culture is seen stable, and able to differentiate a group of people from others. Such view implies that each culture is associated to a specific language and a specific country. On the other hand, anti-essentialist views, which advocate for more flexible, constructivist approaches to culture were few. These definitions are particularly favourable for building on ICC through teaching a language because when culture I seen as something flexible and open that is built and rebuilt on daily practice, then there is appropriate background knowledge for understanding of IELTS.

Last, findings also suggest that culture teaching and developing cultural awareness in the ELT classroom is reserved for to advanced learners and not for the beginners. This may imply teachers’ misleading assumptions that learners’ proficiency in English determines the understandings of culture, culture as dependable of language, or culture’s complexity as a challenging topic that might go beyond the capacities of beginner learners.

## 5.2. The importance of culture and its role in English language teaching

This section discusses teachers' perception on the importance of culture and its role in ELT in an attempt to answer two of the subsidiary research questions that give participants an appreciation of culture and culture teaching: how important is culture in English language teaching? and What role does culture play in ELT? The data revealed that most participants in general see culture as very important and, additionally, inseparable from target language teaching. Accordingly, some participants see language as a «carrier of culture» (Wei, 2005, p. 56): *“Forjamos la cultura a través de la lengua, o sea, la cultura es mediada por la misma lengua que hace parte de la cultura* (PIT12: “We shape culture through language; that is to say, culture is mediated through the same language that is part of culture.”). In short, *“Aprender otra lengua es aprender otra cultura”*, as another participant expressed (PIT14: “Learning a language means learning another culture.”).

Despite the stated indivisibility, in practice participants think about language and culture separately (Brown, 1994; Gao, 2006; Jiang, 2000; Valdes, 1990); some participants may have perceived that by declaring inseparability, they were already fostering interdependence of language learning and cultural learning. This was highlighted by the following viewpoints:

*La cultura se expresa por medio de la lengua y hace parte de la misma. Entonces, no creo que sea posible enseñar una sin la otra* (PIT12).

Culture expresses itself through language and makes itself part of language. For this reason, I do not think it is possible to teach one without the other.

*Aprender la lengua sin aprender la cultura, las culturas que pueden estar asociadas a esa lengua, es como tener la mitad del paquete* (PIT23).

Learning a language without learning its culture or cultures related to that language is like having half of the package.

In this research, everyone except one participant demonstrated an evident unity between the two concepts, and this unity seemed to be conceptually even stronger in those teachers who had more solid formal or experiential knowledge on the topic (e.g., postgraduate programs and stays abroad). In classroom observations carried out for this research, however, culture teaching was predominantly content-based lessons or a thematic common thread (cultural aspects) to achieve the functions of language through compare-contrast strategies. Attempts to enhance learners' cultural awareness through deeper reflection and analysis were few (e.g., guiding their students into research strategies by interviewing other English language teachers about their experiences within the country and abroad).

Two isolated views on the importance of culture in ELT were noticeable: one is overly against teaching culture and declares culture as a problematic issue in the teaching of a foreign language. “*La cultura en la enseñanza de lengua extranjera resulta ser más un problema que en beneficio*” (PIT17: “Culture in foreign language teaching seems more problematic than beneficial”). When asked to clarify this position, this participant advocated that cultural contents were another burden to add to the linguistic component of language; it also led to the polarization of teachers as some would «know more». This assumption may have its origins in the misleading perception of cultural awareness and teaching as a mere transmission of cultural contents and the accumulative knowledge about culture (Pulverness, 2003). My findings suggest that this type of perception towards the inclusion of culture in ELT may negatively impinge advancements towards IELT because interculturalising ELT is not about encyclopaedic knowledge of cultures, but about putting all *savoirs* in a dialogue to foster a holistic approach to teach and learn a language that also include high order critical thinking skills and reflection on actions.

The second view placed the teaching of culture within a specific teaching approach and methodology, the CLT, which has predominated in Colombia (González, 2003, 2007; Linares, 2011; Kim, 2014; Osorio & Insuasty, 2015). According to this participant, culture is a framework for communication and can be used as something that enables the language learner to interact with native speakers:

*La lengua extranjera como tal no tiene sentido si no está en su contexto real o en las situaciones en las que las personas realmente la usan llevando a cabo diferentes funciones comunicativas. La cultura es esa base contextual que crea esos intercambios. (PPT5).*

The foreign language has no real meaning if it is not within its real context or situations in which people use it to perform different communicative functions. Culture is the contextual base that creates those exchanges.

As observed, this participant advocates for CLT's major tenets that emphasize the communication of messages and negotiation of meaning, or performing functions of the language, within an ideal of native speakerism. This conceptual position is frequent among language English language teachers due to the extended tradition of communicative approaches in Colombia (see Chapter 2, section 2.4).

Claims on the teaching of language and culture often imply teachers' feelings of discouragement. This next assertion shows one teachers' feeling of frustration as culture becomes another burden (Lorduy *et al.* 2009):

*No podemos tampoco quedarnos tanto tiempo en la cultura porque todavía debemos enseñar el resto de aspectos de la lengua inglesa que es lo que se evalúa (PPT1).*

We cannot spend much time teaching culture because we still have to teach the other aspects of English that are directly evaluated.

These findings reveal that teachers generally perceive language and culture as a single entity when teaching EFL. However, in practice, it appeared that most participants believed that

culture teaching was to support and facilitate English language learning as, paradoxically, a content unit that is detachable from language. These findings were corroborated through my observations (Classroom observations 3, 5), whereby I observed that culture seems secondary or it is about including cultural themes as part of crowded curricula that have traditionally taught English from a linguistic perspective.

Based on this foregoing discussion, a question that arises is whether Latin American countries have been making less of an effort compared to developed countries with regard to culture teaching; notwithstanding, by reading Moore's (1996) questionnaire-based early work with 210 foreign language teachers in upstate New York, it was demonstrated that only 26% of the respondents taught culture in their lessons. Some additional, more updated research on the same topic in Sweden (e.g. Gagnestam, 2003; Larzén, 2005; Lundgren, 2005) also reported that many language teachers in Swedish upper secondary schools felt unsure about how to deal with culture in language teaching. Thus, research corroborates that the inclusion of a cultural component in ELT has been difficult to accommodate in teachers' praxis, and it addresses more a widespread situation in ELT.

### **5.3. What culture to teach**

To continue with the exploration of culture teaching in the EFL classroom, participant teachers were asked what culture they taught. Despite agreeing on the indivisibility of language and culture teaching and acknowledging its importance, the participants' views differ with respect to their perspective on which culture to involve in the English language classrooms. Accordingly, three views can be identified: 1) The target language culture primarily being the US or UK culture; 2) The target plus the first language culture or cross-cultural comparisons

(McKay, 2002), and finally, to much lesser extent; 3) all cultures involved in the process of English as a world language, including non-mainstream Anglophone cultures.

The first group claim that the culture of the additional language should be involved in language teaching practice to provide a complete understanding of the language forms and shades of meaning. As such, this participant's opinion summarises the general feeling:

*Si no aprendemos su cultura, la comprensión de la dimensión global de la lengua inglesa y sus significados implícitos y explícitos, es prácticamente imposible.* (PIT18)

If we do not learn its culture, understanding the full dimension of the English language, as well as implicit and explicit meanings, is almost impossible.

Accordingly, the competence view that is promoted by Byram and colleagues (e.g. Byram, 1989; Byram & Fleming, 1998; Byram & Risager, 1999) proposes using the language together with its culture in order to provide learners with a holistic view about how and when to use the language (Byram & Fleming, 1998). This mono-cultural approach may originate from the underpinning assumption that English language culture is conceptualised as being essential to develop “a full understanding of a language's nuances of meaning” (Holme, 2003, p. 20). In terms of teachers' opinions on learning about specific target culture, primarily countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia were identified:

*Mis estudiantes escogen un país angloparlante y de allí deriban toda la investigación sobre cultura del curso [porque esos son los países que mejor representan esos pueblos [...]]* (PIT3)

My students choose an English-speaking country and from there they derive all the research on culture [because those are the countries that best represent these peoples [...]] (PIT3)

These opinions also reflect Cortazzi's (1990) general level of cultural content viewpoint, frequently the USA and the UK, and Ryan and Sercu's results of a questionnaire-based quantitative study (2003, p. 101), in which 47 Mexican teachers identified these same

countries and their cultures to be used as material in the classroom. This mono-cultural view, however, creates a tension between the owners and the users of English, considering the fact that English is used mostly amongst its non-native speakers in the world today, and CLT native speakerism is questionable (Erdem Mete, 2011).

Further responses on what culture to teach acknowledge the importance of this competence view coming from the target language culture, and it also further emphasized involvement of the learners' local culture in the English language classrooms:

*La cultura es muy importante porque hace parte de nuestra vida, de lo que somos, la vivenciamos a diario. Por lo tanto, conocerla, respetarla y transmitirla es parte de la enseñanza de la lengua. En la medida que apreciemos y valoraremos nuestra propia cultura, podemos valorar y respetar otra cultura. Al enseñar una lengua extranjera se hace necesario involucrar tanto la cultura de la lengua materna como la de la lengua extranjera para compararlas y apreciarlas en este mundo globalizado. (PIT15)*

Culture is very important because it is part of our lives, of what we are. We live culture on a daily basis. For this reason, knowing, respecting and transmitting it is part of teaching the language. In the measure that we appreciate and value our own culture, we can value and respect another culture. When teaching the foreign language, involving the L1 and the L2 culture becomes fundamental to be able to compare them and appreciate them in this globalized world.

Both first and foreign language cultures contribute to cross-cultural comparisons that some scholars consider strongly desirable in ELT (McKay, 2002; Pratt-Johnson, 2006). First culture in ELT highlights the importance of the involvement of the learners' local culture with target language teaching and learning processes and the critical skill of being able to understand cultures with a parallel and respectful critical view. These skills are favourable if the desire is a cross, intercultural analysis between languages because they draw on the individual's knowledge, beliefs and values, which leads to an increased cultural knowledge, understanding and acceptance: this, in turn, provides a basis for successful intercultural communication. Byram and Planet (2000, p. 189) refer to this comparative approach: "Comparison makes the

strange, the other familiar, and makes the familiar, the self-strange – and therefore easier to reconsider.” With an understanding of their own culture as a starting point, teachers can gradually decentre from their own culture (Byram, 1989; Kramsch, 1993) and develop necessary skills and knowledge to achieve decentring (Liddicoat *et al.*, 2013).

To a lesser extent, some data gathered claim that the idea of English as a world language cannot focus on English teaching based on the traditional countries and cultures such as Britain and the United States. This viewpoint was articulated by a participant who expressed that:

*Al enseñar una lengua indiscutiblemente se enseña cultura, lo cual no se puede limitar a un solo país. Es muy importante incluir aspectos culturales que permitan comparar y construir diferenciación a partir de aspectos de diferentes culturas y países, aunque no sean angloparlantes. (PIT21).*

When teaching a language, one is indisputably teaching culture that cannot be limited to a single country. It is fundamental to include cultural aspects to enable comparisons and enact differentiation from different cultures and countries, even if they are not English speakers.

McKay (2002, p. 81) endorses this assertion by expressing that “the use of English is no longer connected to the culture of Inner Circle countries” because native speaker norms of the inner circle are no longer adequate to meet the needs of individuals who will be using English for international communication (Erdem Mete, 2011). In this way, learning about inner-circle cultures is still limited to develop cultural and intercultural awareness.

Very few participants mentioned, for instance, Caribbean countries such as Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago with which some participants’ institutions have collaborative educational exchange programmes and which may be considered as less important anglophones from a stratifying, dominant Anglo-centred view. Even when participants advocated for the importance of the first language culture in language and culture teaching



practices, this relationship seems incidental and taken for granted as anecdotal aspects of the Colombian culture predominate.

Findings on what culture to teach point to “national cultures” from inner-circle Anglophone cultures (e.g. USA, UK, Canada). Participants also advocated for the importance of Colombian culture to favour cross-cultural comparisons; however, demonstrations of this were infrequently found, as monocultural-oriented teaching prevail over casual comments on Colombian mainstream culture. No allusions were made to national indigenous cultures or, for instance, the case of San Andres Islands (Colombia), where English-creole is spoken as the first language and cultural practices differ a great deal from the rest of the country.

#### **5.4. Reasons and objectives to teach culture in the English language classroom**

This section presents participant teachers’ perceptions on the objectives of culture teaching. The data collected demonstrated a somewhat different set of beliefs and core assumptions regarding stated and non-stated cultural teaching objectives. There were various responses when participants were asked about the main reasons to include (or not to include) culture teaching in the English language classroom. However, despite highlighting the importance of culture in ELT, linguistic objectives still prevail over culture objectives. The following major themes emerged: 1) culture as background that motivates learners to develop language skills; 2) the knowledge dimension and how learners *should know* about the culture of the language they are learning; 3) culture as a fundamental element that bolsters cultural sensitivity and tolerance and improves communication with the target culture.

In terms of the context to teach the language, some of participants’ responses (PPT1, 5; PIT4, 7, 12, 20, 21) advocated for teaching cultural topics with the specific purpose of supporting the teaching of linguistic features of English. As such, lessons that include cultural

topics, such as a Content-based instruction (CBI), were observed. The content part was mostly based on facts to do with Anglo-speaking cultures, and particular emphasis was given to learner motivation. According to participants, this seemed to be particularly motivating for learners because it frequently awoke learners' interest, motivation and curiosity for culture learning (Si Thang Kiet Ho, 2009). Likewise, Tsou (2005) revealed in her research findings in Taiwan that providing foreign language learners with cultural instruction increased not only their language proficiency but also their motivation toward language learning. As such, providing positive motivation to culture learning may foster the curiosity and openness necessary to develop critical cultural awareness and ICC.

The second reason to teach language and culture, according to participants, relates to the assumption that learners in general, including learner teachers, need to acquire culture knowledge and gain understanding of the target cultures to enrich their English language learning: otherwise this latter is incomplete (PIT 8, 12, 22, 25; PPT1, 3). This knowledge seems to refer to the primarily knowledge about a specific culture and not to the *knowledge dimension* of ICC which explores how social groups and identities function and are engaged in interaction (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002). Some advocated that learning from native speaker was better than learning from classroom lessons due to the direct cultural contact. Short and long stays abroad were highly valued (PIT12, 18, 22; PPT1, 3, 4): “*Salir del país y vivir la cultura en carne propia es indispensable.*” (PIT22: Going abroad and living a culture first-hand is indispensable.). This position is partially shared by Lee (2009, p. 433) who, based on her own research on Spanish-American telecollaboration (blogs and podcasts), minimises the caveat of distance and avoids polarization due to the restricted possibilities of teachers' mobility. According to her, direct contact with culture can happen in different ways and, she suggests that “[With interactive collaboration] learning the target culture from native

speakers' experiences and perspectives is more meaningful than the surface learning of a set of simple facts about the target culture in a traditional classroom setting.”

The third reason to teach culture in ELT is because culture is vital to promote cultural sensitivity and tolerance and improve communication with the target culture(s) which relates to communicative language teaching, and within this context the preference seems to favour communication exchange with native speakers. This can be summarised by one participant's opinion when it was asserted that:

*Enseñar la cultura es definitivamente importante porque nos ayuda a llegar a un conocimiento lingüístico óptimo y un desempeño cultural apropiado para que los alumnos puedan reconocer que hay cosas que se dicen y hacen porque corresponden a un lugar, porque corresponden a una cultura, porque corresponden a otro hablante y porque tienen un valor cultural. (PIT15).*

Teaching culture is definitely important because it helps us to obtain an optimal linguistic knowledge and an appropriate cultural development so that learners can acknowledge there are things that are said and done because they correspond to a place, to a culture. Because they correspond to other speaker and they have a cultural value.

Furthermore, understanding culture (first, foreign or other cultures, according to participants) promotes further tolerance and understanding of what it is not that easy to grasp from other cultures:

*Si se quiere aprender inglés y usarlo en diferentes contextos, se necesita comprender sus bases culturales para lograr ser usuarios más eficientes de la lengua. (PIT13).*

If the desire is to learn English and use it in different settings, it is necessary to understand its cultural assets in order to become a more efficient language user.

As several participants explained, the fact that the majority of Colombians speak Spanish as their first language may lead to English language teachers and learners becoming restricted to a Spanish-speaking community and culture, or culture-bound individuals who

tend to make premature and inappropriate value judgments about their as well as others' cultural characteristics (Genc & Bada, 2005, p. 75). Learners' sufficient knowledge and understanding of their own culture (Kramsch, 1993, 2009) is fundamental in order that they create a bridge from their culture to the target culture in an attempt to understand the ecology of teaching and learning processes (van Lier, 2004, 2008).

Data gathered from classroom observations (PIT10) led me to contemplate that, in addition to the importance of English language teachers' culture teaching as background or a common thread that motivates students learning and to a lesser degree a mechanism of cultural understanding, another factor was to promote cultural awareness (CA) albeit not visibly or consciously.

Example 1:

Classroom observation transcript 5, intermediate, PIT10:

From the lesson plan:

Step 1. Previous assignment: students choose one country of interest and do a web quest on one of the following topics: etiquette and manners; food and cuisine; religion; music; customs and traditions; clothing and costumes and games and pastimes.

Step 2. Classwork: students organise the information into the 3Ps for analysis:

- Perspectives (what members of a culture think, feel, and value)
- Practices (how members communicate and interact with one another)
- Products (technology, music, art, food, literature, etc.; the things members of a group create, share, and transmit to the next generation)

(as taken from: NSFLEP, National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1996)

Step 3. Students share with the class.

As it can be seen from the transcript and in the post-observation interview, CA promotes a “sympathetic approach towards other cultures and civilizations” (Dasli, 2011, p. 23) and

entails becoming aware of members of another cultural group in terms of their behaviour, their expectations, their perspectives and values. Some fragments of the activities observed fostered cultural and cross-cultural awareness, and as Dasli argues (2011), CA can be interpreted as a first moment towards CCA and ICC development in the classroom.

After classroom observations, when being asked about cultural objectives, some participants (PIT10, 16) noted that they did not include explicit cultural objectives in their courses. This was because they were neither part of the institutional syllabus nor the learners' evaluation process. Another group mentioned that despite including some cultural topics in their lessons, they did not write specific objectives for them, but had an idea about the general objective pursued on those actions. This lead to collateral learning or hidden curricula: learning that is not clearly part of the formal programmes and does not have pronounced goals and objectives (Massialas, 1996) but that can have a positive impact and be shown to be inherent to the teaching and learning of the language.

In short, some stated and unstated culture-related course objectives are present in my research. Motivating contents, knowledge and tolerance and understanding seem to be the main objectives of culture teaching. Isolated answers referred to the teaching of culture to indoctrinate "appropriate" behaviour (PPT1) or to produce "when in Rome do as the Romans" (PPT8) behaviour and consequently successful communication in L2 contexts. Accordingly, findings corroborate participants' fondness for culture as the knowledge both teachers and learners should have and accumulate. This "baggage" is believed to be useful to understand Anglophone cultures and frequently leads to distorted images of reality and stereotyping. About motivation and the teaching of culture, it is well-known that learners enjoy culturally-based activities such as singing, dancing, role playing, doing research on countries and peoples, etc. However, for the sake of motivation, English language teachers could isolate

these cultural representations as someone else's cultural products, detached from context, that are to be marvelled about or criticised as "a spectacle" (Hall, 1997) or the "exotic other" that highlights the *differentialist bias*, or what Dervin (2017) calls an obsession of differentiating cultures. Last, findings also suggest ELT teaching practices to foster cultural awareness within communicative goals. This was generally an unstated goal and was mainly pursued through compare/contrast activities and small-scale research tasks.

### **5.5. How Colombian English language teachers introduce culture in their lessons**

Analysis of interviews and observation *in situ* data evidenced that some teachers 1) teach culture as observable and factual, and 2) teach culture as determined by language lesson content. In addition, the general tendency was to teach culture under three perspectives: a) the by-the-way perspective; b) teaching culture based on the teacher's own initiative and c) the language-and-culture syllabus. The interrelationship of these findings will now be discussed.

#### **5.5.1. Culture teaching: the by-the-way perspective**

First, casual culture teaching is very frequent, or what Galloway (1985) called the "By the way" approach. This is practiced by English language teachers who consider culture important, but they acknowledge they do not teach it systematically in their English lessons. It happens every only once in a while, if time permits, through anecdotes, films, and examples of situations or showing artefacts pertaining to Anglo-speaking cultures. Specific information seemed to be inserted into the lesson with no other purpose than to enrich it and provide some knowledge.

##### Example 1

Classroom observation transcript 3, intermediate, PIT18:

Within the context of American society (civilisation), the textbook shows a picture of an American family. In the picture background, The Statue of Liberty can be seen:

T- The Statue of Liberty was a gift to the United States from the people of France.

What does she have in her hand?

S1- Fire.

T- A torch. Do you know torch?

Sts- Yes [some collective agreement].

T- And what else?

S2- A book or something like that.

T- Good! A *tabula ansata*. It is a sort of tablet evoking the law upon which is inscribed the date of the American Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776. Do you see something more in this image?

S3-A crown.

T- Right! And besides the crown?

Sts- [no answer]

T- A broken chain lies at her feet. The statue is an icon of freedom and of the United States, and was a welcoming sight to immigrants arriving from abroad [...].

[Later in the same lesson]

T- Do we have similar monuments in Colombia?

Sts-Yes... No...

S1-In Bogota we have one. Guadalupe Virgen on top of the Hill.

T-Very Good! Another one?

S2-In Cali, *Cristo Redentor*.

[other examples continue]

As can be observed, in this case, factual knowledge about culture and observable aspects were part of the lesson. The teacher tries to establish a comparison with Colombian culture, though very superficially. Other cultural content involved issues not necessarily linked to Anglophone cultures but to world culture:

- Classroom observation transcript 5, intermediate, (PIT4):  
“Oh, yeah, in South Korea, dog eating is frequent.” (PPT4). Teacher referred then to web pages where students can get information on the topic.
- Classroom observation transcript 1, intermediate, (PIT23):  
“In Germany you have recycling machines: If you put empty bottles inside, the machine gives you coins.” (PIT23). Teacher showed a postcard with this machine and circulated the postcard among students.

These findings are congruent with Corbett’s (2003, p. 34) work, which suggested that some (skillful) teachers are able to make cultural “asides” when required, sometimes based on anecdotal experiences. This does not mean, however, there is actually a language and culture component in the ELT classroom.

### **5.5.2. Culture as teachers’ choice**

Second, culture teaching is the teacher’s individual concern. Some English language teachers acknowledge the importance of culture teaching. Although the institutions in which they work do not particularly propose a cultural curriculum, English language teachers are free to plan their lessons. Based on their personal biographies and experience, they understand culture as a fundamental part of English language teaching. As they are autonomous, they plan, produce and teach lessons containing cultural contents. In addition to teachers’ own initiatives, the selection of cultural contents goes hand-in-hand with the unit’s proposed language and topical contents and the ELT syllabi’s objectives. Language and culture were purposively matched by the teacher mainly to set communicative goals and as a motivational hook to help with learners’ attention and promote motivation by arising curiosity. As was observed, A concrete example of these findings was observed in the following classroom situation:



Example 1:

Classroom observation transcript 4, intermediate (PIT18):

The teacher was discussing issues relating to food and eating habits. She posed the question, “What do we understand by «fast food»?” With this in mind, learners sat in groups and had to search for information about fast food in the United States, the United Kingdom, and other countries freely chosen by the students (e.g., Australia, France and Colombia). Next, they had to complete a chart with that information and decide what seemed more/less appetising/healthier to them and what they wanted to try or buy for a friend.

According to the teacher in the post observation stage, the class was studying a unit entitled “Dining out”, which was about foods and Americans’ eating habits. The communicative functions to be developed were: providing information, comparing/contrasting facts, and advising/ suggesting others. As the teacher explained, she tried to align the cultural contents she had selected with the topics and communicative functions that were contained in the syllabus. As she further expressed:

*Es mejor incluir algo de cultura, no importa que no sea algo tan profundo, que esperar hasta lograr **una clase perfecta de cultura** y nunca hacerla. Mínimo, si se hace algo con la cultura, el análisis se vuelve más fácil.* (PIT18).

In my opinion, it is more important to include something about culture in the English lesson, no matter its depth, than waiting to teach the *perfect lesson containing culture* and never doing it. At least when you do something about culture, further analysis will become easier.

This is what Scarino (2000) determined in her research as cultural contents derived from the language topics; they can be treated as an addition to ELT’s main educational objective: developing communicative skills. In this case, the teacher has come to the conclusion that there should be two central aspects when including culture in the lessons: first, the teacher’s

desire and ability to manage lesson contents and goals with culture objectives, and second, the need to start from somewhere with respect to culture.

Other activities planned by teachers were the following (PPT5, PIT7):

Activity	Objectives (Verbatim from teachers' lesson plans and post-observation follow up questions)
<p><b>Where in the world</b> (Basic high school learners/pre-service teacher)</p> <p>Teacher shows slides with iconic cities around the world and then has students discuss some questions in groups. Finally, after comparing results, Ss write a brief summary of one of those buildings/ monuments and reads it to the class.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Where is this?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Have you seen any of these buildings/monuments before?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What do you see? (Description)</p>	<p>Grammar focus:</p> <p>To ask and answer wh-questions</p> <p>Communicative function: Describing places</p> <p>[No remarks were made on culture-content objectives, probably, recognising cultural ideas and symbols.]</p>
<p><b>Shopping habits</b> (Intermediate young adult learners/in service teacher)</p> <p>Teachers ask students about their families' or their own shopping habits. Later Ss are told to compare and contrast these with people from the UK and USA's shopping habits. Students need to do a quick web search to complete a format (provided by teacher) with variables marking if it is similar (S) or different (D). If they mark (D), they should write brief notes explaining the difference. They compare results in groups and reach some conclusions that are to be shared with the class.</p>	<p>Communication focus:</p> <p>Comparing and contrasting</p> <p>Grammar:</p> <p>To practice similarities/differences connecting devices.</p> <p>To practice compound and complex sentences</p> <p>Culture: To examine patterns of everyday life (Shopping) in the UK, the USA and Colombia.</p> <p>[The objective has to do with the level of cultural contents. Some tendencies were explored, e.g., American materialism, Madonna's Material Girl, etc. which favour the legitimation and perpetuation of stereotypes: "Americans like to buy, buy and buy..."].</p>

Table 3. Some culture content in English language lessons

As can be seen in these activities (See Table 3), it is suggested that even when teachers tend to align cultural topics with the topics in instructional units, they see each element as something isolated from the sub-topics or chunks of a lesson. In the classes observed, culture was subsidiary to form and function.

Whether culture was taught incidentally or in a planned way, some predominant techniques were identified and then confirmed in the post-observation stage. The first and most frequent was systematic teacher-talk or lecturing about the target culture topics with an emphasis on differences with the native culture. Also, comparing aspects of the target culture with corresponding ones in the native culture and having learners talk about specific aspects of both were part of the classroom dynamics. Similarly, some anecdotal teachers' experiences during short or long stays abroad were also present as a reference to culture. These findings are partly consistent with those of Moore's (1996) which suggested that teachers lectured (41%) in order to teach basic facts about the target language culture, but which have long been superseded by intercultural approaches in language teaching and learning advocated by, for example, Castro, Sercu and Méndez García (2004), Dasli and Díaz (2017), Dervin (2010), Guilherme (2002), Porto (2015) and Porto and Byram (2015).

Despite not observed in the classroom, one teacher (PIT19) mentioned he invited visitors from Anglophone countries to his class to have informal conversations with students. In this way, students could informally "interview" her/him or interact naturally by enquiring about cultural aspects. This participant teacher explained that when the students were beginners, he helped them brainstorm and prepare potential questions in advance. This initiative seems plausible if the experience is viewed as a planned, pedagogical experiment or simulation of an intercultural encounter to foster ethnographic skills. A critique of this strategy could be that an individual is taken as a representative of the whole culture and, thus,

minimizing the complexity or unique representation of the values and beliefs shared by communities (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013).

### **5.5.3. Culture teaching as a part of the institutional syllabi**

As regards the way Colombian English language teachers introduce culture in their lessons, a third approach is identified: culture teaching as a part of the institutional syllabi and curricula or culture-and-language integrated courses. Some participants were teaching in courses explicitly designed as “language and culture” courses, the main aim of which is to teach English and, sometimes not exclusively, inner-circle cultures (Kacru, 1992). Cultural contents, ranging from American/UK institutions, customs, traditions, etc., focus primarily on the visible parts of culture. These are simply expressions of its invisible parts and use the iceberg model of culture as a reference. This subgroup of participants (PIT6, 10, 22, 23) unanimously expressed the importance of conceptualizing English language teaching as a culture-linked project. They also acknowledged their own limitations in overly relying on the surface of culture and also pointed out that they have gradually started to shift to the more covert aspects of culture or deep culture. They have also started providing learners with opportunities to develop intercultural sensitivity and CCA.

These findings coincide with Guillerme’s (2002, p. 174) findings concerning Portuguese teachers advocating for a critical approach towards foreign cultures at all levels of foreign language/culture education, meaning political education and the conformation of a global citizenship. Similarly, this subgroup of participants shared Nieto’s (2002) view that culture is complex and cannot be reduced to holidays, foods, or dances, although these are also elements of cultures. Despite this recognition, it can be concluded that surface culture prevails (Tarasheva, 2008; Hillyard, 2008; Li, 2016).

Of particular interest for this research are two experiences that came from these culture-and-language integrated courses: The first one is, as teachers named it, a “cultural project” or students’ final project or end-of-term evaluation; and the second is the use of guest tutors from Anglophone countries who are invited by the Faculty due to an international agreement. The cultural projects were the course’s final task and the main topic was to be freely selected by the students. Because of this, most projects tend to be based on material, observable culture, which may suggest that students’ first choice to approach culture is essentialist and probably predominantly based on the view of culture that they have received throughout their education.

One respondent teacher was wary and critical on the type of culture being taught in these culture-and-language courses:

*Los cursos se basan en aspectos de la cultura de Estados Unidos y del Reino Unido. Sin embargo, sabemos que esto no es todo y que no es suficiente, pero al menos es un inicio. Estamos tratando de movernos hacia aspectos menos estructurales de la cultura como los valores, las representaciones de belleza, entre otros. No es fácil, pues nosotros mismos no hemos aprendido esto en ninguna parte, sino más bien las lecturas y experiencias individuales. (PIT6).*

These courses are based on US and UK cultural aspects. However, we know this is not everything and neither is it sufficient, but at least it is a start. We are trying to move towards less structural aspects of culture such as values, conceptions of culture, etc. It is not easy as we have not systematically learnt this; they come from our own personal readings and individual experiences.

An experience shared by another teacher evidenced the need to move from culture as knowledge-based contents towards developing intercultural competences. This project was a classroom task that was conceived to examine and learn about US values through the experiences of Colombian foreign language teachers studying abroad. The teacher encouraged learners to use interviews to collect data about the topic. Students interviewed English teachers living and undertaking postgraduate studies abroad; though a small-scale inquiry, students’

efforts led to unveil their EFL teachers' beliefs and assumptions on US values. As I see it, it is a rather thought-provoking experience to investigate teachers' intercultural awareness and ICC, although it is not referred to as such. This shows that teachers can actually help learners develop "independent intercultural analysis and interpretation in a range of situations" (Corbett, 2003, p. 34).

According to the teacher, it was an experiment to have learners undertake some research on deep culture and prevent them from staying on the superficial aspects. The researcher's role learners had to assume, and the type of questions they designed, helped them obtain data describing teachers' perception on the target culture, decentring the legitimized idea that only target culture natives can provide "true" information on that culture. Additionally, as supported by Corbett (2001, p. 137), "Interviewing respondents is an obvious way of encouraging learners to use their language skills 'ethnographically', to gather information about aspects of the target culture."

The second interesting experience with regard to culture-and-language syllabi came from guest assistant teachers from the Anglophone Caribbean region (PIT11, 12). This type of approach is aligned with Baker's (2011, p. 69) proposal to foster cultural and intercultural awareness by incorporating "Cultural informants" and "Face-to-face intercultural communication with non-local English language teachers." Nevertheless, culture-and-language teachers (case 3) participating in this research addressed the topic in two ways: first, they acknowledged the value of real contact with other cultural subjects as well as synchronic communication, but they complained about the nature and focus of these activities. For example, although they are all professional natives or Anglophones, guest teachers are not necessarily L2 educators. According to the participants, this fact affected English language teaching itself as well as the strategies a language teacher is expected to manage in order to

approach language instruction and practice. By sharing these assumptions, participants do not only acknowledge the importance of language teaching by certified or at least experienced teachers, but also they reveal the belief that cultural and intercultural awareness only happens through English. They leave the native (local) language and culture outside the classroom in the pursuit of maintaining a bilingual environment dominated by English.

As witnessed by some participants (PPT3, 5; PIT11), some of these guest tutors tried to represent their culture by generalizing about habits and customs in a conversational way—lecturing mainly— but not actually promoting critical approaches to understanding cultural information. This means that respondent teachers considered the need for “*Hacer algo más con la cultura*” (PIT11: doing something more with culture), or a framework or model that advanced towards cultural and intercultural awareness instead of learning from real intercultural encounters or natural (or simulated) settings: such as the case of guest tutors.

The latter aroused learners’ and host teachers’ sense of curiosity about “*Lo que esta persona tiene que decir y qué me puede aportar*” (PP3: “what this person has to say and what she can bring to us”). As such, this cultural individual was perceived as a provider of information representing his/her whole culture (native speaker) and not as one single individual who contributes to building his/her culture on a daily basis with certain views of the world. On the matter, I wrote the following in my research journal, “When this respondent was talking about guest teachers, I had the impression that a tinge of exoticism was present (foreign, alien, different, novelty, etc.)” Moreover, according to interview data, there was very little communication or reflection on culture due to a higher degree of lecturing and information-transmission activities. Also, there were only a few spaces that were actually co-constructed as guest tutors sometimes followed tight agendas to cover pre-established contents and activities. It was also revealed that guest teachers were expected to complement lessons

by teaching her/his culture within English language lessons, which may reinforce the idea of culture as a background topic in the language classroom.

Another participant (PIT23) complained about the guest tutors' lack of qualities such as patience and a lack of cultural understanding of the students, which can be translated as them having a lack of ICC. He narrated how a tutor was annoyed by high school students' noisy atmosphere when trying to work in groups or control the class. Colombian students often tend to laugh and speak loudly, especially when working together, ignoring turn taking, which—leaving aside disciplinary variables—should be understood to be a positive symptom of motivation and willingness to participate. In my view, the local teacher reflecting on the guest tutor's "lack of cultural understanding" is an act of reflection towards problematizing intercultural encounters and the need for both language teachers and learners to develop intercultural competences to promote positive and constructive teaching and learning processes.

Recurrent data emerging during classroom observations also related to the teaching of culture as a visible, tangible entity. During two different lessons (PIT11, PPT3), learners watched an episode of a TV series, *The Simpsons* and some scenes from *A Christmas with Chevy Chase*. In the first case, the teacher often elicited cultural information from students based on what they could see, for example, barbecue Sundays, baseball games, beer drinking, etc. In the second case, some values such as American materialism and competition were pointed out. Although dealing with American values might be considered a deeper discussion than the surface culture displayed in *The Simpsons*, values seemed to be equated to patterned behaviour and observable aspects, for example, the exuberance of Christmas decorations and the size and ornamentation of the Christmas tree. As a result, teaching culture as something that is eminently observable strengthens a very positivistic notion of culture in which culture



is understood as “something to be there, just outside, and can be pointed out”, making it loose its constructivist sense as a collective, permanent and dynamic co-edification of culture. Conversely, the object-associated view of culture reinforces stereotyping and labelling; this comes from the “mono-causal cultural manifestations of the nation-state” (Dasli, 2009, p. 25).

In addition, adjectives, such as “too” and “huge” were used in the lesson to describe the values of materialism and competence:

(T) Americans spend huge amounts of money on material goods [...]

(T) The house looked too bright [...]

This evokes the image of an unconscious tendency to magnify and possibly exaggerate meaning and representations of that particular group of people, which helps build positive and negative stereotypes, as well as an ethnocentric position. There is, however, an attitude of marvelling that can contribute to awakening learners’ curiosity. This is what Stuart Hall (1997, p. 225) called “the spectacle of the other” and over highlights differences as unbridgeable between languages and cultures (Dervin, 2017). Furthermore, another example displayed a teachers’ respectful and cautious attitude towards students’ general tendency to ethnocentrism:

Example 1:

Classroom observation transcript 7 (PIT15):

Teacher asked students to build sentences with superlatives and comparatives. One student built the sentence: “Coffee is the most popular beverage in the world.”

T- The sentence is perfect, but is coffee a popular beverage worldwide? (Soft but emphatic intonation in the question)

Sts- Yes. Yes. [Some students in chorus. Others nod]

T- Is coffee *the most* popular beverage worldwide? [teachers’ stronger emphasis bold]

S1. Yeeeeees. [Student who wrote the sentence]

S2- In Colombia it is very popular because we produce it.

T-Yes, grow it.

S2- Yes. We grow it.

T- Right! But if you see countries like India, Turkey, China...What happens?

Do they drink coffee as much? Orrrrr... do they have something else?

S3- [After some silence] Ahhhh, it is tea.

Sts- Yes, tea [some agreement].

S4- Teacher, people like *yerba mate* in Argentina, for example.

T- Right. So we cannot say it [Coffee] is **the most** popular [...].

Although not necessarily a conscious action, by using a few words, it is possible to see the teachers' encouragement of intercultural awareness. By using guiding questions, he led learners towards a mind broadening reflection and a decentring of rooted beliefs. This strategy is incipiently similar to the reflection phase proposed by Holmes and O'Neill (2010) in the PEER (Prepare, Engage, Evaluate, and Reflect) model for ICC assessment in which student researchers were motivated to critically reflect on their encounters or experiences in order to enable them to uncover their intercultural competence during their intercultural encounter.

Last, some participants suggested the creation of special courses on culture or about culture for intermediate and advanced students of English in which the syllabi will promote a gradual development of the language while, at the same time, develop cultural knowledge, sensitivity and awareness (PIT20, 25; PPT2) as in Ramos Holguin's research, carried in 2013). Avoiding cultural content in lessons due to students' basic language proficiency or saving culture lessons for higher levels is another strategy to culture teaching (Kaikkonen, 2001; Mahoney, 2009; Sobkowiak, 2016) that was indicated in the research findings and that may imply the continuation of the language-and-culture divide. During the interviews, details of potential contents of these courses focused on traditional definitions of culture, such as Tylor's

(1871, p. 1), which considered culture as something that could be equated to civilization and was composed by “knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” reducing culture to a *tourist approach* (Weil, 1998) or trivia approach (Crawford-Lange & Lange, 1984) and fostering the transmission of information and potential stereotyping.

To conclude this section, teachers introduce culture in their English language lessons in three different ways: by using casual approaches in which culture information seems to be inserted into the lesson to enrich it and provide some knowledge; through EFL teachers’ own initiatives and planning (generally, culture topical contents to support the unit’s proposed language) and culture teaching as a part of the institutional syllabi and curricula. In the first two cases, inner-circle Anglo speaking culture teaching and cross-cultural perspectives are overly fostered by participant teachers who do not always write classroom objectives related to culture in order to achieve critical cultural analysis.

Findings suggest that the absence of culture objectives may evidence the lack of teachers’ readiness to advance toward IELT. Unplanned approaches to culture teaching lead to poor learning objectives and to misleading learners’ perception of the importance of culture in ELT. Findings also show that, when culture is part of an instructional syllabus, “language and culture” teachers of English demonstrate more visible efforts to include culture in their lessons: they write learning objectives and plan creative lessons and activities to approach culture (e.g., cultural projects). The reach of such initiatives shows evident cultural awareness, which could be transformed into CCA, provided due instruction toward developments of ICC. This could be seen as an optimistic evidence, according to Baker (2012), who observes cultural awareness as a state of readiness towards CCA.

## 5.6. Concluding the chapter

This research presents the research findings as regards English language teachers' conceptions and beliefs about teaching language and culture in the English language classroom. These findings relate to the first set of research questions: what are Colombian English language teachers' conceptions and beliefs about language and culture teaching in the English language classroom? What is culture? How important is culture in the teaching of a foreign language? Do you include culture in your lessons?

In this investigation, definitions of culture range from traditional, structural definitions to more constructivist views: there being only a few of the latter. Colombian English language teachers demonstrate their willingness to teach culture and then acknowledge that it is fundamental in English language teaching and learning. However, in practice, they give culture a minor role in the classroom (Nguyen, Harvey & Grant, 2016) and even when there is an interest in the teaching of culture in ELT, its inclusion is often carried out with some lack of seriousness (Guilherme, 2002). This research also shows teachers' views that language and culture cannot be separated, as supported in the literature (e.g., Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002; Byram, 2011; Kramsch, 1993, 2009; Porto & Byram, 2015; Nguyen, Harvey, & Grant, 2016; Risager, 1998; Sercu *et al.*, 2005); contrary to this, data suggest that only few participants demonstrate or try this integration. These findings are also congruent with Ryan and Sercu's (2003) research carried out in Mexico, which demonstrated that most participant teachers devoted more time to language teaching than to culture teaching.

The data analysis also indicates that the way in which teachers introduce culture is mainly by providing information about a given, and usually Anglo-speaking society (as found by Byram & Risager, 1999; Guilherme, 2002; Sercu, 2005; Rajab, 2015), e.g., the United States and the UK principally, in addition to Australia and Canada). Although data show

English language teachers foster cross-cultural comparisons, findings unveil that Colombian culture is also addressed superficially and do not allow true understanding and deep analysis of one's own culture. From data, it can be inferred that, in Colombia, when English language is taught, mainstream Spanish-speaking culture is privileged, while minority cultures are neglected (e.g., indigenous, creole). This narrow vision of the own culture may evidence a lack of culture self-knowledge that overlooks how all social identities in Colombia are part of all intercultural interactions. As teachers seem to disregard this diversity, cross-cultural analysis in the classroom tend to be incomplete and biased.

Besides the predominant culture knowledge, the data demonstrate that teachers seldom foster cultural awareness by trying to motivate learners to re-evaluate dynamic and internal perceptions of culture (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2004.). In the few cases in which culture was creatively promoted in the classroom (e.g., through cultural projects, cross-cultural comparisons and encounters), learners were not only given cultural knowledge, but also an incipient space for reflection and criticism was constructed. Although superficial, the knowledge-based culture in ELT (Holliday, 1999, 2013) may represent an opportunity: a first-step to advance toward and reach deeper understanding (Fox & Diaz-Greenberg, 2006) and avoid trivialising culture's complex nature (Banks, 2002).

Grounded in these findings and in response to the main group of research questions addressing culture and culture teaching, Colombian English language teachers' assumptions and beliefs indicate that they acknowledge the importance of culture and ELT without reservation although the integration of both in the classroom still proves problematic. Taking into account the context, the needs that derive from its critical examination and the findings about teachers' perceptions about culture, it should be said that a conceptual evolution of the term *culture* is needed in order to move towards IELT.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Approaches to interculturality and intercultural English language teaching (IELT) in Colombia**

The second findings chapter discusses Colombian English language teachers' personal approaches to interculturality and intercultural English language teaching. These findings focus on the research's aim which is to make sense of teachers' conceptions of and appraisals on interculturality and English language teaching. This chapter addresses the second group of research questions which aims to explain how conceptions and beliefs about teaching interculturality may shed light on English language teachers' potential progressive development of ICC (RQ2) and unveil possible intercultural teaching practices (RQ3). It also enquires as to whether Colombian English language teachers are prepared and willing to adopt an intercultural approach to English language teaching (RQ4)

The data obtained enabled me to identify the following three key areas from the thematic analysis relevant to the participants' perceptions and beliefs about IELT: 1) participants' general insights and definitions of interculturality in language education; 2) the importance of intercultural competence English Language Teaching (IELT) and 3) a characterization of English language intercultural teaching.

#### **6.1. General insights and definitions of interculturality in language education**

This section discusses participant' perception on the concept of interculturality in ELT in an attempt to answer the research question with regard to Colombian English language teachers'

conceptions and beliefs about the term “interculturality” and “intercultural language teaching. The result was that they gave one of three different types of answers: teachers (1) directly acknowledged not having a clear understanding of the concept; (2) had limited assumptions or understandings of interculturality; and (3) approximately or fully understood the concept.

The first group of participants tried to define the concept of interculturality in language education as follows: “*No estoy seguro. Puede ser la relación entre culturas y las comparaciones transculturales.* (PPT2: I'm not sure. It can be the relationship between cultures and cross-cultural comparisons). Another perception was that “*La interculturalidad tiene que ver con el multiculturalismo*” (PIT20: Interculturality has to do with multiculturalism). In these cases, participants accepted they were not familiar with the concept and tended to give inferred definitions, but for the most part, these were limited or associated to other concepts. This was linked to the second group of participants, which was the largest category. The second group of teachers tended to equate interculturality with multiculturalism, assimilation or acculturation. Some examples of this idea are contained in the following opinions: [Interculturality in language teaching is...] *Diferentes culturas que habitan en un lugar* (PPT4: Different cultures living in one place.), and in addition,

*Es la capacidad que tiene el ser humano de adaptarse a una cultura diferente a la propia o de adquirir algunas costumbres propias de otra cultura* (PIT13).

It is the capacity of any human being to adapt to any culture different from his/her own or acquire some inner customs from the other culture.

Notes from my researcher’s journal summarise my observations about participants’ not knowing or not being familiar with the concept:

En esta entrevista, la participante dice no tener una definición clara del término interculturalidad en la enseñanza del inglés. Ella, a su vez, me devuelve la pregunta tratando de confirmar algunas de sus suposiciones al respecto. Hay

coincidencia con otras expresiones usadas por otros entrevistados a propósito de la misma pregunta: “No estoy muy seguro” (PPT2); “No hemos estudiado el concepto como tal” (PPT1).

In this interview, the participant claims to not have a clear definition of the concept of interculturality in EFL teaching. She then asks me a question endeavouring to confirm some of her assumptions on the topic. There is similar to the way that other interviewees deal with the same question: “I am not quite sure” (PPT2); “We have not studied the concept as such” (PPT1).

Interculturality, according to Dervin (2010, p. 157), “is often confused with cultural, transcultural and multicultural approaches, which do not take on the same goals.” While multicultural education advocates for learning about other cultures to produce acceptance or tolerance of these cultures, intercultural education goes beyond passive coexistence by encouraging “*understanding of, respect for and dialogue between the different cultural groups.*” (UNESCO, 2006, p. 18). Accordingly, the concept of interculturality establishes a field ““in between” the dominant categories, norms, values, beliefs and discourses of the cultures involved” (Witte & Harden, 2011, p. 2), and, generally, no participant is usually left unchanged because relationships are shaped from each other’s experiences. To a lesser extent, interculturality was equated with acculturation, or the process by which learners are encouraged to function within the new culture while maintaining their own identity (Byram *et al.*, 1994, p. 7), but this was not a predominant belief.

As discussed in the contextualization chapter (Chapter 2), English language teacher education programmes do not seem to visibly and explicitly offer subject areas discussing issues relating to interculturality or ICC in ELT. Some pre-service English language teachers from the last semester openly acknowledge this. One of them claimed that:

*Podría suponer de qué se trata, pero dentro de la carrera no trabajamos el concepto como tal (PPT, 2).*



I can imagine what it is about, but we did not study the concept as such in our syllabus.

Few participants, however, provided an approximate or full understanding of the concept of interculturality and/ICC:

*La interculturalidad es la competencia del individuo para poder ser consciente de su cultura y ser consciente de la cultura extranjera, lo que le permite comparar, contrastar, juzgar, entre otros (PIT2).*

Interculturality is an individual's ability to become aware of her/his own culture as well as the foreign/second language culture so as to compare, contrast and judge them, for example.

*Es el proceso que permite el conocimiento, reconocimiento y aceptación de otra cultura (PIT17)*

It is the process of gaining a knowledge of, acknowledging and accepting another culture.

These skill and *know-how* definitions are in congruence with postulations coming from Byram's (1997) and Byram and Zarate's (1997) early perspectives of ICC, which advocate that ICC requires the importance of bringing L1 culture and L2 culture together to understand and judge them respectfully: "Knowledge of the shared values and beliefs held by social groups in other countries and regions, such as religious beliefs, taboos, assumed common history, etc., are essential to intercultural communication." (CEFR, 2001, p. 11).

A second group of data revealed more elaborate definitions that were not so much to do with the skill and knowledge based approaches and but more with interaction and communication. The following opinion portrays some views relating to this group of data:

*La interculturalidad en L2 tiene que ver con la interacción que hay entre varias culturas centrada en el respeto, la tolerancia y la solidaridad, en la cual hay un intercambio y una interpretación de conocimientos, valores sociales, diversidad de ideas, formas de entender el mundo y normas de funcionamiento de una cultura diferente. La interculturalidad implica comprender las diferencias entre culturas y un reconocimiento mutuo (PIT8).*

Interculturality in FLT has to do with the existing interaction between cultures focused on respect, tolerance and solidarity in which there is an exchange and an interpretation of knowledge, social values, diversity of ideas, ways of understanding the world and norms of how a different culture functions. Interculturality implies understanding differences between cultures and acknowledging them mutually.

In this case, communication lies at the core of participants' constructions and implies cultural sensitivity and attitudes relating to respect, tolerance and solidarity in terms of cultural awareness and understanding of the two cultures involved (Alred, Byram & Fleming, 2003; Moeller & Nugent, 2014; Murphy-Lejeune, 2003).

Some definitions point to the abilities or competences that have a specific purpose: to be prepared for cultural encounters with native speakers, which may show the influence of CLT in which the ability to use the language in socially and culturally "appropriate ways" is fundamentally necessary:

*La interculturalidad en la enseñanza de lenguas es aquella habilidad o competencia que desarrollan los hablantes al conocer la cultura meta, las culturas metas y compararla con la suya para hacer un reconocimiento de su propia identidad, de sus propios estereotipos. Esto va más allá de lo meramente lingüístico y le ayuda a prepararse para encuentros reales con hablantes nativos de esas culturas (PIT21).*

Interculturality in language teaching is an ability or competence developed by speakers when they meet the target culture, or target cultures, and compare it/ them with his own to be able to acknowledge his own identity and his own stereotypes. This goes beyond the linguistic component and helps him prepare himself for real encounters with native speakers from those cultures.

Based on this idea, English language teachers are seen as cross-cultural communicators (Pratt-Johnson, 2006), intercultural speakers and mediators (Byram, 1988, 1997, 2014) who are able to develop the ability not only to "understand a native speaker's semantics, but also to compare and contrast with the learner's own" (Byram, 2014, p. 211). From these perspectives, although culture and language are interrelated, the model of a native speaker persists (Byram, 1997;

Byram & Zarate, 1997; Kramsch, 1993, 1998) within a dimension of the interaction between cultural actors in the intercultural encounter (Guilherme, 2002).

An interesting finding pointed to the development of the concept of IELT as a more flexible, open definition:

*Para mí lo intercultural tiene que ver con la manera en que generamos miradas, prejuicios a veces, en función de lo que soy yo y lo que es el otro. Tiene mucho que ver con la alteridad, con el desarrollar cierta capacidad de ver, evaluar, de pronto entender las diferencias o similitudes en términos de comportamiento, de lenguaje, de miradas de mundo para establecer diálogos y una comprensión mutua más eficaz. Y es esto precisamente lo que debe incluirse en la enseñanza de lenguas, puesto que es la verdadera clave de vivir en un mundo globalizado (PIT6).*

In my opinion, interculturality has to do with the way we generate insights, prejudices that are sometimes based on who I am and who the other is. It has to do with Otherness, with the capacity to evaluate and understand the differences or similarities in terms of behaviour, language, and worldviews in order to establish dialogues and more effective mutual understanding. And this is precisely what should be included in the teaching of foreign languages because it is a true key to being able to live in a globalized world.

From a definition such as this, aspects of interculturality and intercultural competences can be identified as the uncertainty and unpredictability of intercultural encounters, which should comprise the co-construction of a common ground, a Third Space (Bhabha, 1990, 1994; Feng, 2009; Kramsch, 1993; Lo Bianco *et al.*; 1999) or borderlands —“sites for both critical analysis and as a potential source of experimentation, creativity, and possibility” (Giroux, 1992, 34)— that allow for negotiation and respectful communication.

Findings also suggest that teachers’ lack of familiarity with the concept, as well as the lack of systematic approaches to interculturality and intercultural language education have caused an unclear vision of international objectives proposed today in the teaching of foreign languages, specifically English. This conceptual vacuum may have favoured the perpetuation

of CLT and its limited vision of communication based on native speakerism as discussed in Chapter 2 (see section 2.4). The findings also reveal that despite the strong influence of the CEFR (The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, designed to provide a basis to elaborate language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, teaching and learning materials, and the assessment of foreign language proficiency) in Colombia as part of the national guidelines to measure language proficiency nationwide, there is an evident lack of knowledge about interculturality and ICC and communication that is described in the CEFR report as a part of language teaching and learning. Last, findings about definitions of interculturality related with ELT unveil an important conceptual void. However, the definitions given by the participants oscillate between this conceptual vacuum and more structured notions of interculturality and the teaching of English. This could be interpreted as a concept of interculturality in evolution and in process of maturation by EFL teachers' experiences and personal biographies, in addition to few institutional initiatives to rethink ELT national curricula (e.g., Language and Culture licensure programmes).

As a final remark, few participants referred to Colombian diversity and how the development of intercultural competence not only involves language, but also the life of individuals. Only one participant made a direct reference to interculturality associated with ethno-education, as the concept was first developed in Colombia (Walsh, 2013). In this study, English language teachers seem not to acknowledge interculturality in its broadest meaning: cultural interactions, which allow not only equitable relationships, but also learning and mutual enrichment. Therefore, there should be permanent negotiation with conditions of respect, legitimacy, political, social and ethical positioning. (Walsh, 2013).

## 6.2. The Importance of Intercultural Communicative Competence English Language Teaching (IELT)

These findings address the value teachers attribute to IELT. Participants were asked about their perceptions on why they considered interculturality to be important in ELT. Responses focused on how IELT: 1) promotes criticality and reflection in language teaching and learning; 2) fosters mutual tolerance and respect between the cultures of the languages involved, 3) helps to deconstruct stereotypes, and 4) educates learners to «experience culture». In addition, in order to explain the importance of developing ICC in ELT, some participants shared their experiences with language and culture, which will also be examined in this section.

First, when referring to intercultural English language teaching as promoting criticality and reflection, one participant expressed a belief that is similar to one of the underlying assumptions guiding this research:

*La enseñanza intercultural de lengua extranjera promueve enfoques más críticos y participativos en los procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje y menos pasivos y e instrumentales (PIT6).*

Intercultural foreign language teaching promotes more critical and participative approaches that are less passive and instrumental for language teaching and learning.

This participant endorsed her opinion by directly acknowledging Byram's (1997) earlier work, more specifically, the concept of CCA based on the *knowing to engage* and participation in communities. Second, IELT that contributes to mutual tolerance and respect between the cultures involved was another perceived belief:

*En cuanto a la interculturalidad y el inglés se puede explorar la cultura y promover valores como el respeto por las ideas y la forma de ser del Otro. (PIT11)*

In terms of interculturality and English, you can explore culture and promote values such as respect for other's ideas and way of being.

The participant further explained that English language teachers should teach language and motivate the respectful interrelation of cultures as a systematic goal in the curricula (Porto, 2014). Third, on breaking stereotypes, participant (PIT25) advocated that IELTS helps teachers and learners identify, analyse and deconstruct stereotypes:

*Es muy fácil juzgar otras culturas cuando no se conocen ni se comprenden. La interculturalidad ayuda a comprender y no a juzgar, especialmente juzgar mal, a personas que pertenecen a culturas diferentes de la nuestra. ¿De donde se originan esos estereotipos? ¿Cómo pueden analizarse e interpretarse, y sobre todo, cómo pueden evitarse? (PIT25)*

It is very easy to judge other cultures when they are not known or understood. Interculturality helps to understand and not to judge, especially to misjudge, people who belong to cultures different from ours. Where do these stereotypes originate? How can they be analysed and interpreted? And above all, how can they be avoided?

This participant advocated IELTS teachers providing students with more analytical tools to approach a language where “common-sense and taken-for-granted assumptions should be challenged” (Guilherme, 2002, p. 122). Through critical self-reflection coming from IELTS, according to Porto’s (2014, p. 253) own bicultural action research on the Malvinas/Falklands war, “students gained awareness of their own values, presuppositions, prejudices, stereotypes, etc. as well as a critical and reflective view upon them.”

Another perception of the importance of IELTS is that it helps learner «experience the live culture» without necessarily having an experience abroad. When this participant was asked to deepen his answer, he said that language teachers needed to develop the capacity, not only to judge, but to be “*maravillado por la cultura*” (PIT7: amazed by culture) by discovering what relationships with others may unveil to those involved (such as in Byram’s (1997) work,

which highlights curiosity and discovery through *savoir être* and *savoir apprendre* skills). As this participant advocated:

*Para desarrollar competencias interculturales en el aula de inglés, el profesor debe, en primer lugar, ser competente interculturalmente para poder enseñar y modelar las competencias a través de sí mismo. Debe ser un ejemplo de que la cultura y la interculturalidad son conceptos abiertos, flexibles y en constante cambio. Desarrollar competencias interculturales en el aula de inglés es como si las dos partes de la interacción estuvieran armando un rompecabezas. Nadie sabe qué imagen va a surgir de esta actividad colaborativa que construyen juntos. Al final habrán construido una imagen impredecible que representa su diálogo continuo, esfuerzo, paciencia e intentos ensayo-error (PIT11).*

To attain intercultural competence in EFL classrooms, the teacher first has to be interculturally competent in order to teach intercultural competence by modelling them through herself. S/he needs to be an example demonstrating that culture and the intercultural are open, flexible and in constant change. Developing IC in the English language classroom is as if the two parties are assembling a jigsaw puzzle. No one knows what image will arise from this collaborative activity they are building together. In the end, they will have built an unexpected image that represents their continuous dialogue, effort, patience and trial-and-error attempts.

Participants also noted the importance of IELTS for *lograr una comunicación efectiva con personas de otras culturas* (PPT1,2,5; PIT6, 7, 8, 11, 13: achieve effective communication with people of other cultures). However, this observation was a frequent component of both culture teaching in ELT and in IELTS. Despite the probing, participants did not demonstrate distinctions in these communication processes. None of the participants mentioned or suggested possibilities to help build a global, intercultural citizenship through ICC and the teaching of English. As is known, research on ICC related to language education underscores the importance of preparing students to engage and collaborate in a global society by discovering appropriate ways to interact with people from other cultures (Sercu, 2005; Sincope, Norris, & Watanabe, 2012). Byram (2008, 2012), Guilherme (2007), and Porto and Byram (2015) advocate that language teaching combines and complements educational

functions together with instrumental purposes to forge aims that coincide with some of those of contemporary citizenship education. The latter, seen through the lens of interculturality and IELT, has an interest in “developing learners’ competences in analysis, cooperation and knowledge about societies and the socio-political environment” (Porto & Byram, 2015, p. 227), gradually encouraging learners to become intercultural citizens.

These first group of findings on the importance of IELT unveil the general perception of the participants on IELT as something positive, important and necessary. Participants point to the importance interculturality in ELT to foster criticality and emphatic interactions with other cultures. Teachers also demonstrate some idea with regard to stereotypes brought to the classroom by learners, which are perceived as something negative to be avoided. Despite probing, findings are not conclusive if the expression “effective communication” could refer to a common overstated idea that comes from communicative approaches, or if participants really intended to include success in communication through developing ICC, as proposed by Fantini’s (2000, p. 27) three domains to develop three abilities: the ability to develop and maintain relationships; the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with minimal loss or distortion, and the ability to comply with and obtain cooperation from others.

A second way of exploring participants’ perceptions on the importance of IELT was examining teachers’ experiences with language and culture. While exploring this sub question on the importance of interculturality, ICC and ELT, some teachers were eager to share their intercultural experiences as they could illustrate the importance of being interculturally competent in environments where diverse cultures are in dialogue. For this reason, and due to the richness of these narratives, I saw it necessary to discuss these intercultural encounters in a different section. Next, three of these events are examined.



### **6.2.1. Teachers' intercultural encounters in an English language speaking medium**

Although ICC development is not exclusive from language teaching and learning or experiences abroad, three participants supported the importance of culture and language teaching from personal events (PIT14, 17, 20), which they identified as “culture shock” and can also be called intercultural encounters or critical incidents or events (Spencer-Oatey, 2013; Jokikokko, 2005, 2016). The experiences the participants shared happened within Anglophone cultures and were all abroad experiences during short or long stays.

#### ***“Latina caliente” (Hot Latina, PIT14)***

This participant narrated her own experience as a postgraduate in the United States ten years ago. During an activity on campus in which students had to introduce themselves, she said she was from Cali, Colombia (a well-known city where Salsa dancing and salsa schools have won international championships). One postgraduate said aloud in poor Spanish, “*Latina caliente*” (Hot Latina). Some people laughed. Here are her comments (originally told in English):

I was happy and optimistic that day, as it was the first day of the master program. This guy was playing the «funny boy» from the very beginning. As he said that, I felt angry, not only at him, but at anyone who was laughing. The course convener did not understand Spanish. For many, it was just a joke; for me it was an insult. Today I think that maybe he did not even understand what he was saying. My point is we were all non-native English speakers. It was not about language. It was about what he had in his head. Today, I would know what to do.

Probably intended as a joke, it had a negative effect on this participant who felt offended and upset. She recounted having feelings of frustration and anger as many other participants laughed and the course convener did not speak Spanish, “*así que estaba sola e indefensa frente al ataque*” (“so I was alone and defenceless during the attack”). Today,

although she seems knowledgeable about IELTS, she did not seem to analyse the issue, and nor did she try to negotiate the situation. She simply did not communicate with this individual for the rest of her stay. She made no attempts to (re) negotiate meanings, or build a Third Space or place of construction of mutual understanding—which is located somewhere on a continuum between the cultures and languages involved (Witte& Harden, 2011)—that could have allowed for mutual learning.

***“Puedo oler lo que almorzaste” (I can smell what you had for lunch, PIT17)***

*“La profesora estaba dando feedback; otros la rodeaban y yo me acerque bastante porque casi no la escuchaba. Entonces me dijo: «Please, do not get that close. Keep your distance. I can smell what you had for lunch»”* (“The teacher was giving some oral feedback: other students were around her, so I tried to get closer because I could not hear what she was saying. Then she asked me: «please, do not get that close. Keep your distance. I can smell what you had for lunch»”).

*Me sentí terrible, pero a nadie pareció importarle el comentario o no sé si eso es una broma usual [...] Me salí del salón y desde allí traté de resolver todas mis inquietudes yo solo o sentado desde mi silla alzando la mano. Eso me pareció tenaz y les cuento esto a mis estudiantes para que no les pasen estos chascos y recuerden que cada cultura tiene unas reglas que debemos aprender y seguir.*

I felt terrible, but nobody seemed to care. I don't know if it was a common joke [...] I left the room and from that moment onwards I tried to solve all my doubts by myself or by raising my hand whilst sitting at my desk. This was so shocking, and I always tell the story to my students so that they do not experience such disappointment and remember that each culture has some rules we have to learn and follow.

The participant concluded that even though this event was a bitter experience, he could learn something from it. He referred to assimilation and even to acculturation and functioning

within the new culture (Byram *et al.*, 1994): the need to follow the target culture's rules and norms. The reflective interpretation attributed a relationship that involved behaviour and punishment: if you do not follow the rules of the target culture you will be penalised. This can be interpreted as a *When in Rome do as the Romans* type of philosophy. This participant seemed to understand what happened as his own responsibility for trespassing invisible cultural rules that he was unaware of at that moment. Today, he seems to keep this position and refers to ICC as *how to* norms to establish harmonious relationships with other others.

### ***Perdido culturalmente* (“Lost in culture”, PIT20)**

This participant teacher narrated his experience while living in Minnesota (USA) as an exchange student in the 1990s:

*Todo era perfecto; la familia genial. Eran muy amables. De pronto comencé a sentirme observado y que como que esperaban que yo dijera o hiciera algo... No sé. Comencé a preguntarme si estaba haciendo las cosas bien, si debía ser yo mismo o si debía comportarme diferente... Esto me insegurizó bastante; me sentía desubicado hasta que en un asado con cerveza les pregunté directamente ellos cómo se sentían conmigo y con mi estadía en su casa [...] Manifestaron que se preguntaban si mis silencios querían decir que me sentía incómodo por alguna razón [...] Luego de esta conversación me sentí mejor.*

Everything was perfect. My host family was very kind. But I started to feel that I was being observed, and as if I was expected to say or do something... I didn't know. I started wondering if I was doing things right, if I should show myself the way I am or if I should behave differently... This made me feel unsure for a while; I felt lost until I was at a barbecue and had had a few beers. I asked them directly how they felt about me and my stay in their home [...] They told me that they were wondering if my silence meant I felt uncomfortable for any reason [...] I felt much better after this conversation.

This intercultural encounter differs from the previous ones due to the positive environment in which it developed. In this case, feelings were associated with insecurity and anguish which did not originate from a negative critical incident, but by an emerging reflection about the self,

vis-à-vis the relativisation of cultural norms or what the participant considered to be “culturally appropriate.” This participant tried to turn the intercultural encounter into intercultural relationships; he was determined to understand and gain insights of the others’ culture “while also contributing to the other person’s understanding of his/her own culture from an insider’s point of view” (Moeller & Nugent, 2014, p. 2), or in other words, demonstrating what an intercultural speaker might do.

Participants identified the first two incidents as transgressions against either themselves or what they originally expected, victimisation from a cultural Other and (self) re-victimisation (e.g., a lack of solidarity from others, anxiety, feelings of anger, frustration, guilt, punishment). Feelings tended to naturally govern thinking and behaviour, as was strongly advocated by Gupta (2003). Intercultural experiences or critical events unfold and lead “to critical reflection, subsequent learning and then change or transformative action” (Jokikokko, 2016, p. 219, 226). In the first two cases, there are no intentional competences for “how to cope” (Murphy-Lejeune, 2003, p. 58) or attempts to build a Third Space or Place (Feng, 2009; Kramsch, 1993; Lo Bianco *et al.*; 1999;) for communication and negotiation. Conversely, the second encounter shows a different standpoint: the participant’s observation skills and inner reflection disestablished his own cultural assumptions making him wonder about his ICC in a different given context.

This process aligns with Holmes and O’Neill’s (2012, p. 709) analysis when they state that “[i]n intercultural encounters communicators reconstruct and renegotiate their commonly accepted ways of being, thinking, doing and communicating, and these patterns are likely to be questioned. Focusing on such situational dissonances may shed light on the competence required.” This participant decided to build a third place by direct negotiation and dialogue

with cultural Other, which can be understood as abilities that help with *how to cope* that foster more ICC views.

Findings from these narratives unveil the importance of IELT as the three participants anticipate what their English language learners may prospectively experience as a result of exchange programmes, personal experiences and working opportunities. The three encounters teach on the need to consciously and systematically teach ICC in the language classroom as it is not innate, and a simple awareness of different cultural references does not seem enough to cope with some encounters. Findings also point to a teacher's role able to help learners discover and develop ICC to understand these intercultural experiences as productive and positive, "and to help learners to analyse and learn from their responses to a new environment." (Byram, Gribkoba & Starkey, 2002).

### **6.3. Characterization of intercultural Communicative Competence English language teaching (IELT)**

This section examines characteristics participants attributed to IELT and considered to be of vital importance. They agreed that, from an intercultural perspective, learning a language should be viewed as an interactive process in which the major focus is the process of making meaning of languages and cultures and the implications of using a language different from one's own. Accordingly, IELT should be characterized, according to participants, by 1) aspects relating to the EFL teacher dimension, and to 2) English language teacher education and language policy-making in Colombia.

### 6.3.1. Approaching IELTS: The teacher's dimension

Participants agreed that for their learners to develop ICC through English, they as teachers needed to become interculturally proficient themselves. Thus, teachers need distinguishing characteristics in order to support their students' intercultural learning process. The teacher dimension as regards IELTS, according to participants includes: 1) teachers' attitudes towards IELTS and the knowledge to be able to impart ICC in the classroom and 2) IELTS practices.

#### Attitudes and knowledge

Data showed that teacher's attitudes, knowledge and capabilities are fundamental for IELTS (PIT6, 7, 9, 11, 21). As one participant expressed:

*El profesor que enseña inglés desde una visión intercultural debe ser un modelo de interculturalidad para sus propios estudiantes [...] demostrar interés por otras culturas y por la propia, usar un lenguaje respetuoso, de mente abierta y puntos de vista flexibles. (PIT21)*

The English language teacher who teaches from intercultural views should be a model of interculturality for her own students. [She should] demonstrate interest for her own and other's cultures, use a respectful language, be open-minded and have flexible points of view.

In my study, an important number of participants seemed willing to gradually become ICC English language teachers with proper guidance: "*Sí, todo lo que sea mejor para que los estudiantes tengan más alcances en este mundo competitivo*" (PIT21: Yes, everything that is better so that students have better achievements for this competitive world); "*Quiero volver mis clases de inglés más interculturales para que mis estudiantes puedan explorar otras culturas sin tantas limitaciones*" (PIT6: I want intercultural English lessons become more intercultural so that my students can explore other cultures without limitations). This finding strongly agrees with Sercu's *et al.* (2005,) and Atay's (2009) research, which advocate that to

support the intercultural learning process, language teachers need the willingness, additional knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary and sufficient for teaching ICC in ELT.

It is fundamental to recall that this knowledge not only implies primarily knowledge about one specific culture, but Byram's knowledge dimension, which entails what is involved in intercultural interactions. According to Byram (1997) and Fleming (2009), personal attitudes, together with language skills, are antecedents to being able to develop the necessary intercultural competence or a "pre-condition for successful intercultural interaction" (Byram, 1997, p. 34). Attitudes, in addition, involve curiosity and openness towards the other as well as readiness to revise cultural values and beliefs and to interact and engage with otherness (Atay, 2009).

As previously established in Chapter 5 (see section 5.6), findings show participants have positive attitudes towards the role of culture and the idea of gradually moving towards IELTS education (PIT6, 21, 25). This finding echoes the point made by Sercu *et al.* (2005) that "FL&IC [Foreign Language and Intercultural Competence] teachers' attitudes should be favourable towards the integration of ICC in ELT. A "positive attitude", as has been clearly explained in this research, is that teachers are "favourably disposed" towards the integration of intercultural competence and English language teaching. However, my findings suggest that a positive attitude is not enough, but an action orientation leading to IELTS is needed (Barrett, 2008). In this way, this research is in congruence with Sercu *et al.*'s (2005) findings that some teachers may have a positive attitude towards interculturalising ELT, but they are not yet doing it.

As regards knowledge, findings refer to the idea that teaching English interculturally requires a teacher with specific knowledge (Sercu *et al.*, 2005). The knowledge teachers

overly referred to was related to, on the one hand, topical knowledge of cultures or types of civilization studies (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013):

*Tener un buen conocimiento de cada una de las culturas (la inglesa y la propia) y la disposición de seguir aprendiendo a cada instante (PIT14).*

Having good knowledge of each culture (the English culture and their own culture) and having the willingness to continue learning.

On the same topic, another participant expressed that:

*En niveles bajos se incluyen temas de cultura visible, como comida, vestido, hábitos, danzas, expresiones culturales en general, y en los niveles altos lo que tiene que ver con creencias, imaginarios, situaciones política, económica, etc. (PIT17).*

For lower levels, topics about visible culture such as food, dress, habits, dancing and cultural expressions in general should be included and for advanced levels, topics related to beliefs, archetypical imagination, political and economic situation, etc.

The factual knowledge of culture can be partially interpreted as a limited aspect of the *savoir* (knowledge as primarily knowledge), but should be expanded to the more complex knowledge dimension advocated by Byram's (1997, p. 35) early work: "Knowledge about social groups and their cultures in one's own country, and similar knowledge of the interlocutor's country on the one hand." (also see Byram & Nichols, 2001; Byram, Gribkoba & Starkey, 2002). Teachers leave aside the intercultural dimension in which primarily knowledge about a specific culture is not as important as "knowledge of the processes of interaction at individual and societal levels" (Byram, 1997, p. 35; Fleming, 2009). In the same way, as participants emphasised, intercultural language teachers need an enlarged worldview to appreciate diversity (PIT21, 25)



In another testimony, one teacher expressed the need to acquire knowledge on intercultural theories and language teaching and learning or to study topics on interculturality and ICC relating to the teaching of foreign languages:

*Ya es hora que estos saberes se nos brinden en programas para la enseñanza del inglés, licenciaturas, cursos y talleres de actualización de educación continuada porque muchas veces estudiar uno solo estos temas no es suficiente (PIT19).*

It is high time we are offered these kinds of topics in FLT programmes, degrees and further education by updating courses and workshops because, often, autonomous self-study is not enough.

This teacher's remark seems to be in congruence with empirically supported ideas from Willems (2000) and Sercu (2005) who advocate the importance of this theoretical knowledge by saying that if willing to teach within this approach, teachers need to be acquainted with basic insights from cultural anthropology, culture and intercultural teaching and learning, and intercultural communication.

Another aspect connected to teachers' knowledge and IELT was about how this knowledge was best gained. Participants highlighted the importance of "knowing" about their own and other cultures through full immersion, long or short experiences (living abroad), or, to a lesser extent, by systematic formative learning or self-learning processes such as taking courses about the subject, reading, inquiring, doing research and web based explorations. Those who advocated the importance of full immersion experiences agreed that: "*No es lo mismo ver la cultura que experimentar la cultura*" (PIT8: It is not the same to witness culture as it is to experience culture), and they also highlighted characteristics such as openness and eagerness to learn and the capacity to experience other cultures then becoming able to teach these in the classroom.

Others claimed (PIT6, 11), in contrast, that it is not necessary for teachers to live abroad to become intercultural English language teachers, but they must learn from professionals and should also be autonomous, critical and curious to gradually become interculturally competent by using technology and inquiry tools as advocated by Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002). One participant made this issue explicit:

*Generalmente el enfoque intercultural en la enseñanza del inglés se hace desde el aula de clase. El docente es quien muestra y explica la cultura extranjera pero no hay ningún tipo de interacción real o una situación comunicativa real con un miembro de la cultura de estudio. Se podría hacer teniendo a una persona extranjera perteneciente a una sociedad de la lengua inglesa, y haciendo comunidades educativas con estudiantes extranjeros cuyo objeto de estudio sea el español. (PIT25)*

Generally speaking, an intercultural EFL approach is pursued in the classroom. The teacher is the one in charge of showing and explaining the foreign culture, but there is no real interaction or a real communicative situation with a native member of the target culture. This could be done by inviting a foreign person belonging to a native English-speaking community into the classroom and trying to make up educational communities with foreign students learning Spanish.

These capacities may facilitate developing IELTS as highlighted by Byram and Nichols (2000, p. 3), who advocate the idea that:

In the foreign language classroom, what was often seen as a problem in teaching the cultural dimension, the lack of opportunity to travel to a foreign country and society, should not inhibit teachers and learners [...] it is not the teacher's task to provide comprehensive information and to try to bring the foreign language society into the classroom for learners to observe and experience vicariously. The task is rather to facilitate learners' interaction with some small part of another society and its cultures, with the purpose of relativising learners' understandings of their own cultural values, beliefs and behaviours, and encourage them to investigate for themselves the otherness around them [...].

Findings suggest that participants are positively disposed towards IELTS. However, with exceptions, their understanding of IELTS seem to be limited to enlarged objectives of culture teaching. About teachers' knowledge as important to develop IELTS, findings suggest that participants regard themselves as being familiar with the

culture knowledge involved in ELT in the Colombian context (Spanish and English). This knowledge, however, corresponds to the *knowledge* (as primarily knowledge), which is not sufficient for a teacher to undertake IELT. Teachers rarely consider an individual systematic revision of the definitions of culture, interculturality, ICC and of the processes that shape intercultural communication and dialogue as societal actions associated with language teaching and learning.

### **Intercultural English language teaching practices**

Participants' views and approaches on what they consider their IELT practices are were also explored in the present study. Some teachers expressed that they included intercultural aspects in their English teaching (PIT6,11, 19, 22). Some observed that despite knowing the importance of IELT in today's global times, they do not do much about it (PIT7, 8, 12, 14). Two different IELT practices emerged: 1) the IELT practices equivalent to culture teaching practices and 2) culture projects and initiatives that can aim at IELT. Last, this section examines EFL teachers unconsciously building Third Spaces in the classroom.

One of the teachers pointed out that, "*Tal vez lo tomamos relajadamente porque no es obligatorio sino más bien opcional*" (PIT8: This relaxed attitude may be because intercultural objectives are not mandatory in our curriculum but individually optional). Another expressed that, "*A veces lo hago, pero es algo más intuitivo que organizado y planeado [...] no me parece algo fácil de hacer*" (PIT12: I rarely do it, but when I do it is more intuitive than systematic. I don't think that it is easy to do though). These queries evoke concerns shared by scholars such as Fiorucci and (2015) echoed by Reid (2015, p. 939) who claims that:

Teachers find it difficult to identify themselves with and apply intercultural aspects of the target language. Even though, all the curricular documents emphasise importance of development of ICC [...] the recommendations are mostly only general and do not provide specific guidance for teachers.

Some IELTS practices seem to be aligned with intercultural views. However, when trying to teach English interculturally, the approaches and procedures are the same as when teaching cultural aspects (as in culture teaching approaches): essentialist, nation-bound culture that promotes the learning of native speakers' cultural aspects through comparison and contrast with the own culture (see Chapter 5 section 5.5.2 and 5.5.3):

*[Sobre la dimensión intercultural] fomento el intercambio cultural en clase, con presentaciones sobre nuestra cultura colombiana y latinoamericana y las culturas angloparlantes. Además, se establecen similitudes y diferencias en cuanto a costumbres, estilos de vida y sistemas sociopolíticos (PIT22).*

[Speaking of intercultural ELT] I foster cultural exchange in the classroom by using presentations on our Colombian and Latin American culture and Anglo speaking cultures. In addition, they work out similarities and differences for customs, lifestyles and socio-political systems.

[Intento enseñar inglés interculturalmente] *investigando en los grupos diferentes países y los componentes de cada cultura y relacionándolos con la nuestra. Analizando e interpretando comportamientos y el lenguaje corporal según la cultura (PIT19).*

[I try to teach English interculturally] by doing research with my students about different countries and the components of each culture, making relationships with our own culture, and analysing and interpreting behaviours and body language according to the culture.

Teaching practices with regard to language and culture teaching (cultural projects and meetings with guest (foreign) tutors (see Chapter 5, section 5.5.3) could have the potential to widen teachers' ability to foster IELTS. In the first case, cultural projects can entail more (self) ethnographic views (Bodrič & Stojičić, 2013; Holmes & O'Neill, 2012; Roberts, 2003) by taking advantage of the curiosity and engagement with otherness during the research process that is essential to reaching an intercultural state (Ryan, 2003).

Second, guest tutors' academic visits that are currently not oriented towards ICC experiential learning can shift from the passive role of the guest teacher as culture-bearer or a living sample of her own culture to a *cultural Other* with whom one can promote mutual reflection, otherness experience, dialogue and third place construction (Holmes & O'Neill, 2012), and who can fulfil the role of cultural intermediary between one's own culture and the Other's culture (Bodrič & Stojičić, 2013).

Based on the above perceptions that summarise some teachers' IELTS practices, findings reveal teachers view the intercultural as something similar to culture teaching, or as enlarged objectives of culture teaching and cultural awareness. Some teachers expressed that their main objective of IELTS was to offer students tools that allow them to widen their world view and access concepts such as tolerance and understanding in an emphatic context (PIT6, 25). They also emphasized that ICC helped learners enlarge their vision from the local to the global (PIT11). However, these findings on IELTS practices allow the conclusion that despite conceptually showing actual intercultural objectives, teaching practices were frequently restricted to culture teaching: direct instruction of knowledge, reflection questions about culture and cross-cultural comparisons. These teaching practices were also identified by Davcheva (2003, p. 83) in her research on 36 Bulgarian student-teachers of English and their intercultural learning experiences.

Finally, findings from Chapter 5 about cultural projects and lessons taught by foreign guest tutors and these present findings may serve as a starting point for discussion on how to capitalise pedagogical practices related to culture and reshape them into pedagogical practices of IELTS. If appropriately redirected, these practices could represent an emergent phase of IELTS (Fiorucci, 2015).

### **Teachers building a *Third Space* in the classroom**

Data suggest that participants unnoticeably try to build Third Spaces in the English language classrooms. My analysis of the data suggest that they try to teach their students about how to relate to other cultures by: 1) constructing theoretical spaces that anticipate the behaviour and reactions of individuals, and 2) through class dynamics that include role play (PIT8, 17).

About these “theoretical spaces”, a couple of participants advocated that:

*Si se quiere que los estudiantes sean capaces de interactuar con personas de otras culturas no solo se les enseña inglés, sino también las costumbres, las formas de interactuar, la filosofía y los valores de esas culturas. (PIT13)*

If students are to be able to interact with people from other cultures, they are not only taught English, but also the customs, ways of interacting, philosophy and values of those cultures.

*Cuando los estudiantes salen del país, para intercambios académicos, por ejemplo, deben saber cómo manejar esas experiencias, no necesariamente agradables [...] al menos hay que enseñarles los comportamientos básicos de esa cultura. (PIT21)*

When students leave the country for academic exchanges, for example, they should know how to handle those experiences, not necessarily pleasant) [...] at least you have to teach them the basic behaviours of that culture.

Data also show a great concern in trying to build an inventory of possibilities and behaviours to cope with potential encounters and events, which is technically impossible (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002). The underlying assumption of this strategy may be that intercultural encounters can be predicted, or at least a univocal event-behaviour relationship can be created as a formula or recipe that sees aspects of communication and context as unimportant. Despite this frequent practice in the ELT classroom, no conscious knowledge of the concept *Third Space* or *Place* was confirmed among participants. According to Bhabha, the *Third Space* is “new area of negotiation of meaning and representation” (1990, p. 211) where “even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricised and read anew”

(1994, p. 37). Drawing on Bhabha's (1994) ideas, Feng (2009), Kramsch (1993), Lo Bianco *et al.* (1999) discuss individual opportunities for change when being confronted with the unfamiliar language and culture that leads to the creation of a *Third Place*.

Another frequent strategy to encourage students build *Third Spaces* in the classroom was to perform activities such as role-plays of different situations, either planned or improvised (PIT20, 22). In one role-play activity (classroom observation 4), three students were acting as tourists asking for a discount in a shop, but no further comments were made by the teacher on, for example, the "culture of bargaining", its meaning or implications for both parties. Is bargaining always accepted? Is it considered disrespectful? Are clients expected to bargain, as they are here in Colombia? A large number of possibilities to reflect on this simulated situation could have triggered intercultural awareness, but more privilege was given to linguistic features, and pronunciation that tended to be emphasised over intercultural analysis.

Findings suggest that, about theoretical spaces, teachers of English expect that by knowledge transmission and memorized learning about cultural facts and prescriptive inventories of behaviours and attitudes (as in CLT), learners can learn and deduce the *how to* or *can do*'s in intercultural encounters or abroad experiences to build theoretical constructs based on *what if* situations (e.g., What would you do if a person from a different culture ...?). This idea of culture, detached from its context, as something fixed, monolithic and predictable, is risky for both teachers and learners since it limits the vision of *the intercultural being* and can lead to stereotyping and mistaken images about the nature of intercultural encounters. As regard role plays, some dynamics coming from CLT, if their objectives are redesigned, can offer opportunities for the construction of more intercultural views in the classroom. Acting out situations that comprise cultural encounters can become a plausible classroom strategy to

start explorations towards Third Spaces and negotiation in IELT settings, provided the theoretical framework and scaffolding strategies to do so.

### **6.3.2. English language teacher education, language policy making and IEFL**

With regard to the characterization of IELT, now issues on ELT education and language policy making will be addressed. The data yielded in this chapter recurrently pointed to issues of dissatisfaction among teachers with regard to language teacher education programmes (PPT4, PIT6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 16, 20) and with regard to language policy making (PIT6, 7, 10, 21). In the first case, data reveal, as discussed in the contextualisation chapter (see Chapter 2, section 2.5), that there is a lack of critical and reflective stances that approach contemporary challenges in the ELT profession (Cárdenas, 2009; Sánchez-Jabba, 2013; British Council, 2015). Still embedded in the communicative approach, language education in the country is based on traditional notions of culture and re-evaluated concepts of the native speaker and communication with native speakers.

Teaching models enforce a focus on mechanical instrumental procedures that train communication. A major claim that arose from participants (PPT1, 2, 3, 5) was about the quality of English language teaching programmes. Initial teacher education and professional development principally aims at building on their linguistic and methodological proficiency by providing formal academic experiences based on knowledge transmission and development of abilities that derive from traditional theoretical procedures (Fandiño, 2013; González, 2000, 2007; Sánchez-Jabba, 2013). Testimonies revealed about undergraduate degrees lack of evolution and updating according to changing times (PPT2,3; PIT7, 8, 10). One undergraduate student teacher expressed her discomfort of the summit teaching goals and perspectives for a whole teaching programme within the English teaching practicum by saying



that:

[Los supervisores] *Le prestan mucha atención al paso a paso de la planeación, a la pronunciación, a dar instrucciones, a la gramática [...] Pero no hay nada como estrategias que promuevan la reflexión de temas culturales en estudiantes y profesores (PPT5).*

They [supervisors] pay lots of attention to step-by-step planning, pronunciation, giving instructions, grammar [...] But there are no strategies to encourage deeper reflection on cultural topics for both teachers and learners.

Another view of a teacher who also had an administrative position years ago is as follows:

*Los programas [de lengua] siguen siendo los mismos y han sido los mismos por años. A veces lo que más cambia en una asignatura es el profesor. La asignatura cambia si cambian al profesor que tal vez trae nuevas cosas [...] pero como el programa está acreditado ante el Ministerio, no pasa mayor cosa [...] raras veces hay actualizaciones o revisiones curriculares que valgan la pena. (PIT18)*

[Language] programmes remain the same and have been the same for years. Sometimes what changes the most in a subject is the teacher. The subject changes if they change the teacher, who may bring new things [...] but as the programme is accredited by the Ministry, nothing happens [...] rarely there are updates or worthwhile curricular revisions.

One probing question addressed by participants had to do with the ways (if any) ICC teaching training was included in their own teacher education. Data show that very few participants studied topics of interculturality and ICC in a systematic way. Some answers to this question were: “*Para nada*” (PPT3: “Not in any way”); “No tocamos esos temas; tal vez porque no estaban tan de moda en ese momento.” (PIT13: We did not study those subjects; maybe because they were not so fashionable at that moment). Some admitted, however, the inclusion of courses such as “American Culture” (PIT21), “The UK in the World” (PIT9), “Linguistics” and “Sociolinguistics.” (PPT1, 2, 4, 5; PIT 7, 8, 10). One question that arises is about language teacher education and its impact on ELT pedagogical practices. As a result, theoretical and methodological elements of intercultural studies should be systematically

included in foreign language teaching curricula as this would constitute the foundations for systematic education in this field. (Lázár, 2003).

About ELT policy making in the country, claims emerged from participant about the update of English language teaching guidelines or national standards for ELT to align with more international objectives (PIT6, 12, 21, 25) Some participants expressed that: “*Es saltar de unos lineamientos a otros sin objetivos claros*” (PIT25: It is jumping from some guidelines to others without clear objectives); “*El Ministerio impone y nosotros debemos obedecer sin preparación previa ni nada*” (PIT12: The Ministry imposes and we must obey without prior preparation or anything). Other perception was that:

*Ni el mismo gobierno sabe lo que quiere con el inglés. No hay estándares, sino una guía desactualizada; hasta ahora están hablando de cultura y la enseñanza del inglés, pero no enuncian objetivos claros y tampoco dicen cómo los profesores debemos integrar esto a la docencia. Y así es como quedamos siempre: bien perdidos.* (PIT6)

The government itself does not even know what it wants with English. There are no standards, but outdated guidelines; now they are talking about culture and teaching English, but they do not state clear objectives, and they do not say how teachers should integrate this into teaching. And this is how we always are: well lost.

When the participant says, “outdated guidelines”, he refers to *The Foreign Language Competence Basic Standards: English* (2006) (*Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: Inglés*), that has been operating for a decade, which mentions the concept of *intercultural communication* without any further detailed explanation on teacher’s knowledge and roles (MEN, 2016, pp. 7, 12, 42; 2016a). The same participant adds: “Now, they are talking about culture and teaching English”, that refers to a new national proposal based on empirical research has recently been suggested: *Designing a suggested curricular proposal for English in Colombia. Grades 6° to 11°; English for diversity and equity*. Despite

the suggestive title containing concepts such as *diversity and equity* and a brief definition of intercultural competence, no special remarks are made on building an intercultural framework to teach English interculturally, or on developing ICC as a goal in the teaching of English nationwide.

Last, a call for action and a need to start from somewhere were participants' legitimate concerns in this research (PIT9, 13, 17, 21). One participant stated: "*Pero ¿qué significa eso de enseñar cultura en el contexto de la lengua extranjera? ¿Cuándo se ha regulado eso como una meta que debemos seguir? El Ministerio nunca ha tenido esto en cuenta*" (PIT18: But what does it mean to teach culture within the context of foreign language teaching? When has this been a goal we should follow? The Ministry has never taken this into account.) This participant's query reflects what many teachers question in light of this situation. In Colombia, when policy makers prescribe "culture" and ICC in the curricular guidelines, standards and suggested language curriculum (MEN, 1999, 2006, 2014, 2016, 2016a), it is mistakenly taken for granted as something everyone knows and understands, or is given scarce attention to (Barletta, 2009). Another view on the same topic was:

*Me pregunto cómo puedo yo hacer algo así con mis estudiantes [se refiere a desarrollar ICC en el aula de inglés]. Claro, primero yo debo aprender a ser intercultural, pero, ¿de dónde, cómo, qué dirección sigo?"* (PIT13).

I wonder how I can do something like this with my students [developing ICC in the EFL classroom]. Of course, I should first learn how to become an intercultural individual, but from who? How? Which direction should I follow?

In short, claims for broader and more general orientations on interculturality and intercultural English language teaching are frequent. Participants express their desire to have some formal guidelines or orientations on how to teach English interculturally (PPT4, PIT9). They also wish to have some instruction on how to become intercultural English language teachers

themselves and be able to find more guidance on this topic in Colombia to make it visible in the classroom (PIT7).

As the above discussion shows, findings are conclusive in that Colombian English language teachers need guidance and professional scaffolding to explore the dimensions of IELT. Findings also suggest that the quality of ELT education is a concern and something that negatively influences advances in ELT. As EFL teachers express their discontent, this might indicate their readiness to advance towards more critical and reflective proposals in the ELT profession, such as those provided by IELT. In addition, limited understanding of ICC and IELT could largely be due to the lack of these conceptual developments in language teacher education programmes. There is a need to create the basis for a systematic inclusion of the intercultural component in foreign language education and clearly define the field of ICC in all its dimensions, taking into consideration its dynamic and continuous evolution. This can help develop more ICC-oriented English language teacher profiles. From data, it can be concluded that English language teacher education programmes and language policy making processes in Colombia share some responsibility in the frequent omission or inexistence of intercultural studies in ELT teachers' praxis.

#### **6.4. Concluding the chapter**

This chapter sought to explore definitions and assumptions about interculturality and ELT. It addressed research questions 2 and 3 on EFL teachers' conceptions and beliefs about teaching interculturality, how important this is and its characterisation in teachers' praxis. To sum up, regarding the definition of interculturality and IELT, understanding of the concepts are limited. The majority of teachers, with exceptions, do not provide a clear definition of interculturality in ELT but tend to outline general characteristics of an ICC approach to

teaching English (e.g., tolerance, open-mindedness, cultural understanding), which they have learnt from personal biographies or intuited from the culture teaching dimension of CLT.

Some teachers conceptually understand IELTS objectives related to cultural understanding, dialogue and tolerance, but their practices frequently shift towards culture teaching: direct instruction of knowledge, reflection questions about culture and cross-cultural comparisons. Understanding of IELTS seem enlarged objectives of culture teaching or display a continuum of language and culture teaching (see section 6.1 in this chapter); this is what Piątkowska (2015) sees as a progression from a *knowledge-based approach* to a *contrastive approach* to an *ICC approach* to foreign language teaching (My italics). Drawing on Ho (2009) and Piątkowska (2015), participant teachers in this research can be experiencing advancements in the continuum.

My research findings share similarities with Sercu's *et al.* (2005) in that many participants have a positive attitude towards IELTS teaching; however, the lack of knowledge and clear instruction on how to advance from the cultural to the intercultural dimension was identified as one of the major reasons for teachers to stay in a comfort zone of communicative approaches to language and culture teaching. About teachers' knowledge, participants claim to have the *knowledge* (as primarily knowledge) to teach culture and IELTS; however, knowledge about both cultures is superficial (see Chapter 5, section 5.6) and does not transcend to *savoir*, or the knowledge necessary to understand intercultural interactions.

Findings are conclusive in that English language teacher education programmes and language policy making processes in Colombia share some responsibility in the frequent omission or inexistence of intercultural studies in ELT teachers' praxis. Colombian English language teachers need guidance and professional scaffolding to explore the dimensions of

IELT. In the same direction, the quality of ELT education is a concern and something that hinders a better understanding of the intercultural component in foreign language education.

It is essential that language teacher education in Colombia involves intercultural education so as to foster teachers' abilities to handle conflict and ambiguity in a constructive and creative manner (Hoff, 2016). This implies the need for a renewed teacher's role able to help learners develop ICC and cope with the unpredictability of intercultural encounters. Consequently, teachers should prepare learners to face cultural exposure different from their own in such a way they can take advantage of and get the best out of these experiences. This will help learners decentre or *make the strange familiar and the familiar strange* (Byram, Gribkoba & Starkey, 2002, p. 19. Authors' own italics).

## **Chapter 7**

### **An emerging model for intercultural English language teaching in Colombia**

A major research goal of this study is, from English language teachers' understanding of ELT in Colombia, to develop a model or an approach to familiarise the teachers with ICC. Teachers' points of view, experiences, emerging conditions, queries, thoughts and assumptions were elicited as how teachers think, and what teachers know and believe influence their actions and performances in the classroom (Borg, M., 2001; Borg, S., 2003). This inextricable interrelation endorses why the elicitation of a model was preferred rather than trying to find a match with an existing one (Dreher, 2002). Accordingly, to develop a model or approach to IELT, I follow some grounded theory principles and draw on three theoretical constructs that inform my emergent IELT approach in the Colombian context: (1) Byram's (1997) postulates of ICC (participants did not mention the word "model"), (2) critical thinking and (3) reflective teaching principles.

This chapter addresses the final research question (RQ5): Which principles could be helpful in developing an IELT model in Colombia? An additional sub question was: according to teachers' needs, own views and approaches to teaching, which principles or theories (or specific components from models) may be helpful guidelines to start with the process of interculturalising English language teaching? It also addresses the closing question in the interview: Would you like to add something more or share any particular thought about culture, interculturality and ELT in the Colombian context? Two important information sources support the development of the proposed approach: first, data emerging from

participant teachers' understanding of what teaching interculturally may imply, and second, potential actions to guide teachers' praxis. Byram's (1997) ideas were frequently referenced as were aspects of critical and reflective thinking (steps 1, 2 and 3 above) to develop an IELT model which can be seen as a work in progress. Next, the following topics will be discussed: 1) teachers' co-construction of a framework to advance into IELT and 2) other components contributing to the development of a model. Next, these issues will be further examined.

### **7.1. Teachers' co-construction of a framework to advance into IELT**

From participants' understanding of culture and language teaching (Chapter 5) and intercultural English language teaching (Chapter 6), this section develops what participants consider important theoretical aspects to be included in a model to advance towards IELT. Some participants (PIT 6, 11, 21, 25) agree that, just as teachers should motivate their students to take an intercultural learning path, they themselves should gradually start a conscious process of interculturalising their ELT practices. Data collected addressed understanding from participant teachers who added their insight into IELT with ideas such as openness, understanding, flexibility and tolerance, reflective teaching and critical thinking.

Key findings in this research show that Colombian teachers recognise the importance of culture teaching in the ELT classroom, and their perspectives and practices are oriented towards the inclusion of essentialist views of culture, factual culture, trivia and culture-as-content teaching. Accordingly, with regard to ICC, teachers express their receptiveness to it and have a positive attitude towards IELT. However, their knowledge on the topic is limited, and, as a result, they end up restating the cultural dimension and cross-cultural comparisons. In this way, they return to the culture teaching momentum of CLT. It could be said that teachers arrive at a conceptual bottleneck that hinders them from advancing towards IELT



(see Chapter 6, section 6.3.1). Some of the following answers represent participants' reactions about this situation: "*Es claro que no sabemos como integrar el componente intercultural en nuestras aulas de inglés; la mayoría de mis acciones son intuitivas*" (PIT21: It is clear that we do not know how to integrate the intercultural component in our English classrooms; most of my actions are intuitive.) Another participant claimed that:

Quiero decir que sin apoyo de expertos, sin una guía o algo sirva como orientación, no se puede avanzar [hacia IELTS], puesto que por mucho que uno lea sobre los temas, no se pueden llevar a la práctica tan fácilmente (PIT25)

I want to say that without the support of experts, without a guide or something that serves as an orientation, you can not advance [towards IELTS], since no matter how much one reads about the topics, they can not be put into practice so easily.

Accordingly, participants have identified aspects to conform a model (or what they have called "a guideline" (PIT6, 11) or "a starting point" (PIT23) that can be used as a first step to help them get familiar with ICC and its inclusion in ELT.

### **7.1.1. Attitudes and values in IELTS**

Participants advocated some important attitudes and values to be part of an intercultural language teaching framework. They did not make references to a particular ICC model; however, some advocated the importance of emerging components or qualities such open mindedness (Feng, 2009, p. 71) and tolerance towards other cultures (Alred, Byram & Fleming, 2003, p. 9) as this participant declared: "*La interculturalidad en la enseñanza de lenguas es enseñar con mente abierta sobre las culturas para lograr tolerancia de las diferencias*" (PIT21: Intercultural teaching in L2 means teaching about cultures with an open mind to be tolerant of differences.). Participants placed these values at the core of the triad

ICC model (Byram, 1997)→Critical thinking→Reflective teaching (see Figure 3 in this chapter).

Murphy-Lejeune (2003, p. 109) advocated that openness has various facets such curiosity, tolerance and flexibility. She identified them as core qualities in her own research findings about students travelling abroad, and her view is that the concepts are interrelated and interdependent, as my participants also indicate (see Chapter 6, section 6.3.1). Similarly, Fantini (2009) defines, among other components of ICC, a group of qualities including flexibility, humour, patience, openness, interest, curiosity, empathy and tolerance for ambiguity which contribute to critical individuals “able to review and change negative attitudes or prejudices about other cultures, to observe, compare and see the world with a new perspective.” (Barany, 2016, p. 259). Other concepts expressed by participants were: “*fraternidad y solidaridad entre culturas*” (PPT5: Fraternity and solidarity between cultures) and “*negociación cultural*” (PIT11: Cultural negotiation) (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). Findings suggest participants agreement on that an intercultural language teacher should have or develop extra characteristics in addition to what traditional teachers generally have (PIT6, 9, 11, 21, 22; PPT4, 5). This set of values and attitudes seem to be, according to participants a *sine qua non* aspect to develop IELTS. Without them, intercultural communication and dialogue, as fostered in intercultural language are education, seem unlikely to happen.

### **7.1.2. Byram’s ICC postulates from his descriptive model**

Guilherme (2002, p. 143) explicitly states that “Byram’s writings have, to a great extent, been responsible for the growing significance attributed to the cultural component within foreign language education [...] and for making teachers more interested in adding a critical dimension to it.” For this reason, Byram’s proposal constitutes an important portion of the

model that will be put forward in the following lines.

Byram (1997) maintains that the language classroom can offer enough opportunities for the acquisition of certain skills, knowledge and attitudes on the condition that the teacher is the one guiding the activities. His ideas have highly influenced teachers' ideas and attitudes towards culture teaching and ICC, namely, the concept of "critical cultural awareness" (Byram, 2008, p. 162) and the "intercultural speaker" (Byram, 1997, p. 31). Byram sees language learning as a communicative, interactive and meaningful process and describes the factors involved in successful intercultural communication as a set of knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions that should be acted upon. Accordingly, Byram (1997) and Byram and Zarate (1997, p. 11) identify the following components of ICC within foreign language education: "*savoirs*" (**knowledge** of: The Self and the Other, and of interaction, both individual and societal); "*savoir comprendre*" (**skills** involving interpreting and relating); "*savoir être*" (intercultural **attitudes**: relativising self, valuing the Other), and "*savoir faire/apprendre*" (**skills** relating to discovering and/or interacting) (Byram, 1997, p. 34). Furthermore, Byram distinguishes "*savoir s'engager*" (political education, critical cultural awareness) as the epicentre of his ICC model (Byram, 1997, p. 54. See Figure 3).

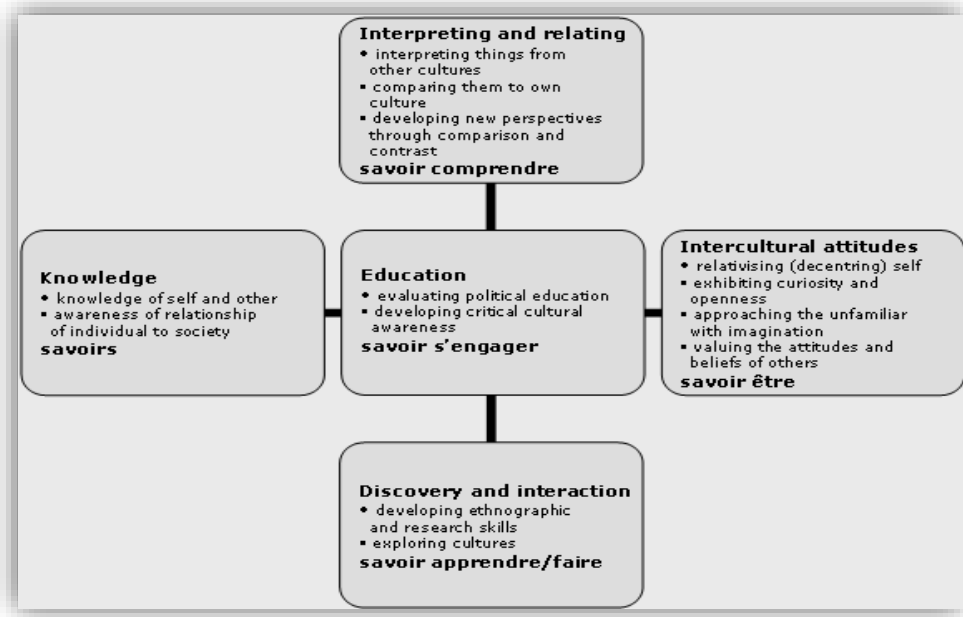


Figure 3. Byram's five "savoir" categories (adapted from Byram, 1997. In Lindner, 2010)

Participants advocated Byram's theories when speaking of IELTS, although no evidence of the model (the word *model*) itself was provided (PIT6, 11, 22, 25). Teachers, however, tended to unnoticeably relate Byram's work with isolated characteristics or components of the model, and their perceptions of interculturality partially addressed *savoir* (knowledge as primarily knowledge) and *savoir comprendre* (skills to interpret) (see Chapter 6, section 6.3.1. Also see Figure 1). Participant teachers, however, limited their reference of Byram to a desired IEFLE teacher profile: "*un profesor de mente abierta, capaz de comprender al Otro Cultural.*" (PIT11: An open-minded teacher able understand the cultural Other). Some other expressions were "*Valorar otras culturas*" (PIT22: Value other cultures) and "*capacidad de apreciar otras culturas*" (PIT21: Capacity to appreciate other cultures). According to this, they appeared to have Byram's ideas of attitudes and dispositions. In fact, participants mainly referred to the set of knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions that are

required to act rather than specifically to *savoirs*.

Notwithstanding, the data referring to culture-as-knowledge, to cross-cultural recurrent classroom strategies and to valuing the native culture and the target cultures suggest that the “*savoirs*” and “*savoir comprendre*” components of Byram’s model are the most acknowledged parts. What is more, these knowledge and skills involving relating to people are coherent with established structural definitions of culture that see the accumulation of factual knowledge as very important, and culture driven to nation-state:

*Es importante que el profesor enseñe a los estudiantes un conocimiento general sobre las culturas relacionadas con la lengua, pero aún más importante es que aprendan a compararlas comprendiendo sus divergencias y similitudes (PIT11).*

It is important that teachers teach learners general knowledge about cultures related to the language, but being able to compare them, understanding their divergences and similarities is even more important.

Even when some teachers are aware of Byram’s (1989) model to help language teachers critically understand the concept of ICC, critiques on his model cannot be overlooked. These address at least three dimensions: 1) its Eurocentric nature is descriptive of CEFR needs although it can perhaps be applied to many different learning environments (Miike, 2003); 2) the nation-oriented character of the culture definition that the whole approach is based on determines that the model is mainly nationalist and essentialist (Belz, 2007, p. 129). 3) the structure of Byram’s model, its taxonomical nature and the inseparability of the *savoirs* with regard to the symbolic competence or the exercise of “the symbolic power of discourse.” (Kramsch, 2009, p. 116). Echoing these perspectives, Risager (2007, p. 121) set out the absence of a direct relationship between language and culture, or the lack of a “hypothesis of the inseparability of the two” despite being addressed to a readership of foreign language teachers.

More recently, Hoff (2014, p. 512) cautions how Byram’s intercultural encounters may

result in a one-dimensional overruling perspective if considerations of the Other's needs and expectations are allowed to prevail. In this case, Hoff advocates that the relationship between the Self and Other would be based on an imbalance of power rather than equality: "Byram's model implies a passive, uncritical process of socialisation, rather than a view of the intercultural dialogue" (Hoff, 2014, p. 512). The previous critiques of a structuralist, national-centred approach and the unstated relationship about language and culture seem legitimate and have also been discussed in Byram's works (2012a, 2014) in which he builds on the topic. Byram (2012a) has discussed and problematized his model and has acknowledged the need to be aware of these criticisms for further refinement of his theory in terms of the "structuralist" character of the approach taken, the nationalist-essentialist interpretation of the model and the relationship between language and culture.

In addition, Hoff's (2014) arguably imbalanced perspective between the Self and the Other in intercultural encounters may find a counterargument in the strength of ethnocentrism, the belief that one's own culture is centrally important and is superior to other cultures (Gudykunst & Kim 2003; Gudykunst 2004; Taylor, 2006) and the natural resistance it creates in individuals facing intercultural encounters. As regards Byram's model, it relativises ethnocentrism by encouraging "willingness to suspend belief in one's own meanings and behaviours, and to analyse them from the viewpoint of the others with whom one is engaging". The ability to "decentre" (Byram, 1997, p. 34) or the "relativisation of one's own and valuing of others' meaning, beliefs" (p. 35) is fundamental to be able to understand other cultures. Ethnocentrism influences how people communicate with others from different cultural backgrounds (Butcher & Haggard 2009) as they tend to use their culture as a benchmark against which to judge those from other cultures (Campbell, 2016; Gudykunst & Kim 2003;). This means that conceding a privileged place to the Other does seem legitimate to counterbalance

the natural interlocutors' trends.

An important remark about Byram's or any other model on ICC development involves Matsuo (2012), whose appraisals are legitimate when she states that models are abstractions and cannot show a full picture of social phenomena. This is something Colombian English language teachers should be made aware of by developing an on-going poststructuralist reflection (Kramsch, 2009) or criticality (Byram, 2009, 2012a) necessary to understand any model's reach and limitations. Structural stances should not be set aside or overlooked because they may work as a starting phase to toward IELT (Byram, 1997). Teachers, however, should be made explicit what structural and post-structural instances mean and imply in ELT. In this way, it would be possible to progress from what teachers know and feel confident with to anti-essential approaches.

For the aims of this research, the fact of becoming an independent intercultural speaker is not based on van Ek's (1980, p. 95) idea of "native-like command", "full command" and "adequacy"; but rather, as Byram (1997, p. 78) maintains, "a threshold for ICC will be defined for each context and will not be an interim attainment, a stage on the way to a goal, but rather the goal itself, i.e. the ability to function as an intercultural speaker". Ros i Solé (2013, p. 335) expands the term "intercultural speaker" to a "cosmopolitan speaker", or mediator, who can ultimately develop into an intercultural citizen (Guilherme, 2002).

Findings suggest that participants see in Byram's model a plausible, familiar guideline (PIT6, 21) they can adhere to as a start. Teachers' lack of a conceptual background for IELT can take advantage of the descriptive model, and of the clear way to approach the different ICC dimensions and their interrelation in the language classroom. Because communicative language teaching is taken as a major reference for teachers, explorations of Byram's (1997) model can be perceived as an advancement if ICC is seen as a continuation in the continuum

of communicative approaches.

## **7.2. Other components contributing to the development of a model**

Besides Byram's core ideas, participant teachers provided other data addressing the potential components of a model or guidelines to teach IELTS in the Colombian context. The most salient aspects teachers considered were *reflexivity* and *critical thinking skills* to advance towards more global ELT goals (see Chapter 2, section 2.5). In addition, two specific values were made relevant as part of teachers' desirable intercultural attitudes or *Savoir-être*: fraternity, which has not been highlighted in other research, models or proposals (e.g., Byram, 1997, 2008; Deardorff, 2009), and solidarity that has also been considered by Byram's (2008) intercultural citizenship framework within the affective and moral attitudes of political education. This implies that, from an ICC perspective, solidarity as a value constitutes part of the evaluative orientation (Byram, 2008, p. 179) represented in the concept of critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*). This evaluative orientation proposes some affective/moral attitudes such as "valorisation of mutuality, co-operation, trust and solidarity and the struggle against racism, prejudices and discrimination." (Byram, 2008, p. 180). In the end, participant teachers in my research demonstrated their incipient construction of knowledge about IELTS and began to envisage themselves as an active part of a larger community and maybe as prospective citizens of the world.

### **7.2.1. Critical thinking**

Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of active and skilful conceptualization. According to Ennis (2002, 2011), critical thinking is reasonable and



reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do. It is process of applying, analysing, synthesizing or evaluating of information obtained or created with the help of observation, experience, reflection, consideration and communication (Martincová & Lukešová, 2015). It is based on universal values such as: clarity, accuracy, consistency, relevance, persuasiveness, depth, width and justice thinking (Scriven & Paul, 1987; Ennis, 2002; Pessoa & De Urzêda Freitas, 2012).

The participants who discussed a potential ICC teaching strategy advocated for the importance of developing critical thinking skills that would, in turn, lead to reflective teaching transcending the superficial aspects of cultures (PIT21, 22, 25). A shift would take place towards more in-depth and thoughtful insights of ICC development. The following perception on this issue summarises the opinions on the topic:

*Implementar estrategias de pensamiento crítico transversales a todo el currículo podría ayudar a establecer competencias interculturales en la enseñanza del inglés por la criticidad que ofrece (PIT17).*

Implementing critical thinking strategies cross-curricularly could help establish ICC in ELT due to the criticality they entail.

Despite my probing to try and uncover participants' understanding of *critical thinking*, only a little amount of information emerged: “*el pensamiento crítico es pensamiento de calidad para evitar juicios irresponsables*” (PIT6: critical thinking is quality thinking to avoid irresponsible judgements), and “*todo tipo de pensamiento se construye sobre presunciones y puntos de vista; por esta razón, hay que aceptar que no es lo único ni lo verdadero*” (PIT21: all thinking is made up of assumptions and undertaken from a specific viewpoint; for this reason, one has to accept that they are not the only one, nor are they the truth). The relative vagueness in terms of the understanding of critical thinking leads to contemplate Guilherme's (2002, p.

177) appraisal on the definition of «critical» with respect to teaching and learning a foreign culture, and how this has remained “within a domain taken-for- granted among researchers, policy makers, and teachers.”

The participants’ ideas are strongly endorsed by Paul & Elder (2003, 2007, 2008) who have studied critical thinking closely and whose ideas are briefly addressed here in order to show the factual relationship between ICC development and critical thinking. For example, they examine premises guiding reasoning, which includes assumptions and viewpoints (other elements include: purpose, problem solving, inference and interpretations, implications and consequences, among others (see Figure 4) with universal intellectual standards that should be applied to thinking to ensure its quality (e.g., clarity, relevance, and fairness, aspects that are important in developing ICC). Important shared questions that should be considered are the following: “Are we considering all relevant viewpoints in good faith? Are we distorting some information to maintain our biased perspective? Are we more concerned about our vested interests than the common good?” (Paul & Elder, 2008, p. 7).

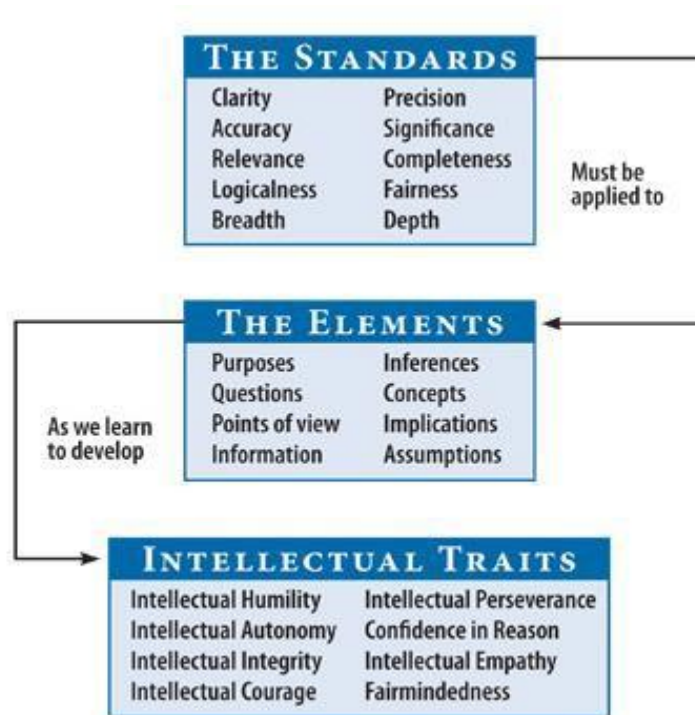


Figure 4. Paul & Elder's model of critical thinking. The foundation of Critical Thinking (<http://www.criticalthinking.org>)

Critical thinking may also contribute to the vision of critical societies by encouraging a multi-cultural worldview, open-mindedness, intellectual empathy, etc. (Paul & Elder, 2008, p. 23). These may all be components that contribute to intercultural thinking and to ICC development (Byram, 1997, 2012b, 2014; Guilherme, 2002; Porto & Byram, 2015). To illustrate, the following quotation from Paul and Elder is a description of a critical thinking standard relevant to intercultural thinking and to developing ICC in the language classroom:

“Critical thinkers recognize that there are many potential sources for any particular point of view: time, culture, religion, gender, discipline, profession, peer group, economic interest, emotional state, social role, or age group—to name a few. For example, we can look at the world from:

- a point in time (16th, 17th, 18th, 19th century)
- a culture (Western, Eastern, South American, Japanese, Turkish, French)
- a religion (Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, Jewish)
- a gender (male, female, homosexual, heterosexual)
- a profession (lawyer, teacher, ...)

- a discipline (biological, chemical, geological, astronomical, historical, sociological, philosophical, anthropological, literary, artistic, musical, dance, poetic, medical, nursing, sport)
- a peer group
- an economic interest
- an emotional state
- an age group

Students who think critically are aware of the fact that anyone's viewpoint, at any given time, reflects some combination of these dimensions." (Paul & Elder, 2008, p. 24).

As can be observed, this specific standard regarding "Points of View and Frames of Reference" (Paul & Elder, 2008, p. 23. See also figure 2) is for students who are able to think critically so that they can recognise that all thinking occurs within the context of some point of view: "To reason justifiably through an issue, you must identify points of view relevant to the issue and enter them empathically", which is compatible with *savoir-être* intercultural attitudes and which entail readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own (Byram, 1997). In this way, critical thinking may become a tool to help individuals minimise prejudices and stereotypes, just as ICC also do. In the end, critical reflection becomes a powerful tool on the journey towards achieving ICC (McKinnon, 2012).

Martincová & Lukešová (2015) demonstrated in their recent study devoted to the topic of critical thinking as a tool for managing intercultural conflicts the relation between the two. Regarding the elements shared by ICC and critical thinking as connected vessels, it can be said that they critically evaluate the complex and often "invisible" social complexity; understand the world in context; are able to assess the situation from more than one perspective; and recognise prejudices and negative stereotypes that prevent an adequate and useful grasp of social problems.

Last, developing critical thinkers is central to the mission of all educational institutions

and so should ICC education. Learning critically and fair-mindedly ensures that individuals not only master a determined knowledge but also become effective citizens who are capable of reasoning ethically and acting for the public good (Paul & Elder, 2008). Concomitantly, intercultural language teaching and learning foster abilities which are crucial in intercultural citizenship education, namely comparative interpretation, consciousness-raising, reflection, critical thinking and critical reflexivity (Byram, 1997, 2001; Porto, 2014)

### **7.2.2 Reflection and reflective teaching in the language classroom**

The third and final emerging concept was *reflection* (see Chapter 3, section 3.6.5). Participant teachers in this research (PPT3, PIT6, 7, 8, 21) advocated for a reflective teaching practice as a key aspect to foster permanent teaching self-assessment growth:

*“Si los profesores somos reflexivos y críticos frente a nuestras prácticas docentes, se hace más sencillo identificar y reconocer la necesidad de un cambio pedagógico que promueva visiones de la enseñanza de lengua más moderna. (PIT6)”*

If we teachers are more reflective and critical practitioners in the face of our teaching practices, identifying and acknowledging the need for a pedagogical change becomes simpler to promote new views on the teaching of languages.

Reflection and reflective practice plays a fundamental role when developing ICC in language teaching, and it cannot actually be separated from critical thinking. Nieto (2002, p. 7) portrays how the focus on reflective questions invites people to consider different options, “to question taken-for-granted truths, and to become more critical thinkers.” According to Bolton (2005, p. 3), a *reflective practice*:

gives strategies to bring things out into the open, and frame appropriate and searching questions never asked before [...] It challenges assumptions,

ideological illusions, damaging social and cultural biases, inequalities, and questions personal behaviours which perhaps silence the voices of others or otherwise marginalise them.

Teachers who are informed of the nature of their teaching are able to reflect upon their stage of professional growth and what aspects of their teaching they need to modify. *Critical reflection* as to prompt a deeper understanding of teaching is seen as an on-going process “enables teachers to feel more confident in trying different options and assessing their effects on teaching” (Richards & Lockhart, 2007, p. 4) as this research intends Colombian English language teachers to think of implementing IELTS. Byram, Gribkova, and Starkey (2002, p. 34) had already established a direct relationship between reflection and the intercultural dimension in language teaching in the way this research sees it:

What language teachers need for the intercultural dimension is not more knowledge of other countries and cultures, but skills in promoting an atmosphere in the classroom which allows learners to take risks in their thinking and feeling. Such skills are best developed in practice and in reflection on experience. They may find common ground in this with teachers of other subjects and/or in taking part themselves in learning experiences which involve risk and reflection.

In this section, findings about critical thinking and reflective teaching show the importance of these twinned concepts as intrinsically linked to English language teacher’ demands on language education quality and to IELTS assets of conscious reflexivity and responsible criticality. These terms are also coherent with previous ones in national and international research (Cárdenas, 2009; British Council, 2015; Sánchez-Jabba, 2012, 2013; Usma, 2009) detailing that Colombian language teachers have repeatedly expressed their need

to become “reflective practitioners” (e.g., González, 2003, p. 158) and critical reflective thinkers (Richards, 1998) who are able to motivate learners to engage in a dynamic learning processes (González, Montoya & Sierra, 2002). The two concepts in action, critical thinking and reflective teaching practice, may contribute to the reflection on teachers’ own ELT praxis, and to challenge cultural assumptions and experiences. Criticality and critical thinking are inner constituents of *critical cultural awareness*, or knowing to engage, which is embedded in political education and propounds for responsible judgment and evaluations of the own and others’ culture.

The three theoretical constructs advocated by the participants in this study—Byram’s *Savoirs* and *Savoir Comprendre*, as well as critical thinking and reflective teaching practice (Byram, 2000b)—are part of an advancement towards seeing English language teaching as a dynamic discipline that is moving towards more flexible approaches beyond the communicative approach. Shifting from the concept of ideal communication with native speakers to becoming citizens of the world should lead English language teaching to become grounded on systematic reflective teaching practices that permits teachers to undertake self-analysis to be able to approach, understand, maintain or change courses of action that they choose (Archer 2010; Ryan, 2015). As Fandiño (2013, p. 93) claims, “reflective teaching can strengthen pedagogical practice and favour strategies for critical reflection and change”, which may include some of the major goals of intercultural English language teaching related to understanding, reflection, judging and criticising.

This emerging triad (the core of the model. See Figure 5)—Byram’s postulates on ICC, critical thinking and reflective teaching practice—addresses how some teachers are not unaware of the importance of making ELT more critical by involving culture and ICC. Some teachers acknowledged the need for constant reflection to reshape their teaching praxis, but

they were also aware of their conceptual voids with regard to culture and IELT. Based on this line of thought, reflective teaching seems to appear as something desired that is embroidered with criticality. This triad serves as the ground for the model of IELT that will be discussed in the conclusion chapter and is at the core of the model itself. As I see it, critical thinking skills are implicit in ICC and can contribute towards IELT. This idea was also shared by one participant who stated that: “*si hay nivel crítico y capacidad de reflexión, se puede avanzar hacia una enseñanza más abierta e integral*” (PIT21: If there is a critical level and capacity for reflection, it is possible to advance towards more open, integrative teaching).

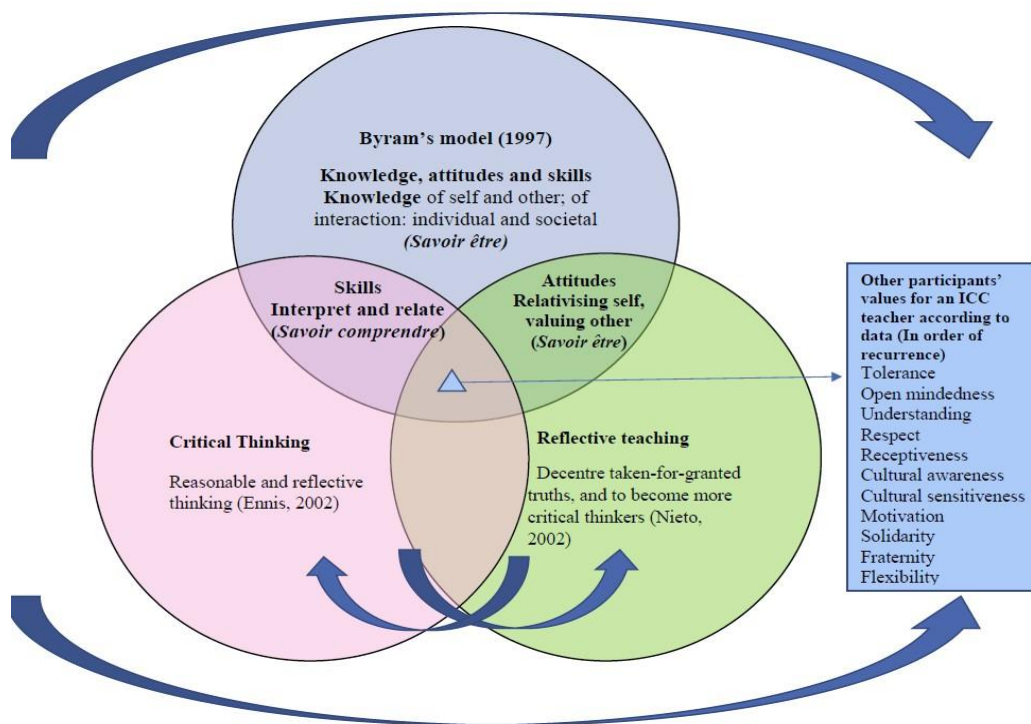


Figure 5. My interpretation of the interrelation among ICC, Critical Thinking, and Reflective Teaching according to data.

### 7.2.3. The values of fraternity and solidarity

As mentioned above, two values mentioned by participant teachers as important qualities in intercultural attitudes or *Savoir-être* were fraternity and solidarity. These values



are particularly significant for Colombian collective society in which the group, and not the individual, is at the core of social relationships. The solidarity of the individuals is addressed as a fundamental principle in the Colombian Constitution (1991, Art. 1) and advocates for unity among individuals with a common interest and mutual support within a group (Hoyos, 2004). The principle of solidarity reinforces the group's welfare and can be found in popular sayings such as "Hoy por ti; mañana por mí" ("You scratch my back, and I will scratch yours."). Even though solidarity has not frequently been mentioned in other models of ICC (e.g., Byram, 1007; Deardorff, 2009; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009), it is well acknowledged by international organizations as UNESCO, which in one of its principles advocates that "[i]ntercultural education provides all learners with cultural knowledge, attitudes and skills that enable them to contribute to respect, understanding and *solidarity among individuals*, ethnic, social, cultural and religious groups and nations". (2013, p. 27 - italics added).

Concomitantly, fraternity, or bonds of brotherhood, friendship and support, was also identified as an important characteristic for the intercultural teacher. These two values together, coming from participants' opinions, highlight the importance of ICC because they are collective values that in their very nature emphasise the relationships between groups of individuals in need of strategies for their mutual understanding, appreciation and permanent dialogue. Seen from this perspective, fraternity and solidarity could represent a Colombian, or a Latin American contribution to the intercultural attitudes or *Savoir-être* English language teachers should develop.

To understand the triad above (see Figure 5), findings suggest that participants' concerns on IELTS focus on what an ICC English language teacher should develop themselves, and then help develop in their language learners: ICC knowledge, attitudes and skills within

a framework of reflexivity and criticality. Participants also emphasise teachers' values as very important (placed at the core) for this renewed professional identity' (e.g. tolerance, respect, solidarity. See Chapter 6, section 6.3.1). Findings also suggest the importance to advance towards IELT departing from what is familiar to teachers (some aspects of Byram's ICC model and issues on critical thinking and reflective teaching practices) to then continue the exploration of teaching interculturality, which needs English language teachers have professional scaffolding and feedback.

### **7.3. A closer look to the model**

Based on the different characteristics that participants have in the ELT field, their beliefs, knowledge and queries on the topic of interculturalising IELT, and the research questions and objectives, the model should necessarily adhere to the following characteristics:

1. A data-driven model that comes from participant teachers' opinions on culture and interculturality.
2. A plain model that is easy to understand and operationalize by teachers who are for the first time approaching the issue of interculturalising ELT. It should not, in my view, contain many specialised concepts that may discourage teachers in their initial attempt.
3. A model that recognises a departing stance from culture teaching at any level and should be located on the wide spectrum of culture and language instruction.
4. A model that promotes reflection as to how teaching practices and the concept of culture should evolve from structural to more constructivist, anti-essentialist standpoints.
5. A model that leads to a process of increasing intercultural sensitivity, not something

that works as an inventory to determine presence-absence relationships (e.g., Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003; Bennett & Bennett, 2004), but as breakthrough-in-progression, which underscores the natural relationship of culture teaching with interculturalising views and competences in ELT.

6. A model that capitalises upon English language teachers' previous knowledge and experiences. In this case, Byram's proposal with the triad knowledge-skills-attitudes may serve as a starting reference, provided that any criticism is recognised, and any issues resolved.
7. A model the core of which includes critical cultural awareness (CCA) due to its consolidation of some of Byram's postulations combined with reflective teaching practices and higher order thinking skills. This was advocated by participant teachers in what they considered to be a need to advance ELT.
8. A model that points to *maturity* in the progression and settlement of *savoirs*, regardless of teachers' initial position on the culture teaching continuum. In this sense, an idea of individual development and self-guided growth is fundamental.
9. A model for which the stage of maturity may be congruent with the development of an *intercultural mediator*. This is a concept that is more preferable than the "intercultural speaker" (Byram, 1997) in order to avoid misunderstandings in terms of a preferred linguistic skill.
10. A non-prescriptive model, although this may sound paradoxical, that acknowledges its transitory validity and continuous construction of concepts. It can be seen as a guideline or a thinking-and-reflecting tool for English language teachers to find their own ways to access intercultural English language teaching.

Based on these characteristics, compositional models are useful here in defining the basic scope of ICC, and, according to Spitzberg and Changnon (2009, p. 10), they represent “probable traits, characteristics, and skills supposed to be productive or constitutive of competent interaction.” Along with traits from compositional models, aspects from developmental models also become relevant. Developmental models are built under the assumption that competence evolves over time, and these models “provide stages of progression or maturity” that entail relationships that can become more competent through on-going interaction (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009, p. 10, 21). Similarly, the processual nature of developing ICC is highlighted by developmental proposals, as “intercultural competence cannot be acquired in a short space of time or in one module. It is not a naturally occurring phenomenon but **a lifelong process** which needs to be addressed explicitly in learning and teaching” (The author’s emphasis. McKinnon, 2012, paragraph 4).

As national research suggests (Álvarez, 2014), it is not inaccurate to say Colombian English language teachers are in their infancy of ICC language teaching, and evolving towards an ICC “maturity” appears to be a feasible route to take. King and Baxter Magolda’s (2005) Developmental Model of Intercultural Maturity purports that intercultural competence unfolds from an initial to more mature stages. The issue here is that teachers understand that besides teaching English, there are different paths to become intercultural and develop solid intercultural views. Thus, achieving ICC maturity involves time, and the processes of becoming intercultural not only depends upon external factors, but also on teachers’ internal intrinsic aspects relating to their autonomy, disposition and personality. ICC maturity can allow teachers to perceive, through self-evaluation and a self-monitoring process (reflective practice), how close or distant they are from advancing towards ICC. Achieving ICC maturity does not have to do with an age or language proficiency level, but rather it involves

professional maturation, reflective critical praxis, capitalizing on experience and “self-authorship” (Kegan, 1994, p. 185).

Findings elucidate that despite criticism on Byram’s model (e.g., Belz, 2007; Kramsch, 2009; Miike, 2003) already discussed, it is of particular value to my research because *critical cultural awareness* as a goal represents an inclusive aim encompassing reflection, criticality and maturity in ICC—the triad that has emerged from teachers’ views and assumptions. CCA demands that teachers are reflective practitioners, in a permanent enquiry process that encourages discovery and informed judgment (Byram, 1997; Byram & Guilherme, 2000; Moore, 2006). These are all aspects that may contribute to the critical dimension that is necessary to rethink ELT in Colombia.

#### **7.4. Concluding the chapter**

This chapter is the last section of the research findings, but its purpose is different. It is a combination of analysis of emerging data that helped to build an IELT model for Colombian English language teachers and grounded in theory that drew on three theoretical constructs: Byram’s ICC (1997) model, critical thinking and reflective teaching. The chapter aimed to answer the research question “Which principles could be helpful in developing an IELT model in Colombia? The proposed model is conceived as an on-going continuum of developmental thinking that tried to define ICC by considering the relationship between the elements of the triad (see Figure 5). The purpose was to find the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to attain gradual maturity in CCA, which would then aid to lead to developments of ICC and IELT.

The proposed model tries to unlock teachers’ potentials in the language and culture teaching spectrum. Teachers tend to teach the cultural, which privileges the teaching of culture

as a knowledge of history, traditions and institutions. For this reason, to help them advance towards an IELTS approach, the components of Byram's (1997) ICC model were examined, vis-à-vis what teachers already know (although superficially) about it. The descriptive nature of this ICC model offers strong foundations for teachers' co-construction of their own ICC learning path. Other aspects to draw from the model were participant teachers' claims and critiques that addressed the lack of critical, reflective teaching practices arising from foreign language pre-service and in-service teaching programmes. From these claims, critical thinking and reflective practice in the teaching profession were introduced in my proposal as major forces to promote more empowered, creative ELT. Similarly, teachers claimed the lack of directions or standards such as CEFR or ACFTL, that serve as collective guidelines and generate active academic debate in the ELT community, which is conducive to research and the production of applied knowledge.

## **Chapter 8**

### **Conclusions**

This final chapter presents the conclusions of the study. Next, a summary of the study is presented (8.1), the research questions are revisited and answered (8.2) and subsequently, I explore the theoretical, methodological, educational and pedagogical implications of the investigation (8.3), followed by a discussion of the study's limitations and possible directions for future research (8.4).

#### **8.1. Summary of the study**

This exploratory interpretive study aimed to describe and make sense of teachers' current views and EFL practices in the classroom. A qualitative inquiry strategy from a social constructionist perspective was employed in which semi-structured interviewing and classroom observations were the main methods for data collection. Eventually, 25 participants were involved in the research, which provided rich data for a thematic analysis. To achieve the aim of this research, I sought an understanding of Colombian EFL teachers' current thinking in relation to the culture and its relationship with ELT (Chapter 5). I also explored interculturality, ICC and IELT in order to be able to include more global-oriented IELT approaches that would, in turn, lead to intercultural dialogue (Ganesh & Holmes, 2011; Crosbie, 2014; Holmes, 2014) and the construction of a global/ intercultural citizenship (Guilherme, 2002; Byram, 2006, 2010a; Porto & Byram, 2015) (Chapter 6). Finally, I proposed of a guiding model to scaffold language teachers' efforts towards the interculturalisation of ELT (Chapter 7).

This research was undertaken based on the underpinning assumption that interculturalising English language teaching in Colombia may be beneficial to foster critical approaches towards the teaching and learning of English in Colombia. As a result, this may promote fundamental advancements in the teaching of English and move the country on towards more updated, global goals in IELTS. As such, it was necessary to investigate the knowledge of teachers' current EFL practices in the classroom and their own demonstrations of interculturality in this context to provide a comprehensive understanding of current English language teaching in Colombia, including teachers' experiences and perspectives on culture and interculturality.

Since intercultural competence is not a naturally occurring phenomenon, educators must intentionally address this in the foreign language classroom as well as within other courses. (Deardorff, 2011). Research findings answered the umbrella research question, which was **how do Colombian English language teachers' current ELT practices, beliefs, and professional self-concepts relate to an envisaged profile of the intercultural English language teacher?** The findings suggest that teachers—particularly those who feel closer to culture teaching—feel positively disposed to IELTS. Some teachers conceptually understand IELTS objectives related to cultural understanding, dialogue and tolerance, but their practices frequently shift towards culture teaching from communicative teaching approaches. As a result, understanding of IELTS seems enlarged objectives of culture teaching or display a continuum of language and culture teaching (see section 6.1 in this chapter); this may suggest that teachers are moving towards becoming a foreign language and intercultural competence (FL&IC) teacher as Sercu and colleagues (2005) advocate, but at present their IELTS profile is a work in progress. Teachers showed, to some degree, manifestations of IELTS, but their



teaching profile that does not meet all the expectations pertaining to the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are all desirable in the foreign language intercultural competence teacher. Some individual teachers are already closer to the desired FL&IC teacher profile due to their individual biographies or postgraduate experiences (e.g., stays abroad, postgraduate studies in Colombia and abroad. See Chapters 5 and 6, sections 5.2 and 6.4). However, participants often struggle to advance towards becoming intercultural in their English language teaching as a result of conceptual limitations and a lack of standards or clear guidelines on how to proceed (see Chapter 6, section 6.3.2). At present, some teachers either continue with the CLT approach in which they are English language instructors, or their teaching practice ranges within the continuum of culture-and-language teaching; the latter could be cautiously understood as the early stages of ICC teaching (see Chapter 7, section 7.1.2)

Some other major findings demonstrate that the concept of culture on which teachers might base their IELT approaches ranges from structural definitions of culture to some anti-essentialist definitions. Notwithstanding, these conceptions are primarily essentialist, placing culture as an add-on to language teaching. In this way, interculturality and IELT tends to develop within this limited perspective of culture and stays at the level of teachers' attitudes and knowledge (as primarily knowledge) when they try to teach interculturally. As a result, there is no such thing as an IELT consolidated teaching profile, as demonstrated in studies by Sercu *et al.* (2005) and Israelsson (2016), but instead incipient attempts to create one, which brings its own tensions and difficulties.

Further analysis showed that knowledge-based culture teaching (e.g., lecturing, sharing anecdotal experiences, etc.) and the compare-contrast paradigm (Piątkowska, 2015) of culture teaching from CLT are replicated in teachers' efforts to teach interculturally (see Chapter 6, section 6.3.1). Teachers demonstrated a lack of knowledge on how to advance and

felt that they were given lack of direction and no support to be able to fulfil intercultural goals (see Chapter 6, section 6.3.2). In the end, arising from participants' appraisals on what is needed to move forward towards IELTS, I proposed a tripartite model which integrates Byram's descriptive model with postulations from reflective teaching practices and critical thinking skills in a synergic relationship that involves teachers being able to gradually and conscientiously develop mature ICC awareness and competence (Byram, 2012a). (for the foundations of the model see Chapter 7, sections 7.1, 7.2, and 7.3. For the model itself see this Chapter 8, section 8.3)

## **8.2. Answering the research questions**

The key findings related to the research questions can be summarized as follows:

*Answer to RQ1. What are Colombian English language teachers' conceptions and beliefs about teaching language and culture in the English language classroom?*

The data analysis in Chapter 5 suggests that Colombian English language teachers consider integrating culture in their English language lessons important. They also demonstrated their willingness to teach culture and advocated that language and culture can never be separated (as evidenced in other studies, e.g., Brown, 1994; Jiang, 2000; Gao, 2006; Naveel, Kantara & Cserző, 2016); however, this generalized belief encountered an issue as there is a difference between what they think and perceive of culture and culture teaching and how they actually tackle the issue in the classroom. They also generally see culture as something that supports English teaching (Luk, 2012; Nguyen, Harvey & Grant, 2016); however, they see it as an entity that should be taught separately.

Moreover, few teachers implement the teaching of culture as a regular and planned practice. Intuitive and occasional cultural content seemed to predominate, usually based on

traditional, structural definitions of culture and culture knowledge accumulation perpetuated by CLT. Culture teaching in the foreign language classroom is perceived by some participants as mere content, aspects that are taken-for-granted, or optional activities since the concept is not seen as a primary goal for nationwide EFL teaching. The findings demonstrated that teachers infrequently fostered cultural awareness by trying to motivate learners to re-evaluate dynamic and internal perceptions of culture. To summarise, superficial aspects of culture were taught over critical approaches, although attempts to motivate conscious cultural awareness were seldom present in the classrooms.

Along similar lines, culture teaching was overwhelmingly perceived as something subordinate to language teaching that contributed to learners' language learning within CLT. Consequently, language and culture were definitively assumed as separate and culture teaching was seen as an add-on to language teaching. Findings showed that culture teaching involved in EFL classes depends on students' English proficiency and their overall academic performance, which is a reflection of their cognitive skills and acquisition ability. This means that culture teaching is often reserved for high levels or conversational levels of EFL courses, which reinforces the relationship between language learners' cognition and culture as a complex topic of study the idea of culture as a content component (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013).

***RQ2. What are Colombian English language teachers' conceptions and beliefs about the term "interculturality" and "intercultural language teaching"?***

The findings reported in Chapter 6 show that participant teachers perceived interculturality and intercultural foreign language teaching as interesting, challenging, complex, and some of

them, a distant concept to EFL teaching. Understandings of interculturality and intercultural EL teaching were limited and, generally speaking, teachers' unfamiliarity with the concepts made them perceive it as a challenging experience that needed more exploration in order to be fully grasped and practiced in the classroom. Several teachers who were more versed with the concept did not draw on a definition but tended to provide general characteristics of an ICC approach to teaching the L2 (e.g., tolerance, understanding of other cultures). Others tried to or offer definitions that tended to equate interculturality with other concepts such as culture, multiculturalism (Witte & Harden, 2011; Boyé, 2016), assimilation and acculturation (Byram *et al.*, 1994, 2010b).

A small group of participants provided more articulated conceptions of interculturality and ICC based on the works of Mike Byram and Alvino Fantini, or based on personal biographies and on their own postgraduate experiences. Furthermore, a closer look at the data indicated that participants shared a positive attitude towards IELT, which was understood as positive disposition to move forward toward more critical language and culture teaching, no matter the intensity and depth in English language teaching lessons.

Teachers' one key assumption was that advancements towards IELT could not be made possible without a clear understanding of how to move forward from the cultural to the intercultural. Because this knowledge is currently infrequent in language teacher education and, teaching culture (when it happens) based on traditional views and essentialist definitions, that is devoted to accumulating knowledge-based facts of culture, will continue to predominate. This style of culture teaching that is deeply embedded in communicative ELT approaches perpetuates as participant teachers want to advance towards IELT but lack the knowledge and strategies to be able to do so. As such, they reach a conceptual and pedagogical bottleneck that needs systematic instruction to be alleviated: "the question lingers as to how

such cultural teaching should and could most effectively occur at the classroom level” (Dema & Moeller, 2012, p. 76), and in teacher education programmes in Colombia, as this is one of teachers’ major concern (see Chapter 6, section 6.3.2).

Teachers also shared some self-experienced, intercultural critical events through which they deduced the importance of more reflection within the English language classrooms (see Chapter 6, section 6.2.1). This could be seen as the missing piece of the jigsaw, which each person (participants in the critical event) would approach according to their cultural backgrounds and experiences. This situation strongly endorses the concept that, in order to make the most of intercultural encounters and critical events related to EFL as well as understanding how to build Third Spaces (Kramsch, 1993; Lo Bianco *et al.*; 1999; Feng, 2009), communication, negotiation and dialogue should be part of the foreign language teacher education curricula through ICC development. Participants manifested their reactions to emotional experiences that contributed to unsuccessful, frustrating or unfortunate episodes, and, as such, they found that preparing their EFL learners to face these intercultural communication challenges by developing IELT in their lessons was a valuable lesson. Based on their own experiences, they understood how IELT can contribute to coping with diversity and communication in unpredictable situations in which using English can help build Third spaces of dialogue and negotiation.

***RQ3. Do teachers include interculturality in their teaching practices? If so, in what ways?***

Participant teachers did not include, systematically or consciously, intercultural teaching practices in their English language lessons. Sometimes, intercultural ELT efforts turned back into culture teaching based on CLT approaches. However, as can be seen in the interviews, a

progression from a *knowledge-based approach* to a *contrastive approach* (Piątkowska, 2015) was revealed as teachers tried to implement culture activities in their English language lessons. Contrastive approaches between cultures predominated, particularly in the search for differentiation. Imparting factual knowledge about cultures from teachers' and learners' oral presentations was also frequent. In terms of advancements, according to Piątkowska (2015), the next step might be moving forward towards more holistic ethnographic approaches to culture that prompt negotiation of language and cultural meanings or an *ICC approach* to foreign language teaching (Roberts, 2003; Holmes & O'Neill, 2012). Of course, as teachers have repeatedly claimed, both guided instruction and prompting ICC learning opportunities are necessary to bring about the desired shift. A series of initiatives devoted to culture teaching (e.g., cultural projects, foreign guest tutors) could cautiously serve as a springboard towards more robust ICC teaching practices. This is because some teachers just stay in the sphere of the anecdotal, evident, and observable, but these spheres have the potential for deeper reflection and cultural analysis to bolster ICC development.

***RQ4. Are teachers prepared and willing to adopt an intercultural approach to English language teaching? If so, how?***

Teachers' responses that were analysed in Chapter 5 showed strong support for the idea that EFL Colombian teachers positively view IELT, and this generally led to a certain degree of willingness to adopt intercultural approaches in ELT (Sercu *et al.*, 2005; Yuen, 2010), provided there was the necessary support and time to achieve a successful gradual process. Few teachers felt reluctant to move away from CLT towards more holistic approaches to ELT as their teaching comfort zone was being challenged. In the end, however, many of them identified the need to reconsider how English is being taught in light of more global

educational goals and challenges. Furthermore, some EFL teachers felt prepared to adopt an intercultural approach due to direct experiences and personal biographies and as part of their postgraduate programmes. The remaining participants declared having some ideas but felt that they were not actually prepared to teach English interculturally. However, they saw a possibility to grow professionally and become internationally competitive in intercultural approaches to ELT, although they seldom reflected on their inner transformations, teaching identities or the implications of becoming intercultural themselves.

Last, a lack of readiness was mainly attributed to lackadaisical teacher education and language policy making that does not accommodate the resources to provide conceptual knowledge about interculturality and IELT (Pajak-Wazna, 2013). To reiterate, setting national standards with regard to culture, interculturality and IELT, and updating pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes to help teachers become interculturally aware and better-trained may be beneficial if they were established in the English language teacher education curricula (e.g., Holmes & O’Neill, 2012; Jackson, 2014). This may importantly contribute to bridging the gap between the cultural and the intercultural in Colombian ELT.

***RQ5. Which principles could be helpful in developing an IELT model in Colombia?***

The evidence revealed and explained in Chapter 7 determined three emerging core concepts that constitute a potential proposal to help teachers’ co-construction of a framework to be able to advance towards IELT. These were: 1) some components of Byram’s (1997) ICC descriptive model, to which participant teachers added two fundamental values to the *Savoir-être*: fraternity and solidarity; 2) critical thinking principles, and 3) reflective teaching practice to bolster the teaching of English and promotion of an IELT. Teachers also highlighted their attitudes and values, some of which are contained in Byram’s (1997) model, such as open

mindedness, tolerance towards other cultures, respect and receptiveness towards diversity. In the same way, participant teachers emphasised the importance of *fraternity* and *solidarity* that are important assets for collective societies like Colombia and are not present in other models (e.g. Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2009; Liddicoat, 2004, 2014). These values privilege union and group welfare, which in turn, raise issues on intercultural dialogue and mediation. Because ICC is integrated with learning to know, to do, and to be, participants emphasised intercultural attitudes or *Savoir-être* as a self-transformation to interacting with cultural others. Learning to be, or *Savoir-être* helps provide “the reflective step of thinking about one’s social self as having a place in the global world” (UNESCO, 2013, p. 16). This awareness implies the reflective sphere teachers also advocate for advancing towards IELT. A culture of peace relies upon intercultural dialogue, as well as conflict prevention and resolution, and so UNESCO is committed to promoting intercultural competences, making these common competences to be studied, taught, and promoted not only at a theoretical level but as a way to approach a wide variety of diverse situations in daily life. These all are components that contribute to intercultural thinking and to IC development (Byram, 1997, 2012, 2014; Guilherme, 2000, 2002; Porto & Byram, 2015).

Because participants were concerned about having a lack of knowledge of and expertise with IC development, Spitzberg and Changnon’s (2009) conceptualizations regarding a compositional and developmental model as something complementary to aid teachers’ increasing familiarity with ICC, which is undertaken at their own pace and willingness, appeared to be incompatible with teachers’ position. Research outcomes suggest that teachers’ ICC growth can be self-assessed with the idea of ICC maturity in order to establish how they are advancing towards more consolidated intercultural competences (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005).



The findings emerging from this study point to some key characteristics that should be present in a proposed model of IELT in the Colombian ELT context (see Chapter 7, section 7.3): the model should be built on constructivist definitions of culture that underscore reflection and critical thinking at the core of ICC; its simplicity to be understood by teachers recently approaching the issue of interculturalising English language teaching; its flexibility in the continuum of culture-and-language instruction that includes critical cultural awareness (CCA) as a major aim, and last, its cyclical pattern that points to *maturity* in the progression and settlement of aspects of ICC (e.g., Byram's *savoirs*, 1997), regardless of teachers' initial position on the culture teaching continuum. In this sense, the idea of individual development, self-guided growth, learning and change towards transformative action (Jokikokko, 2016) are fundamental to empower teachers' ICC development.

### **8.3. A model of intercultural English Language Teaching**

Drawing on these findings, I present a guiding model to suggest how teachers can advance towards IELT (see Figure 4). This model is inspired in the triadic dimension of Byram's ICC→critical thinking→reflective teaching as explains in chapter 7 (see section 7.2.2 and Figure 5). This cyclical model to approach ICC involves the development of a continuous process of knowledge, attitudes and beliefs, not as isolated instances, but rather as cyclical operations within the language learning spiral process that teachers can revisit in order to reflect on intercultural experiences in or outside the classroom. Convergence with Byram's descriptive model, critical thinking, and reflective teaching practice are embedded in the concept of CCA. With CCA teachers build an open environment of inquiry to discover by themselves the origins of judgments or stereotypes (Byram & Guilherme, 2000). As teachers learn to deconstruct stereotypes and prejudice, they become mature intercultural learners and

mediators ready to share this knowledge in the classroom along with the tasks required for learning the language.

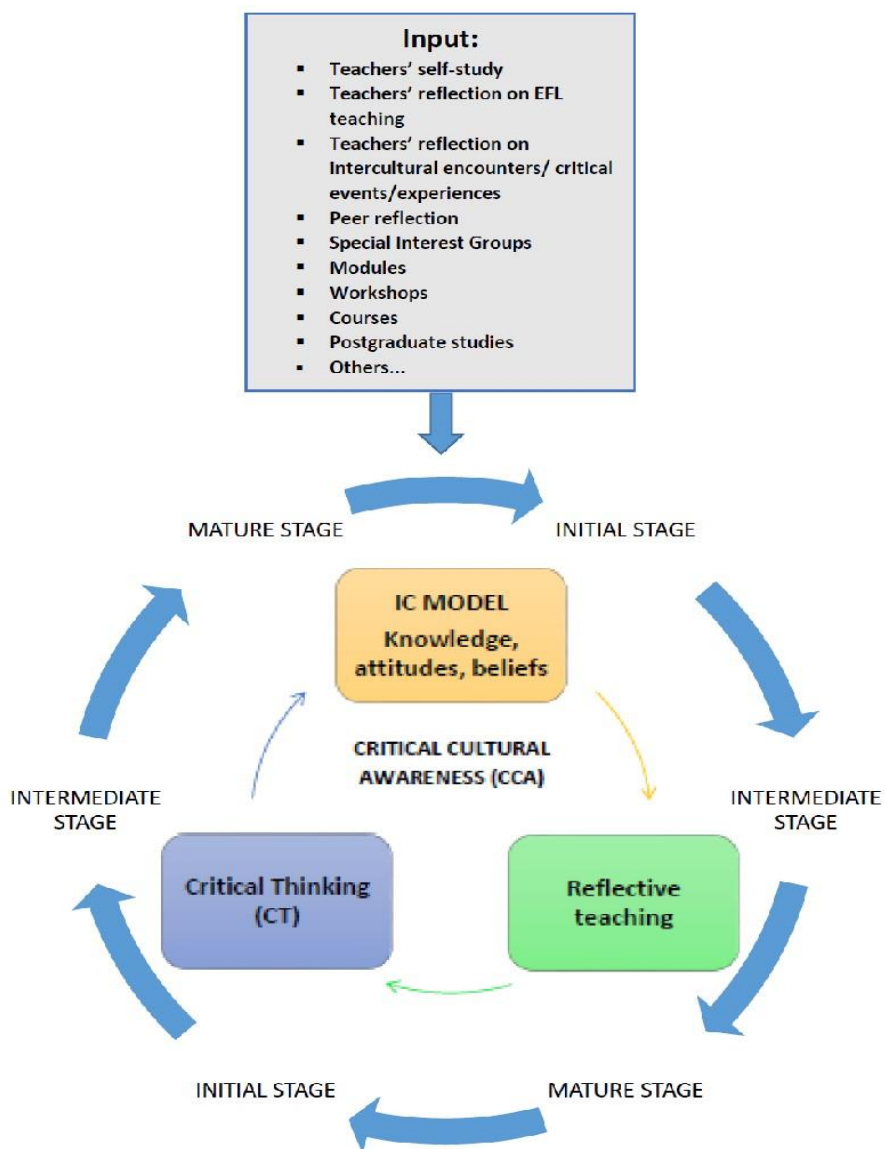


Figure 6. A cyclical model to approach ICC in English language teaching

The double dimension of teacher-as-a-teacher and as a learner will help advance towards ICC maturity when deeper understandings of intercultural dimensions are achieved and teachers' beliefs evolve resulting in a more profound understanding of cultural

manifestations (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006; Nugent & Catalano, 2015). It is important to remember the bidirectional nature of CCA, as noted by both Byram (1997) and Barret (2008), that is, that CCA also entails having a critical awareness of oneself and of one's own cultural situation and values, self-knowledge and self-understanding (not only those of the cultural other). Similarly, when thinking about classroom environments, CCA may occur within real or simulated contexts, such as those encouraged in the ELT classroom, that try to include interactions with individuals of diverse cultural backgrounds and worldviews (Byram, 1997; Guilherme, 2002; Liddicot & Scarino, 2013).

The model proposed here advocates for the gradual development of teachers' self-awareness and internal transformation in the pursuit of ICC (Furstenberg, 2010, 2010b) and demerits the necessity of English language teachers to live abroad to become interculturally competent or have ICC. This means that the rich sense of interculturality is not restricted to the teaching and learning of languages only. Echoing this thought, Jaeger (2001) purports that becoming an intercultural mediator means harmonizing between culturally diverse groups in various contexts, learning by interaction with others and by acquaintance with diverse cultural contexts, as well as being constantly engaged in self-reflection. In other words, for Colombian IELTS teachers, intercultural learning can happen at home, amidst the diverse linguistic and cultural groups that comprise Colombian society.

A first stage that the model should look at is helping teachers become aware that any foundation for an ICC approach should be built on an *anti-essential* or post-structuralist view of culture with strong basis in constructivist thinking (Elsen & St. John, 2007) that sees culture as a constant (re)creation prevailing from the reshaping and renewing of social activities. If culture is seen as “a dynamic process of meaning making” (Elsen & St. John, 2007, p. 25), then competence for intercultural communicators will be about coping with open-ended,

unpredictable processes that enhance understanding and perception of reality. In turn, these types of intercultural encounters will produce interactions that will feed the development of language skills (Witte, 2011). Second, teachers should realize that they have been developing some *savoirs* (e.g., *savoirs*, *savoir comprendre*) and the model should help them move towards the other *savoirs*: *savoir être* or intercultural attitudes, *savoirs apprendre/faire* or developing ethnographic and research skills and *savoir s'engager* or critical cultural awareness.

The model presented in this research should be seen as a dynamic continuum and resembles some aspects of Deardorff's (2006, 2014) Process Model of Intercultural Competence in that teachers are hopefully motivated to always learn, change, evolve, and become transformed with time (Nugent & Catalano, 2014). Circularity and arrows can indicate the freedom and flexibility to transit between categories to achieve a certain *action orientation* that can be understood as the crucial link between interculturality and intercultural citizenship (Guilherme, 2002; Barrett, 2008).

The model also highlights that "maturity" is achieved within a process of multiple revisions of the triad of concepts that, at some point, interrelate and merge. The initial or intermediate stages in some aspects of the *savoirs* do not exclude being mature in some other aspects; growth in a competency does not mean that all processes grow evenly due to teachers' experiences, backgrounds and self-motivations. For this reason, establishment and maturation of ICC happens because time aids teachers to revisit attitudes, knowledge and skills, and they assume the roles of reflective, critical thinkers and English teaching practitioners.

Finally, although not within the scope of this research and somehow premature to think of a follow-up and assessment for this model, evaluation on how teachers' ICC in the Colombian context unfold, develop and grow is essential to be able to move educators towards a deeper understanding of ICC development (Deardorff, 2011). Fantini (2009) suggests that

interviews, (self) observations and portfolios are considered valuable to track ICC developments. As suggested by Holmes and O'Neill (2010), ethnographies and teachers' journals with carefully designed entries and questions to guide those entries, short narratives, focus groups and similar data gathering instruments to collect evidence and encourage self-reporting encompass what Deardorff (2011) and Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) call a multi-method, multi-perspective approach needed to determine ICC teacher development.

#### **8.4. Implications of the study**

This study has gone some way towards enhancing understandings in the field of teaching English in Colombia and how teachers coconstruct their own paths and profile towards intercultural foreign language teaching. Based on their beliefs and assumptions, I have sought to respond to a number of research questions related to how EFL teachers' explorations have led to the current state-of-the-art in terms of interculturality and intercultural English language teaching in their praxis and a definition of their language teaching profile favouring more intercultural approaches. From this qualitative constructivist enquiry process, I now present some emergent theoretical, methodological, educational and pedagogical implications.

##### **8.4.1. Theoretical implications**

Two bodies of literature were particularly enriching for this research, and they created valuable tensions in my understandings on how to approach interculturality and ELT: the constructivist approach to explore the research topic and answer the research questions, and the literature related to culture, ICC and intercultural language teaching and teachers. These theories informed my understandings of my field of study, research objectives and questions. They also served as a benchmark to analyse Colombian ELT and potential IELTS status quo.

### *An ontological position of social constructivism*

Constructivist thinking helped make sense of teachers' understandings of culture, culture teaching and their understandings of the ICC dimension in the teaching of English. This ontological position was in congruence with the dynamic and changing nature of culture and language and culture teaching as well as with the changing realities I was exploring while co-constructing with the teachers' facets of that same reality (Bryman, 2012). I sought to understand and interpret their beliefs, opinions, assumptions and teaching practices as regards culture and IELTS. Knowledge was constructed through a constant state of revision (Schwandt, 2000) and interaction with participants (Bryman, 2012). I reflected on how English language teachers approached, analysed and revisited their teaching praxis and vis-à-vis culture teaching and interculturality. Interpretations of data were based on shared understandings between the language teachers and my own ELT practices and the languages we shared (in this case, English and Spanish) (Schwandt, 2000).

Constructivist views also helped me understand the culture-and-language teaching of English as a lively picture continually being drawn and transformed by teachers and by social actors. Interculturality is, thus, constructivist in nature (Egidiussen Egekvist, Lyngdorf, Du Xiang & Shi, 2016) and implies being aware that there is no one *correct* or *established* way of doing things, but that all behaviours are culturally malleable and variable (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). Within this approach, as a researcher, I reshaped vestiges of positivist thinking into more flexible, constructivist views that helped me understand research is not a black and white process with one to one relationships and delineated findings. Rather, it is a flexible, open quest that takes on its own directions and poses its own challenges (Creswell, 2007).

Constructivist ontology also helped me develop individual research values such as tolerance for data ambiguity and for any unexpected directions in the research. In the end, I realized that this research was my very own intercultural experience. I lived the diverse intercultural encounters with teachers' Otherness and built the Third Spaces of meaning every time a participant was interviewed. Constructivist ontology permitted me, as an insider researcher, to have an inner reflection on the research topic and development. This approach also permitted my active involvement as a researcher in the interpretive inquiry and also prevented me from being excessively confident by delegitimising preconceived truths and settled assumptions: a constructivist approach liberates researchers from their comfort zone, and could help novice researchers explore different research paths from those learnt in traditional research courses.

### ***Theories about culture, interculturality, ICC and intercultural language education***

Theories about culture and language and culture teaching (e.g., Kramsch, 2013; Faulkner *et al.*, 2006; Elsen & St. John, 2007) about interculturality, intercultural education and foreign language education (e.g., Byram, 1997; Byram & Fleming, 2003; Crozet, Liddicoat & Lo Bianco, 1999; Deardorff, 2009; Dervin, 2010, 2016; Guilherme, 2002; Jackson, 2014; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Sercu *et al.*, 2005) provided the empirical support and knowledge necessary to explore Colombian English language teachers' appraisals for the interculturalisation of their teaching practices.

In my research, the cultural dimension of language teaching was addressed. Central findings point to structural definitions of culture and its secondary role in the English language classroom. This is resonant of, for example, Guilherme (2002) and Nguyen, Harvey and Grant (2016) who claim that the teaching of culture in EFL classrooms is not given enough

importance or is often carried out with some lack of seriousness. This research has also drawn on e.g., Byram (2011), (Kramsch, 1993, 2009), Porto and Byram (2015), Nguyen, Harvey and Grant (2016), Risager (1998) and Sercu *et al.* (2005) as an analytical framework to understand the indivisibility of language and culture and the importance of this relationship in the foreign language classroom. Contrary to this, my data unveil that only few participants understand and try this integration. These findings are also congruent with Ryan and Sercu's (2003) research carried out in Mexico, which demonstrated that most participant teachers privileged language teaching over culture teaching.

As regards the intercultural dimension in ELT, this study constitutes a response to Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002), Choudhury (2014), Dervin (2010), Furstenberg (2010, 2010a), Godwin-Jones (2013), Guilherme (2002), Porto (2015), Porto and Byram (2015), among others, who claim that intercultural perspectives have become fundamental to revitalise language teaching and learning in different contexts, and language teachers are important actors in this process (Cheng, 2012; Dervin & Gross, 2016; Guilherme, 2002; Risager, 2007; Sercu *et al.*, 2005). In addition, my findings reveal teachers' difficulties to provide a definition of interculturality, ICC and/or IELT. These findings were congruent with Byram (2009), Rathjie (2007) and Dervin (2010) who purport that ICC is a complex concept difficult to define, and as a result, challenging to articulate in the language classroom. Rather, participants in my study try to provide general characteristics belonging to intercultural views (e.g., tolerance, open-mindedness, etc.). Concomitantly, about the role of the teacher—or the teacher ICC dimension advocated by Sercu (2005, 2007) and Risager (2006, 2012)—general findings of my study include the necessity to widen teacher knowledge, skills and attitudes to integrate intercultural critical aspects into practice and teacher education.



From my findings, three emerging theories were also of fundamental help in proposing a model that would help teachers to guide the development of an intercultural competence model for the teaching of English: Byram's (1997) ICC model, Paul and Elder's (2008) constructs on critical thinking and Richards & Lockhart's (2007) reflexivity and reflective teaching practice. These concepts intertwine and are consistent with the principles of critical cultural awareness (Byram, 1997, 2008, 2011) in which the critical reflective appraisal of cultural others is valued. By combining the three theories, I was able to develop a model that emerged from the teachers' appraisals of what is needed to move towards a more critical and intercultural English teaching (see Figure 6 above). The following table shows the relationship amongst the theories, teachers' perspectives and the challenges involved (that is, the interrelationship between the conceptual, the empirical, and the contextual that informed my thinking in developing the model (see Table 4). From left to right, the first column refers to the concepts as they are found in the literature; the second column explains what participants brought up in their interviews or their understanding of the concepts, and the third column summarises my remarks on what could be reflected upon key concepts to interculturalise ELT.

Model/ Concept	In my research-Data driven findings	Observations
<p><b>Byram's Model on ICC (1997)</b></p> <p><i>Savoirs</i> (knowledge of Self and Other; of interaction; individual and societal) <i>Savoir comprendre</i> (skills of interpreting and relating) <i>Savoir être</i> (intercultural attitudes; relativising self, valuing other) <i>Savoir faire/apprendre</i> (skills of discovering and/or interacting) <i>Savoir s'engager</i> (political education, critical cultural awareness).</p>	<p><b>Byram's Model on ICC (1997)</b></p> <p><i>Savoirs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accumulative knowledge of factual culture, <i>trivia</i>, curious facts and general knowledge (e.g., History, celebrations, habits)</li> <li>• Primarily knowledge of <i>Others</i>. In the second place, knowledge of <i>Self</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Savoir comprendre</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-cultural comparisons</li> <li>• Compare/contrast activities between C1 and C2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness of Byram's model critiques and the model shortcomings.</li> <li>• How to advance towards more critical instances?</li> <li>• How to bridge this incipient approach with more critical conceptual growth towards IC in English language teaching? How to advance toward critical cultural awareness?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Critical Thinking</b> Reasonable and reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do (Ennis, 2011) based on observation, experience, reflection, consideration and communication (Martincová &amp; Lukešová, 2015)</p>	<p><b>Critical Thinking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being able to discern, select and evaluate information.</li> <li>• Avoid first impressions</li> <li>• Relativise what seems apparent</li> <li>• Aid to attain reflective teaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A relation or an intension to establish a relation between critical thinking findings and <i>Savoir être</i> (intercultural attitudes; relativising self, valuing other) can be established.</li> <li>• A purpose to an end of critical thinking</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reflective teaching</b> Discovering more about their own teaching (Schön, 1984)</p> <p>As a thoughtful practice, as a model of teacher preparation, as organised professional development, as classroom inquiry, and as a means to social justice (Sze, 1999)</p> <p>Teachers seen as critical and reflective thinkers (Richards, 1998 González, 2003)</p> <p>Capacity of decentring (Byram, (1997; Liddicoat &amp; Scarino, 2013), of stepping outside existing, culturally constructed, framework of interpretation and seeing things from a new perspective</p> <p>Searching questions never asked before; challenging assumptions, ideological illusions, damaging social and cultural biases, inequalities, and questions personal behaviours (Bolton (2005.)</p>	<p><b>Reflective teaching</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a thoughtful practice</li> <li>• As a process of understanding, assessing and redirecting the own teaching processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflection as a common thread linking Byram's model (Decentring, stepping outside) and critical thinking: reflective practitioners seen as critical and reflective thinker</li> <li>• Reflection as challenging assumptions and destabilizing cultural bias as in ICC developments</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action-orientation, transformative action, critical action</b> Action is praxis that articulates reflection and action, theory and practice, thinking and doing (Guilherme, 2002)</p> <p>A pedagogy of action not simply about 'utilitarian practice' or 'pure activism' but practice informed by theory which leads to transformative action (Guilherme, 2002)</p>	<p><b>Action-orientation (as activism)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Own's, language teaching programmes' or MEN's activism toward change.</li> <li>• A realistic, gradual shift toward IELT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to advance towards action as reflexion-action, theory-practice and thinking-doing?</li> <li>• A pedagogy of action leading to transformative action</li> </ul>

Table 4. Some major theoretical constructs and how they emerged in my data (with comments)

One concern in my study was that the selection of theories and empirical research supporting the study was mainly from Anglophone cultures and was built around their own political and ideological contextual needs. British and American proponents (e.g., Byram,

Fleming, Corbett, Deardorff, etc.) were highly represented due to their thorough and established research tradition. To minimise this possible intellectual bias, works of other scholars (e.g. Guilherme, 2002, Lundgren, 2009; Larzen-Östermark, 2009; Ho, 2009; Porto, 2014, 2015) were taken also into account in an endeavour to try to balance other voices of authority in the field. Despite this, the reality is that most of them are written in English, and their works are based on very similar canonical theories.

The results of my study are either partially or totally in line with much international research on culture and IELTS. Accordingly, one of this research's important contribution is the revisiting of international theories and making major criticisms in light of Colombian English language teachers' intercultural teaching practices as well as the provision of much needed empirical data on the current situation. In my experience of revising other doctoral theses on similar research topics, I have found that some provide an exhaustive literature review, but only few discuss existing criticisms, an activity that allows for a better appraisal of theoretical proposals.

#### **8.4.2. Methodological implications**

Working under a constructivist qualitative paradigm was beneficial to accomplish the research aims, and accordingly, delegitimize inappropriate outdated positivist views of reality and deconstruct biases. By exploring teachers' beliefs and assumptions descriptively, I was exploring and appraising my own beliefs and assumptions in the continuum of language and culture teaching. Facing my own reality as an English language teacher, as a novice researcher and as an insider, participant teachers' interview-driven reflections led to my own teaching reflections in the search for personal developments of ICC to be able to teach interculturally. I tried to answer my own interview questions, and then derive and analyse data, which was a

useful process to take an action for my own intercultural development approach. In this way, sympathetically, it was possible to understand my participants' feelings, reflections and self-evaluations when I was conducting the interviews.

Deep reflection and descriptive analysis guided my process of ethnographic discovery by providing rich descriptions of data in which analysis moved back and forth trying to make sense of teachers' beliefs and key assumptions (Schwandt, 2000; Myers, 2008). Interviews proved to be an effective method to approach my research topic and understand the nuances of the meanings attached to teachers' praxis and experiences as well as their views on ICC teaching. In the end, participant teachers were not *those being studied*; instead they were individuals empowered with the knowledge and experience necessary to be able to co-construct ELT realities (Josselson, 2013) by sharing their occurrences as a way of building empirical knowledge in the country. The final remark is about awareness of the importance to participate in research (e.g., being interviewed, being observed, answering questionnaires, writing narratives, etc.) for it is the only way to strengthen empirical findings and construct a knowledge community (for teachers) that permanently grows and improves in changing times. This awareness may contribute to a sense of collaborative reciprocity amongst language teachers and teacher educators.

As regards researching multilingually, in this study English and Spanish were equally used as the languages of the researcher and of the researched in an attempt to balance power relations in the research process (Holmes *et al.*, 2013; Holmes, 2017). Using the two languages meant that English language teachers were free to select their preferred language for the interview. However, all participants chose Spanish (with frequent code switching. See appendix 6) as they would feel more comfortable sharing information in Spanish: the language of sharing experiences and expressing the deepest feelings. Spanish as the interview language

was also an emphatic strategy to generate trust, confidence and trustworthiness (Hennink, 2008; Holmes *et al.*, 2013).

Complementary to this, my first language is also Spanish. My role as an insider researcher and translator with understanding of the field, who understands the languages involved (as I am bilingual) and has some bicultural experience were all fundamental aspects. This involves the ethical dimension of using two languages in the research process, in which meaning, and interpretation must be truthful. As an insider researcher who shares the language of the participants, I was able to immerse myself in the original data and, which provided added insights and clarity to the interpretative process (Irvine, Roberts & Bradbury-Jones, 2008).

#### **8.4.3. Educational implications**

Educational implications address a call for renovation in language teacher education programmes (Usma, 2009; Cárdenas, 2009; Sánchez-Jabba, 2012, 2013; British Council, 2015) and for policy makers to include national standards or guidelines related to language and culture teaching to foster the development of ICC in language classrooms. (Magnan, 2008). As UNESCO (2013, p. 5) advocates, today, there is an imperative need of an awareness among policy-makers and civil society to acknowledge that “intercultural competences may constitute a very relevant resource to help individuals negotiate cultural boundaries throughout their personal encounters and experiences.”

***Language teacher education.*** Participant teachers advocate a lack of formal knowledge as well as a need for follow-up development and guidelines to help their professions evolve towards more ICC approaches. These outcomes indicate the current situation on IELT in Columbia, which exist alongside a plethora of educational and political challenges and tensions. First, in Colombia, professional qualifications in ELT need to be revised and

updated, taking into consideration new perspectives on language teaching and learning, more comprehensive interdisciplinary pedagogical approaches and English language teachers' competences to teach in the direction of global goals. In short, institutions issuing their professional qualifications should revise their curricular proposals to move forward from the cultural to the intercultural in ELT.

*Intercultural English language teaching standards.* There is no national curriculum regulating the teaching of English or other languages in Colombia (British Council, 2015); instead there is a set of guidelines (MEN, 1999) that have recently been renewed and updated to address the need for a nationwide English language curriculum (MEN, 2016, 2016a). The *Basic Standards of Competence in a Foreign Language: English*, established in Guide No. 22 (in which the word *culture* does not appear at all), does not contain standards designed to orient language and culture teaching goals. For these reasons, this study is particularly useful to enrich these efforts and contribute to creating a state-of-the-art IELTS framework for teacher education, which includes finding out how teachers think and what teachers actually know about culture, interculturality and IELTS in order to renew curricular guidelines and standards, or propose new ones (e.g., The Common European Framework of Reference, CEFR, 2001; the Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures or FREPA, 2007; the National Standards in Foreign Language Education in the United States, ACTFL, 1996). This empirical research represents a status quo of teachers' current positioning in ELT in Colombia, their own appraisals, and what is needed to take action toward interculturalising English language teaching.

Echoing Deardorff's (2011, p. 46) claims, this research has implications for educators and policy makers in that it helps teachers "understand the concept of intercultural competence and incorporate interculturally competent practices into teaching." In other words:

Are intercultural competence concepts infused throughout the teacher education curriculum? [...] How interculturally competent are educators themselves and what can be done to increase educators' own development in this area? How can the *process* of intercultural competence development be integrated into courses and programs? (Italics in the original, Deardorff, 2011, p. 46).

Moreover, the MEN 2016a document seems to be a work in progress, the final objective of which will probably be a school level English language teaching national curriculum. The definition of ICC given in the MEN's document—based on Malik's (2013, p. 15) Byramian interpretation—addresses the knowledge, abilities or skills and attitudes an intercultural mediator should have. However, in my view, there is no clarity in the concept of culture that this ICC is based upon. The development of ICC should entail constructivist, anti-essentialist conceptions of culture to build on the dynamic nature of intercultural communication, and this research has provided evidence to elucidate the relationship.

Concomitantly, this study has demonstrated that teachers are already doing "something" with culture teaching, and they have been unwittingly developing ICC (*savoirs, savoir comprendre*). As the main challenge identified is that teachers do not possess all the clarity required to advance from the cultural to intercultural ELT, language teacher education should provide knowledge and resources to make developments towards the other *savoirs*: *savoir etre* or intercultural attitudes, *savoirs apprendre/faire* or developing ethnographic and research skills and *savoir s'engager* or critical cultural awareness, important for the

intercultural mediator. In addition, my proposed model aims to contribute to English language teachers' developments toward IELTS.

Last, the suggested curriculum proposed by MEN advocates school freedom and autonomy to undertake actions to articulate the pertinent parts of the proposal in their PEI (*Proyecto Educativo Institucional* or Institutional Educational Project, for its Spanish acronym) (p. 42). This volitional stance makes my study useful for school governance directives, as well as for English language teacher trainers and policy makers who may want to enhance English language teaching and learning and initial language teacher education by employing intercultural perspectives. Concomitantly, an important contribution of this study is that it allows me to construct an empirically-based *Statement of philosophy to set ICC English language teaching standards* as a necessary next step in creating a comprehensive ELT national curriculum which incorporates ICC in English language teaching. It would read as follows:

One of the most significant changes in language education worldwide has been the recognition of the cultural and intercultural dimension as a key component in language teaching and learning. The inextricable relationship between language and culture, and how foreign language teaching objectives will be insufficient without reflection on building Intercultural Communicative Competence in language teaching must be a major concern in a globally interconnected world. Language teacher education in Colombia must embrace a multi-perspective approach in which, in addition to linguistic and pedagogical knowledge, the development of intercultural competences and critical cultural awareness, leading up to intercultural citizenship, are at the core. In an envisaged near future, ICC forms an integral part of the language curriculum. Language teachers become intercultural mediators able to develop a new vision of the language in their learners which can help them access cultures, experience intercultural encounters and participate in national and international intercultural dialogue as they become citizens of the world.

Ideally ICC should permeate all social institutions (UNESCO, 2013), but the challenge for language education stakeholders in Colombia is to understand that nowadays there is a



necessity to transform language teaching into a more political achievement (Pessoa & De Urzêda Freitas, 2012). It must be acknowledged that language teachers deal with language and education, “two of the most fundamentally political aspects of life” (Pennycook, 1990, p. 9), and IELTS can help build on this transformation.

#### **8.4.4. Pedagogical implications**

The findings in this research have important implications for Colombian English language teachers and their teaching praxis. First, since it has been evidenced that ELT benefits from intercultural approaches, teachers should be open to the idea of readjustment as a result of revising and re-evaluating their current teaching practices. This necessarily entails a change in their teaching profile (Sercu, *et al.* 2005). Second, to develop intercultural awareness and competences, they should have an action orientation. As a result, in addition to attitudes, knowledge, skills of discovery and interaction, interpreting and relating skills and critical cultural awareness; action orientation should be encouraged to pursue and attain ICC development as an individual and professional goal (Barrett, 2008).

This action orientation may be understood by some teachers to be a challenging ordeal. However, everyday appraisals of reality and simple attitudes can make the difference; for instance, some of Barrett’s (2005, p. 5) guidelines to help teachers take action towards developing ICC are:

- grasping and taking seriously the opinions and arguments of others, according personal recognition to people of other opinions, putting oneself in the situation of others
- accepting variety, divergence and difference, recognising conflicts, finding harmony where possible
- regulating issues in a socially acceptable fashion, finding compromises, seeking consensus, accepting majority decisions

- weighing up rights and responsibilities, emphasising group responsibilities, developing fair norms and common interests and needs

As these guidelines illustrate, conscious decisions need to be taken towards life and the diverse realities that embrace reflection, criticality, mediation and responsible judgements. This research has devised an ICC model as an invitation to take action by using data from what participant teachers claimed to need. This proposal highlights reflection and reflective teaching practice as a compulsory step towards developing IELT. While respecting teachers' own processes of understanding, learning rhythms and transitions towards change, the model encourages teachers to move from incipient developments of ICC to more mature instances - acknowledging that becoming or acting interculturally is a life endeavour.

Accordingly, a shift from the *cultural turn* to more holistic intercultural approaches—*the intercultural turn* (Risager 2005; Dasli, 2011)—requires the communicative language teaching instructor to inspire intercultural mediators who are able to motivate intercultural communication by building Third Places or spaces? of negotiation and dialogue. An intercultural competence foreign language intercultural teacher (FL&IC teacher, Sercu, *et al.*, 2005) can emerge from CLT if this is considered to be an early stage of the intercultural L2 teaching. In Colombia, as CLT still predominates, the evidence from this study implies that the seeds have already been planted to advance towards IELT, but we must capitalise upon the necessary educational and pedagogical support to move forward.

With regard to classroom methodologies and teaching strategies, this study has revealed teachers' limited understandings of ICC. Consequently, misleading conceptions, generally based on essentialist definitions of culture, create obstacles for the teachers to effectively plan strategies and classroom activities that promote ICC language learning. Based on this, insights have been gained with regards to teachers' practices that range from

knowledge-based to contrastive approaches to culture (Piątkowska, 2015). For teacher to develop more ICC dynamics from which they can learn themselves, two contributions seem plausible and congruent with my model's proposal due to their reflective, critical character and exploration of the Self: the reflective practice through writing (e.g., Robertson, 2003; Bolton, 2010; Jackson, 2012; Holmes & O'Neill, 2012) and the Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters (AIE, Byram, Barrett, Ipgrave, Jackson & Méndez García, 2009).

In the first case, reflective writing leads to the idea of a ICC *learning journal* (for different types of writing proposals see Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters, AIE, Byram, Barrett, Ipgrave, Jackson & Méndez García, 2009; Bolton, 2010; Holmes & O'Neill, 2012; Bektaş-Çetinkaya, 2014) which is an educational instrument created to facilitate and scaffold the development of the intercultural competences necessary to engage in effective intercultural dialogue (Barrett, 2008). AIE can be an educational tool beneficial to pre-service and in-service English language teachers in two ways: first of all, it is a systematic interculturally-focused enquiry process in which teachers can find their own way and pace to experience what reflecting and developing ICC really means. Secondly, teachers produce rich qualitative data from their narratives and testimonies (Bintz & Dillard, 2007). Consequently, a sharp thematic analysis may follow to survey on language teachers' ICC development.

Last, about the AIE, a free on-line self-study course for educators supports the development of autobiographies and seems to provide an update on what teachers should explore in order to foster ICC (see Figure 5). Concomitantly, the **OSEE** Tool (Deardorff, 2011, p.44) prompts individuals to challenge their assumptions and explore other perspectives through observation and analysis (**O**bserve (and listen); **S**tate objectively **E**xplore different explanations; **E**valuate which explanation is the most likely one). Similarly, the **PEER** model (Prepare, Engage, Evaluate, Reflect) designed by Holmes & O'Neill (2012, p. 710), through

self-reflection, encourage individuals to consciously examine their intercultural encounters as they engage with a Cultural Other so that they become able to reflect on, and evaluate their intercultural competence (Holmes & O'Neill, 2012, p. 709).

## The Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters

Welcome to the Council of Europe's online course in the use of the Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters (AIE). If you are new to the course, we recommend you start with the [Introduction to the course](#) before moving on to the modules.

**Navigation note:** Run your mouse over the module titles for the links to each module. To return to this course overview from any other page, click the house icon (🏠) that you can see at the top left of the page.

- ▶ Introduction to the course
- ▶ Module 1: You and your encounters
- ▶ Module 2: Other people's encounters
- ▶ Module 3: Understandings of intercultural encounter
- ▶ Module 4: Competences for intercultural encounters
- ▶ Module 5: The structure of the AIE
- ▶ Module 6: The AIE in practice
- ▶ Module 7: Using the AIE in your context
- ▶ Glossary of key terminology

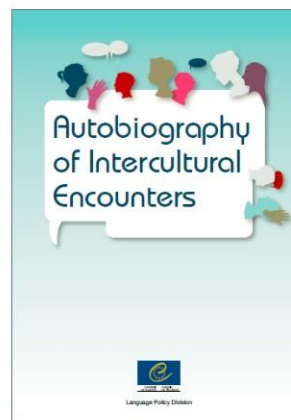


Figure 7. On-line self-study course for educators to scaffold the AIE (CoE, 2009).

Moreover, Müller-Hartmann & Schocker-von Ditfurth (2007) provide ideas on how to match L2 classroom activities with Byram's *savoirs* to enhance ICC teaching and learning (see appendix 10). Based on this research, data outcomes and my own teaching experience, it seems enriching if teachers are encouraged to establish a battery of activities and classroom initiatives in relation to the *savoirs* so as to prompt creative lesson plans that address ICC developments. Teaching these lessons will motivate further reflection on what they know about teaching English and how they can foster ICC. If teachers realize that advancing towards the intercultural does not mean “wiping the slate clean” in their teaching practices but instead building on what they know to advance towards more complex goals in language teaching, they will be motivated to recognise their pedagogical accumulated knowledge as something

that is valuable and necessary.

Based on these findings, a further important implication is that as teachers develop their own ICC, they will also become knowledgeable in terms of analysing, selecting and adapting materials to bolster intercultural learning. Similarly, the transit from culture teaching to intercultural teaching indisputably requires a critical dimension to be able to examine available theories and frameworks (Israelsson, 2016). In this way, my model (see Figure 6) proposes the critical stances of the cyclical process to advance toward ICC in ELT, based on Byram's *savoirs*, critical thinking and a reflective teaching practice.

### **8.5. Limitations of the study**

This study could be used as a starting point to develop a project with teachers of English on ICC teaching; however, it is probable that several limitations could have influenced the results obtained. The most salient limitation of this research was working with one group of teachers and students only who belonged to the mainstream Spanish-speaking population. Although there was no expressed intention to select mother-tongue Spanish-speaking bilingual teachers, those who responded to my call all, through happenstance, fell within this profile. Teachers from other cocultures, with other mother tongues different from Spanish were not present, even though Colombia is a multicultural, diverse and multi-ethnic country in which English is taught mandatorily nationwide as part of the General Law of Education (1994) and the MEN's dispositions on language policies. As mentioned previously in the methodology chapter (see Chapter 4, section, 4.6.5), most participants came from one university's databases associated with academic events for the teaching of English (e.g., congresses, symposia, conferences, etc.) which, in turn, raises questions about the target audience. Concomitantly, building a model of IELT is limited to this specific teacher profile and type

of ELT classrooms. In this way, to safeguard the trustworthiness of this research, it is fundamental to acknowledge the limitation that, although this study focused on the larger (and dominant) group, it does not represent the whole landscape of English teachers in Colombia.

Another problematic issue in this investigation had to do with classroom observations as a data gathering strategy. Traditionally, according to experiential data, Colombian teachers do not like their lessons being observed or filmed. There is an almost generalised reluctance and mistrust because they think their language proficiency or teaching methods will be criticised. In addition, when participants agreed to be observed, permissions and protocols to enter English language classrooms were stricter because underage learners were involved. For these reasons, recruiting volunteers who allowed their lessons to be observed in addition to getting gatekeepers' permissions were hard tasks. As a result, only a small amount of observation data was collected, and a valuable opportunity to see teachers in action was lost.

Another potential limitation to be considered concerns the research blog. At first, introducing a blog seemed a positive strategy to minimise power relationships and motivate participants to further comment on their intercultural experiences. The blog had three questions posted for two or three weeks each. Valuable remarks and opinions were frequent for question number one while questions two and three did not provoke as many reactions. I tried to comment on each post and encourage participation, which decreased as the school term advanced. Some participants mentioned that course loads and evaluation periods took up much of their time. I then realized that maybe periods in between posted questions were too long, and for this reason, teachers became busier and less motivated as time elapsed. Maybe giving only shorter periods for each question and inviting other teachers to participate could have maintained a more participative and productive on-line discussion atmosphere. Because participation was not constant, at the end I felt the resource was somehow wasted.

Despite gatekeepers being collaborative in the recruitment process, for one of the institutions I felt that some interviewees had not volunteered to participate but were appointed by the gatekeeper to take part in the interview. My suspicions were aroused based on a phone call from one participant who asked me to change the interview time as he could not attend the scheduled appointment. With a feeling that there was a third party pushing participation, I decided to take more time reading the informed consent together with the participants of this university to overcome this difficulty and let them know they were free to participate (or not) and drop out the process if they so wanted (Bryman, 2012; Bogdan & DeVault, 2015).

The last acknowledged limitation has to do with trying to establish academic debates to share and confirm findings with colleagues. As findings usually serve as a starting point for discussions with colleagues and exchanging ideas, I thought integrating an intercultural dimension in language teaching could be particularly interesting for my academic department. However, I found that my colleagues' primary interest was in attaining assessable CEFR proficiency levels and developing language abilities; teaching culture or developing ICC did not seem to be much of a priority.

As regards the trustworthiness of my research, transferability of findings cannot be overgeneralised due to my study's qualitative, interpretive nature based on a small participant sample which does not cover the wholeness of diversity of English language teachers in Colombia. Transferability does not entail broad claims but invites readers of research to make connections between constituents of my study and their own experience. (Savin-Baden & Major, 2010), As a researcher I provided thick descriptions (Geertz & Darnton, 2017) that offer corpora to potential readers for making judgements about the possible transferability of findings to other settings (Bryman, 2012; Lincoln & Guba, 1985), having into account that this research topic has developed under a specific contextual framework, with peculiarities

and needs derived from the ELT praxis in Colombia. Similarly, credibility has been addressed along all the research process: transparent record keeping, strict ethical procedures, rich and thick verbatim data, participant validation or member check, clarity and transparency of interpretations and ongoing critical reflection were some of the strategies used to ensure depth and relevance of data collection and analysis (Noble & Smith, 2015).

### **8.6. Directions for further research**

The complexity of finding an IELT starting point for teachers who have been immersed in CLT for decades is significant. Furthermore, the dearth of research in the country and the limitations of the current study offer the potential for further research to establish a more solid field of knowledge that will lead the teaching of English to become more holistic, critical and globally aware. First, in terms of this study, there is a need to assess the model of language teacher initial and on-going education and the design of classroom dynamics to accomplish the relevant goals. Workshops or courses that implement the model through different highly reflective classroom dynamics could be one topic for a continuation study based, for example, on teachers' narratives. A systematic revision of ELT education programme goals and objectives seems to be a priority if in-service and pre-service teacher education aims for 21<sup>st</sup> century intercultural dialogue and communication.

Second, a complementary study might address English language learners' intercultural competences in light of teachers' ideas towards interculturalising ELT. When intercultural competence is an integral part of the language classroom, "learners experience how to appropriately use language to build relationships and understandings with members of other cultures" (Nugent & Catalano, 2014 p. 14). According to learners' beliefs, conceptions and assumptions, elucidating how they approach ICC foreign language learning could serve as



complementary research to the present study for a more robust understanding of foreign language teaching and IELTS in the country. This cross-perspective approach may provide a clearer picture of how students perceive instruction and training of ICC in the English classroom led by an ICC language teacher. Last, since intercultural competence is not “a naturally occurring phenomenon” (Deardorff, 2011, p. 45), educators must be intentional about addressing this in the language classroom (as well as within other courses); undertaking research on this topic can shed light on how to do it gradually and successfully.

Further research could involve qualitative and quantitative studies of different regions of Colombia, which may shed light on how English language teachers nationwide are evolving (or not) towards IELTS. This could provide valuable information to formulate culture and IELTS L2 standards. Interestingly, some regions portray idiosyncrasies that may lead to them having different results, for example, high international tourism (e.g., Cartagena, Santa Marta) where English is constantly spoken by people in services and commerce. Another interesting case is on San Andrés Island where English, Spanish and Creole coexist and are spoken as first languages; and in Leticia, where, in addition to native aboriginal languages, Portuguese is spoken in a bilingual linguistic situation due to the proximity with the Brazilian border.

More broadly, building on Sercu’s *et al.* (2005) research design, an international mixed-methods study analysing how language teachers build on their intercultural teaching profiles can reveal the *status quo* of an IELTS growth in Latin America where English has become the predominant foreign language. Comparing and contrasting teachers’ views on IELTS can notably enrich the educational community by sharing successful experiences and common trends for the teaching of English in the 21<sup>st</sup> century:

Both national and international teacher education programmes can build on these commonalities and have teachers from different countries cooperate, knowing that they all share a common body of knowledge, skills and convictions. They

can also exploit differences between teachers to enhance teachers' understanding of intercultural competence. (Sercu *et al.*, 2005, p. 15)

Further research which draws on this study can examine how intercultural competence may be explored in other school subjects different from ELT (e.g., Ethics, Peace Education, History). To consider the possibility of promoting IC from primary and secondary school, my model can be seen as an initiative that allows Colombian teachers to explore Colombia's own diversity and multiculturalism. A specific case would be that of ethno-education, discussed in section 2.1, where more than 60 aboriginal groups are educated under the precepts that advocate rescuing their own historical and linguistic-cultural heritage. In this attempt, these groups can be affected by the lack of integration with the Spanish-speaking culture of the country, and at the same time, made subaltern in terms of the predominant Spanish-speaking culture. Thus, my study and the proposed model could bring advantages for bidirectional mutual learning of both the Spanish-speaking dominating culture and the ethno-education scheme, which currently, are exclusionary and limited. In this way, through a systematic exploration of the *Savoirs*, an approach to critical thinking skills and the implementation of reflective teaching, the construction of Third Spaces understood as a common ground (Bhabha, 1990, 1994; Feng, 2009; Kramsch, 1993; Lo Bianco *et al.*; 1999) can be promoted to achieve intercultural dialogue and mutual understandings among different sectors of the Colombian society.

### **8.7. Concluding the study**

My study shows the need for an intercultural English language teaching approach (IELT) that enables English language teachers and learners to advance toward the construction of ICC to build on language education in Colombia. This research also calls for a definition of the role of the intercultural English language teacher who is seen as a major actor in the process of

interculturalising ELT and who should develop an IELTS profile. Findings offer insights into how English language teachers in Colombia approach the concept of ICC and language teaching, and how their views impact their efforts towards a more IELTS based approach. The outcomes also call for transformative action to implement IELTS guidelines or standards, resulting in the formulated *statement of philosophy to set ICC English language teaching standards*

This study has contributed to research and practice in several ways. First, it has provided empirical evidence on Colombian English language teachers' perceptions, beliefs and assumptions on culture and IELTS. Second, it has contributed to the production of contextual, empirically-based knowledge that can be used to enrich research on the topic in the country. Third, the research has developed an exploratory model to help teachers advance towards the development of ICC from incipient to more mature stances, and where the language teacher is privileged as a reflective practitioner who is able to build on her ICC to teach English. Finally, this study has promoted placing IELTS at the core of the ELT process and has demonstrated how English language teaching and learning are bettered by intercultural teaching perspectives.

# Appendix 1: Ethical approvals minutes. Durham University (UK)- Universidad de los Andes (Colombia, S.A.)



Shaped by the past, creating the future

30 March 2016

Beatriz Pena Dix  
EdD

[b.m.pena-dix@durham.ac.uk](mailto:b.m.pena-dix@durham.ac.uk)

Dear Beatriz

## **Developing intercultural competence in English language teachers: Towards building intercultural foreign language education in Colombia**

I am pleased to inform you that your application for ethical approval for the above research has been approved by the School of Education Ethics Committee providing that you comply with the conditions below:

1. To note that documents should be proofread before going out to participants though we appreciate that they will be translated into Spanish first.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you good luck with your research

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. M. Holmes".

Dr. P. Holmes  
Chair of School of Education Ethics Committee

COMITÉ DE ÉTICA DE LA INVESTIGACIÓN  
Acta No 558 de 2016

El COMITÉ DE ÉTICA DE LA INVESTIGACIÓN de la Universidad de los Andes, certifica mediante la presente acta del 25 de enero del 2016 que se revisó la enmienda a la propuesta denominada: "DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS: FROM TRADITIONAL TEACHING TO INTERCULTURAL FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN COLOMBIA" cuya investigadora principal es Beatriz Peña Dix, Profesora Asistente del Departamento de Lengua y Cultura de la Universidad de los Andes.

**Concepto**

El COMITÉ DE ÉTICA DE LA INVESTIGACIÓN de la Universidad de los Andes, **aprueba el proyecto presentado**. De conformidad con la legislación vigente, este proyecto se clasifica como:

**INVESTIGACIÓN SIN RIESGO.**

Se expide esta certificación el 15 de febrero de 2016.

Cordialmente,



SILVIA RESTREPO RESTREPO  
Presidente del Comité

Nota: Los proyectos evaluados para las convocatorias de COLCIENCIAS deben volver a presentarse al comité de ética una vez sean aprobados.

## Appendix 2: Information sheet and invitation for participants (Spanish version)



1

### *Developing intercultural competence in English language teachers: Towards building intercultural language education in Colombia*

Desarrollo de competencias interculturales en profesores de inglés: hacia la construcción de una educación intercultural de lenguas en Colombia

#### SÍNTESIS INFORMATIVA

Estimados (as) profesores (as):

Mi nombre es Beatriz Peña Dix\* y los (as) invito a participar en algunas actividades asociadas a mi investigación doctoral con la Universidad de Durham, Inglaterra, titulada ***Developing intercultural competence in English language teachers: Towards building intercultural language education in Colombia*** (Desarrollo de competencias interculturales en profesores de inglés: Hacia la construcción de una educación intercultural en lenguas extranjeras en Colombia).

#### Objetivo de la investigación:

Esta investigación tiene como meta principal desarrollar un perfil potencial del profesor intercultural de lengua extranjera en Colombia, más precisamente, del profesor de inglés. Asimismo, se quiere explorar cómo se puede renovar y actualizar la enseñanza del inglés en el país hacia visiones de enseñanza más globales e “internacionalizables”, con base en la enseñanza intercultural de lenguas extranjeras que proporciona oportunidades para el fortalecimiento de una praxis crítica y reflexiva.

#### Etapas y procedimientos de la investigación:

	Herramienta de recolección de datos	Procedimiento
ETAPA 1	Breve cuestionario de datos biográficos:	En línea. Los participantes deberán llenar algunos datos personales relacionados con su formación y experiencia docente.
	Cuestionario pre-entrevista:	En línea. Los participantes responderán preguntas de base preparatorias para el diseño de la entrevista.

ETAPA 2	Foro en línea:	En línea. Foro en línea para garantizar la participación y la inclusión de los participantes frente a algunos temas y experiencias de encuentros interculturales.
	Observaciones de clase:	Información documental. Presencial. Se realizarán una serie de observaciones <i>in situ</i> de clase a algunos de los participantes.
	Entrevistas:	Presencial. Se realizarán una serie de entrevistas semi-estructuradas cuyas preguntas serán diseñadas con base en los datos obtenidos en el cuestionario en línea.

**Garantías y confidencialidad:**

Con el fin de garantizar el carácter volitivo de su participación y la protección de su información, se establece lo siguiente:

1. Su participación en el estudio será voluntaria.
2. Como participante, puede retirarse en el momento en que lo desee.
3. Los datos recolectados serán completamente confidenciales. No se revelarán las identidades de los colaboradores en este estudio.
4. La confidencialidad de los datos se garantizará con el uso de seudónimos y/o la generalización del masculino (“Los profesores”) para todos los participantes (esto en la versión en español).
5. El estudio no generará información sobre instituciones educativas específicas. Se protegerá la identidad institucional.
6. Apartes de la versión final del borrador se presentará a los directivos de las instituciones y a los profesores participantes con el fin de hacer los hallazgos transparentes y recibir realimentación oportuna de su participación en el proceso.

**Lengua de comunicación:**

Inglés y/o español

**Día y lugar:**

Estas actividades se realizarán entre el 5 y el 30 de abril de 2016 en los horarios acordados con los profesores. El foro en línea estará abierto hasta el 30 de mayo de 2016.

**Incentivos:**

- No hay ningún tipo de remuneración económica por la participación.
- Posible conformación de red de apoyo a profesores.

[\\*http://scienti1.colciencias.gov.co:8081/cvlac/visualizador/generarCurriculoCv.do?cod\\_rh=0001162080](http://scienti1.colciencias.gov.co:8081/cvlac/visualizador/generarCurriculoCv.do?cod_rh=0001162080)  
<http://lenguas.uniandes.edu.co/index.php/profesores/profesores-de-planta/beatriz-pena>

**BEATRIZ PEÑA DIX**

Profesional en Lenguas Modernas de la Universidad de los Andes (1997). Magister en Literatura Hispanoamericana del Seminario Andrés Bello, Instituto Caro y Cuervo (2001). Magíster TEFL (*Teaching English as a Foreign Language*) (2005) de la Universidad de León, España. Profesora Asistente del Departamento de Lenguas y Cultura de la Universidad de los Andes en el área de Pedagogía de lenguas extranjeras y en el Programa de Aprendizaje de Lenguas extranjeras (PAL). Actualmente, se encuentra en la última etapa de sus estudios de Doctorado en Educación con la Universidad de Durham (Inglaterra). Autora compiladora de *Bilingüismo en el contexto Colombiano: iniciativas y perspectivas en el siglo XXI* (2011) y *Exploraciones sobre el aprendizaje de lenguas y contenidos en programas bilingües. Una indagación en la escuela primaria* (2012).

**¡Gracias por su amable atención y colaboración!**

Beatriz Peña Dix  
[bpena@uniandes.edu.co](mailto:bpena@uniandes.edu.co)  
Tels. 3-394999 ext. 2536  
Universidad de los Andes



## Appendix 3: On-line exploratory questionnaire (Spanish version)



El siguiente cuestionario escrito se contextualiza en la investigación *Developing intercultural competence in English language teachers: Towards building intercultural language education in Colombia*. Todas las respuestas aquí escritas se tratarán de manera anónima y confidencial.

Su nombre: \_\_\_\_\_

Institución: \_\_\_\_\_

### I. Información personal

#### 1. Tipo de profesor. Marque todas las que apliquen.

Profesor en formación  
Profesor en ejercicio  
Profesor pensionado  
Otro \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2. Formación profesional. Marque todas las que apliquen.

Formación experiencial (sin título docente)  
Formación en otra disciplina  
Escuela de formación docente (por ejemplo, escuela normal)  
Licenciatura  
Especialización  
Maestría  
Doctorado  
Otros \_\_\_\_\_

#### 3. Experiencia laboral.

Práctica docente

De 0-1 año  
De 2-5 años  
De 6-10 años  
De 11-15 años  
Más de 15 años

**4. Nivel en el que enseña. Marque las que aplique.**

Primaria  
Secundaria  
Media  
Instituto de lengua  
Técnica  
Tecnológica  
Universitaria  
Otro \_\_\_\_\_

**II. Preguntas abiertas.** Por favor, responda sinceramente a las preguntas sin consultar ninguna fuente externa. Lo más valioso será conocer lo que usted piensa, cree, siente y/u opina.

1. En su opinión, ¿qué es cultura?
2. ¿Qué tan importante considera usted que es la cultura en la enseñanza de del inglés? ¿Qué papel juega? Justifique su respuesta.
3. ¿Incluye/Incluiría usted la cultura en la enseñanza del inglés? ¿De qué formas lo hace/lo haría? ¿Qué materiales utiliza/utilizaría? En caso negativo, ¿por qué no lo hace/no lo haría?
4. En su opinión, ¿qué es la interculturalidad?
5. ¿Qué tan importante considera usted que es la interculturalidad en la enseñanza del inglés? ¿Qué papel juega? Justifique su respuesta.

**¡Muchas gracias por su colaboración!**

## **Appendix 4: Pilot Interview Guide (English version)**

### **Pre-interview**

Informal conversation about interviewee's English language teaching experience, workplace, courses that s/he teaches, etc. Introduce my research, the interview process and sign informed consent.

#### **I. About English teachers' language learning processes**

1. Could you briefly describe your own English language learning process? Methodologies? Procedures your teachers employed?

#### **II. About the concept of culture**

1. What is culture? How do you understand the concept of culture? Explain
2. How important is culture in the teaching of a foreign language? Why? Explain.
3. Do you include culture in your lessons? Explain

#### **II. About the concept of Interculturality and the teaching of English**

1. Are you familiar with the term *interculturality*? Have you heard of it? Give a definition.
2. What do you understand "an intercultural approach to English language teaching" to be?
3. How would you describe English language teachers' roles in light of an intercultural approach to teaching English?
4. In your opinion, may (or may not) an intercultural approach add value to current English language teaching practices in Colombia?
5. Do you find there to be any limitations in the idea of an intercultural approach to English language teaching?

## **Appendix 5: Interview Guide with probes (Bilingual version-English/Spanish)**

### **Pre-interview**

Informal conversation about interviewee's English language learning and teaching experience, workplace, courses that s/he teaches, etc.

Introduction to my research, to the interview process and sign informed consent.

### **I. About English teachers' language learning processes**

This set of questions helped to establish rapport and served as a warm-up before the interview process itself was started. In the same way, it provided information about teachers' experiences when they were learners of English, and their perceptions and approaches to those experiences. In the end, these questions helped describe and compare what they had learned and lived as English language learners and what they do today as English language teachers.

1. When did you start learning English?

¿Cuándo inició su aprendizaje del inglés?

2. Could you please briefly describe the main methodologies and procedures your teachers employed to teach English? Frequency?

¿Podría, por favor, hacer una breve descripción de las metodologías y procedimientos que sus profesores empleaban para enseñar inglés?

3. During your English language learning experience, how important do you think culture was in the English language curricula/ syllabi/ lessons? Why? Explain. Give examples.

En su experiencia de aprendizaje del inglés, ¿qué tan importante cree usted que fue la cultura en el currículo/sílabo/programas y/o lecciones la lengua inglesa? ¿Por qué? Explique. De ejemplos.

## **II. About the concept of culture**

This set of questions was designed to explain about the conceptualizations of culture and its role in the teaching of English.

1. What is culture? How do you understand the concept of culture? Explain.  
¿Qué es cultura? ¿Cómo entiende usted el concepto de cultura?
2. How important is culture in the teaching of a foreign language? Why? Explain.
3. ¿Qué tan importante es la cultura en la enseñanza de una lengua extranjera?
4. Do you include culture in your lessons?

Affirmative answer: Why? How do you do it?

Negative answer: Why not? Why don't you include it?

¿Incluye usted la cultura en la enseñanza del inglés?

Respuesta afirmativa: ¿De qué maneras lo hace?

Respuesta negativa: ¿Por qué no lo hace?

## **III. About the concept of Interculturality and the teaching of English**

This set of questions was to explore the concept of interculturality within the teaching of English and the teacher's conceptualizations on how to approach this vision of ELT.

1. Are you familiar with the term *interculturality*? Have you heard of it?  
Affirmative answer: Where? In which context? How do you understand this concept?

Negative answer: Based on our previous discussion on culture, could you make some inferences/guesses about this concept?

¿Ha escuchado el concepto de interculturalidad?

Respuesta afirmativa: ¿Dónde lo ha escuchado? ¿En qué contexto? ¿Cómo lo entiende?

Respuesta negativa: Con base en la discusión previa sobre cultura, ¿podría inferir su posible significado?

Another possibility: In what ways, if any, was ICC teaching training included in your own teacher education?

Affirmative answer: how? Can you give concrete examples of this?

2. What do you understand “an intercultural approach to English language teaching” to be?

¿Cómo o de qué manera entiende usted el concepto de “enseñanza intercultural del inglés?”

3. Which important characteristics do you think an intercultural approach to teaching English has?

¿Cómo se caracteriza el enfoque intercultural para la enseñanza del inglés?

4. How would you describe English language teachers’ roles in light of an intercultural approach to teaching English?

¿Cómo describiría el rol/los roles del profesor a la luz de la enseñanza intercultural del inglés?

5. In your opinion, may (or may not) an intercultural approach add value to current English language teaching practices in Colombia?

Affirmative answer: How? In which ways?

Negative answer: Why?

¿Podría un enfoque intercultural para la enseñanza del inglés darle un valor agregado a la enseñanza actual del inglés en Colombia?

Respuesta afirmativa: ¿Cómo? ¿De qué forma?

Respuesta negativa: ¿Por qué?

6. Do you find there to be any limitations in the idea of an intercultural approach to English language teaching?

Affirmative answer: Which one (s)? In which ways?

¿Encuentra usted limitaciones en el enfoque intercultural para la enseñanza del inglés?

Respuesta afirmativa: ¿Cuáles?

#### **IV. Closing question**

Would you like to add something more or share any particular thought about culture, interculturality and ELT in the Colombian context?

¿Le gustaría agregar algo más o compartir alguna idea en particular sobre el tema?

**Thanks a lot for your time and your cooperation.**

**Muchas gracias por su tiempo y colaboración.**

## Appendix 6: Participant informed consent form

1



### *Developing intercultural competence in English language teachers: Towards building intercultural language education in Colombia*

Desarrollo de competencias interculturales en profesores de inglés: hacia la construcción de una educación intercultural de lenguas en Colombia

#### CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO

Yo, \_\_\_\_\_ he sido invitado(a) por la profesora Beatriz Peña Dix de la Universidad de los Andes a participar en la investigación ***Developing intercultural competence in English language teachers: Towards building intercultural language education in Colombia***

Esta investigación tiene como objetivo proponer un perfil intercultural del profesor de inglés que atienda a los retos globales y los nuevos estándares nacionales e internacionales en la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras. De esta investigación, se deriva una serie de actividades, a saber:

ACTIVIDAD	DURACIÓN	MÉTODO	LUGAR
<b>Cuestionario parte 1: datos personales y laborales</b> (Todos los participantes)	Alrededor de 6 minutos	<b>E-encuesta</b> donde se proporcionarán algunos datos biográficos y laborales. Esta información preliminar servirá de inscripción al taller.	En línea
<b>Cuestionario parte 2: preguntas exploratorias</b> (Todos los participantes)	Alrededor de 25 minutos	<b>E-encuesta</b> de preguntas respecto a la cultura y enseñanza de la cultura	En línea
<b>Grupo focal</b> (Todos los participantes) Taller presencial titulado <i>Reflecting on English Language Teaching Practices in the 21st Century: What's Culture's got to do with it?</i> ( <i>Reflexiones sobre la praxis de la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera: ¿Qué tiene que ver la cultura?</i> ).	6 horas en total  Parte 1: 8:30 am-12:30am  Receso: 12:30 -1:30pm  Parte 2: 2pm-4pm	<b>Grupo focal</b> a partir del cual se discutirán colectivamente los temas pertinentes a la investigación.	Universidad de los Andes, Departamento de Lenguas y Cultura, sábado 27 de febrero de 2016.
<b>Foro en línea</b> (Participación voluntaria) Seguimiento al taller	Abierto por dos meses: de febrero 26 a abril 29 de 2016	<b>Wiki-espacio</b> donde se plantean aspectos de la enseñanza de la cultura de la lengua extranjera: los participantes podrán si lo desean, participar libremente aportando opiniones,	En línea





		experiencias, ideas, entre otros.	
<b>Entrevistas</b> (Participación voluntaria)	Cada entrevista tendrá una duración de 45-60 minutos aproximadamente. Todas las entrevistas se llevarán a cabo entre el 7 y el 21 de marzo	<b>Entrevista cara a cara</b> donde el profesor/ la profesora y la investigadora conversarán sobre algunas preguntas específicas.	El participante establece el lugar y la hora de la entrevista, dentro de las fechas establecidas.
<b>Observaciones de clase</b> (Participación voluntaria)	Alrededor de 3 horas por participante. Se observarán dos o tres clases del mismo profesor en un mismo día.	<b>Observaciones de clase</b> durante una franja horaria. Luego de las clases, profesor participante e investigadora conversarán sobre aspectos puntuales de la clase.	En la institución educativa

He sido informado(a) que toda la información recolectada hará parte del corpus de análisis de la investigación y será utilizada con fines académicos e investigativos y, además, su uso será **estrictamente anónimo y confidencial**. Con el fin de garantizar el manejo seguro de la información, solo la investigadora y un asistente tendrán acceso a los datos, que se almacenarán en un archivo confidencial con código de acceso restringido en un equipo de uso exclusivo de la investigadora

De igual manera, de presentarse las siguientes situaciones, (no) autorizo lo siguiente:

Grabar en audio las entrevistas SI  NO  Firma: \_\_\_\_\_

Grabar en audio los comentarios de las observaciones SI  NO  Firma: \_\_\_\_\_

Filmar las diferentes actividades del grupo focal SI  NO  Firma: \_\_\_\_\_

He sido informado(a) que las grabaciones de audio y la filmación del grupo focal son mecanismos para, posteriormente, extrapolar datos brutos y fortalecer el análisis de la investigación. Este material será destruido una vez sea aprobada la investigación en su etapa final por la Universidad de Durham, Inglaterra.

También he sido informado(a) que puedo retirar este consentimiento en cualquier momento y que puedo dejar de participar del proyecto cuando lo desee. Dado el caso, comprendo que mi retiro voluntario de este estudio no perjudicará mi relación con la institución empleadora ni con los investigadores. Además, soy consciente de que no seré beneficiario(a) de ninguna retribución económica por mi participación en esta investigación.

He leído y comprendido la información contenida en este consentimiento informado y certifico que se me ha dado una copia del mismo. Después de la explicación clara sobre mi participación en esta investigación, manifiesto que:

Sí, deseo participar: \_\_\_\_\_

No deseo participar: \_\_\_\_\_



**Confirmando mi participación a partir de (fecha)** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Ciudad:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Nombre completo:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Institución educativa:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Correo electrónico:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Teléfono de contacto:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Firma:** \_\_\_\_\_

En caso de tener preguntas adicionales, requerimientos específicos en cuanto a esta investigación, sus procedimientos o su participación en ella, puede comunicarse con la investigadora principal:

BEATRIZ PEÑA DIX  
 Universidad de los Andes, Facultad de Ciencias Sociales  
 Departamento de Lenguas y Cultura, Oficina GB (Franco)-506  
 Cra 1 N° 18A- 12 Bogotá, Colombia  
 Teléfono: 3-394999/49 Extensión 2536  
[bpena@uniandes.edu.co](mailto:bpena@uniandes.edu.co)

En caso de presentarse algún problema asociado a la investigación, usted también puede contactar al Comité de Ética de la Universidad de los Andes. Teléfono 3394949 Ext. 3867 o al correo electrónico [comite-etica-investigaciones@uniandes.edu.co](mailto:comite-etica-investigaciones@uniandes.edu.co)

Firma investigadora:

Firma participante:

Identificación número:

Beatriz Peña Dix  
 Universidad de los Andes, Facultad de Ciencias Sociales  
 Departamento de Lenguas y Cultura, Oficina GB (Franco)-506  
 Cra 1 N° 18A- 12 Bogotá, Colombia  
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[bpena@uniandes.edu.co](mailto:bpena@uniandes.edu.co)

## Appendix 7: Classroom observation template

### Developing intercultural competence in English language teachers: Towards building intercultural language education in Colombia

#### Classroom Observation Template

Observation #: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Institution: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Course: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of students: \_\_\_\_\_ Class duration: \_\_\_\_\_

Aim of the lesson (previously discussed with teacher): \_\_\_\_\_

#### 1. During-class observation:

Activities	Manifestations of cultural/ intercultural awareness and/or intercultural competences	Observations and comments
1)		
2)		
3)		
4)		
5)		
6)		

#### 2. After-class reflection (15-minute dialogue with teacher):

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#### 3. My comments and other emerging questions:

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## Appendix 8. Sample interview transcript

Entrevista a [REDACTED] - Universidad [REDACTED]

### Transcripción

Presentación de la investigación. Se le pregunta si hay algún interrogante al respecto o alguna duda. Se firma el consentimiento informado, previa lectura del mismo.

P: Que hagas una brevísima presentación, tu nombre, en qué programa estás dictando y comenzamos.

E: Ok

P: Ella capta todo, no te preocupes.

E: En inglés, ¿sí?

P: O en español, como tú quieras.

E: Ah bueno, bien. Eh... mi nombre es [REDACTED], eh... soy docente de inglés como lengua extranjera aquí en la [REDACTED], eh... lidero cursos como: [REDACTED] la enseñanza de inglés,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED].

P: Tienes un recorrido larguísimo. Eh... bueno, [REDACTED], tú personalmente, ¿cuándo comenzaste tu aprendizaje del inglés? Me podrías como comentar brevemente cómo fue eso del aprendizaje del inglés tuyo.

E: OK. Eso es una pregunta interesante, realmente creo que mi gusto y pasión por, por las lenguas se despertó desde muy niño, tuve uno de mis abuelos... -pausa corta- pues había viajado al exterior y manejaba algunas palabras, algunas frases en francés y también en inglés y pues oficialmente no estudié inglés en primaria, pero sí mi abuelo me enseñaba cositas. Luego en bachillerato conté con la fortuna de, de tener la misma, creo que es una ventaja, que tuve la misma docente en todos, todos los grados de bachillerato y creo que pues tenía una de las cualidades pues que más resalto en un maestro que era la dedicación; y pues cuando el maestro es dedicado y es bueno se constituye en una ventaja tener la misma docente, y pues ella me motivó al ver mi interés por lenguas a que estudiara en Bogotá, eh...

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

E: Entonces ella me motivó y pues aprovechando que mi abuelo era de acá del interior pues viene a la ciudad de Bogotá, y pues profesionalmente digamos a nivel de estudio pues fue mi pregrado donde me inicié realmente en el mundo de los idiomas sobre todo el inglés. Y pues luego hice... -pausa corta- eh... viajé al exterior y he hecho varios cursos y pues creo que, que el aprendizaje es constante, el aprendizaje de inglés nunca para y hay que estar actualizado al menos leyendo, eh... no sé... una, dos páginas creo yo, al mínimo, en inglés o en cualquier idioma.

P: Exacto, qué interesante. Una pregunta, tú me hablaste de la dedicación de la profesora, tú recuerdas particularmente metodologías específicas durante tu proceso de la enseñanza del inglés, es decir, ¿recuerdas qué metodologías usaba la profesora o cuáles eran como las más recurrentes para enseñar inglés?, ¿ella qué hacía con ustedes? / During your English language learning experience, how important do you think culture was in the English language curricula/ syllabi/ lessons?

E: Bien. Yo creo que ya que tengo un curso en metodología y me devuelvo al pasado, siempre creo que la palabra metodología es una palabra que tal vez todos usamos pero, pero de pronto ... -pausa corta- a veces la dimensionamos de manera tan abstracta; pero para mí y recordando mi profesora, [REDACTED] de bachillerato, creo que metodología, la metodología de un maestro parte por esas pequeñas decisiones que se toman en clase, eh... a veces noto que hay docentes que, que saben mucho y leen y manejan de pronto en su esquema mental muchas metodologías pero entran en contradicciones en el salón de clase. Creo que una metodología, una decisión metodológica acertada era que ella siempre desde sexto de bachillerato nos dejó claro que si queríamos aprender a nadar teníamos que nadar, entonces algo que recuerdo de ella es que jamás, por ejemplo, usó español en la clase de inglés y es algo que yo siempre he implementado, ella buscaba todas las estrategias posibles, decía ‘si yo no sé dibujar le pediré, le pediré a un estudiante que dibuje, les haré mímicas, les daré sinónimos, les traeré el material real’, **whatever, [Expresión complementaria al discurso]** ella buscaba todas y cada una de las estrategias y algo muy poderoso también que recuerdo era su manejo de grupo, la autoridad que ella tenía la imprimía a partir de su presencia, su voz, su dulzura, el manejo de la voz, por ejemplo, es importante y mmm... algo también metodológico que me encantó era eh... que trabajábamos en grupo ¿sí?, ella promocionaba mucho las actividades en grupo y nunca nos dejaba trabajar con las mismas personas, siempre trataba de decirnos ‘bueno, ya trabajaste con fulanito de tal ahora quiero que ensayes con otra persona’ y nos preguntaba al final de clase ‘¿cómo te sentiste?, ¿qué quieres cambiar?, ¿por qué crees que no funcionó?’. Entonces creo que de cierta manera en nosotros cultivó estrategias para poder trabajar con diferentes personas.

P: Qué interesante, qué interesante. Y tú también tienes este manejo de la voz ¿no?, le aprendiste muchas cosas a ella.

E: Pues ah... yo... -pausa corta- trato en lo posible de... -pausa corta- me centro mucho en una parte de la fonética porque siempre he sido apasionado de la fonética, la fonología, la mecánica, el manejo de la voz, el timbre, todo eso...

P: Totalmente, gracias [REDACTED]. Si nos devolvemos al pasado, ¿tú recuerdas que tu profesora o tus profesores hacían algún énfasis en particular en la enseñanza de la cultura, la cultura de la lengua extranjera o la cultura propia inmersa en el tema de la enseñanza de lengua extranjera?, ¿había algún tipo de alusiones culturales, de análisis cultural ya sea de la lengua

1 o la lengua 2 en la clase de inglés?

E: [REDACTED] pues así, digamos, lo que siento, o sea... - pausa corta- siendo honestos que sí se hizo, pero pues creo que uno puede trabajar con cultura, puede hacerlo como inductivamente y deductivamente, entonces pienso que... -pausa corta- eh... sí se hacía, ya que voy al pasado, sí se hacía, la profesora de pronto lo hacía... -pausa corta- siempre... no tanto al comienzo porque obviamente al no tener tanto vocabulario, al no tener tanto referente, tanto bagaje lingüístico, no se hacía pero si recuerdo que ya de séptimo en adelante ella trataba de mostrarnos objetos reales, por ejemplo, de sus viajes. Era una profesora [REDACTED] también pero manejaba un muy buen nivel de idioma y ella nos decía algo importante que... -pausa corta- que no perdiéramos nuestra cultura por ejemplo, ella... - pausa corta- decía... allí me parece que, que ya empieza un modelo cultural porque ella siempre nos decía ‘siempre seremos colombianos, eso no indica por ejemplo que, que no debamos adquirir un acento’, decía ‘se pueden manejar las dos cosas’ y, y eso también me causa curiosidad hoy en día, si por ejemplo el tener un acento en un idioma te hace perder tu identidad, eso sería otro tema interesante para discusión. Pero entonces ella hacía comparaciones culturales... - pausa corta- decir... recuerdo por ejemplo que nos hablaba de los carros, qué tipos de carros, nos decía ‘por qué los carros en Estados Unidos son tan grandes, ustedes qué creen’, eh... no sólo los carros, y nos decía ‘sé que no han viajado al exterior, o si lo han hecho pues me corrigen, pero es importante que ustedes se den cuenta que hay otras estrategias para aprender, no sólo la lengua sino de la vida misma’; entonces por ejemplo, nos incentivaba... -pausa corta- a mirar programas de televisión, a tratar de entender las letras de las canciones, ir un poco más allá, pero pues creo que la cultura por lo menos a nivel de productos, al menos a nivel de estereotipos, a nivel de perspectivas, se trabajó de cierta manera. Y pues obviamente ya en los últimos grados, décimo, once, eh... se hizo un poco más de... -pausa corta- digamos hincapié en otras cosas, por ejemplo recuerdo que alcanzamos a ver algo de **“current issues”**. **[Trata de precisar significado del mensaje]** entonces ya podíamos como identificar pues los problemas de ciertos países ¿no?...

P: Qué interesante.

E: Identificar por ejemplo, que no existe el país perfecto, si no nos decía ‘piensen también en las diferentes sociedades, en lo que tienen y en lo que nos falta.’

P: Pero son reflexiones profundas para esos niveles, interesante.

E: Sí, pues se va logrando de todas maneras.

P: Qué bueno, porque son reflexiones que tienen cierto nivel de profundidad importante.

E: Sí, ahora que lo pienso sí, y que uno... -pausa corta- de cierta manera debería insistir, debería seguir haciéndolo.

P: Sí, Sí, interesantísimo. Voy a hacer un breve “recast”, tú me contaste que habías contestado el cuestionario, te voy a hacer un “follow up” chiquitico sobre la definición de cultura, eh... qué tan importante crees tú que es y si tú particularmente incluyes cultura en tu enseñanza. Es un poquito de follow up de lo que de pronto contestaste en el cuestionario, una breve definición eh... qué tan importante crees que es en la enseñanza de lengua y si tú lo haces particularmente, cómo lo haces. / How important is culture in the teaching of a foreign language? / Do you include culture in your English language teaching lessons?

E: OK. Bueno, no me acuerdo exactamente lo que copié pero...

P: No, no importa.

E: ... yo me refería allí a que bueno... -pausa corta- obviamente por haber leído pues creo que es mucho más complicado dar un concepto puntual mmm... pero yo resalto de muchos autores y de la impresión que tengo que la cultura no es algo estático, la cultura no se debe confundir con civilización, la civilización es parte de la cultura y están compenetradas, pero básicamente si tuviera que definir cultura diría que son todas aquellas manifestaciones, ya sean artísticas, literarias, políticas, económicas, de género, todas aquellas manifestaciones en donde se plasman las perspectivas, donde se vislumbran productos, donde se evidencian prácticas particulares de los grupos humanos; que bien pueden ser universales o pueden ser relativas a una civilización, y en las cuales obviamente siempre hay un intercambio y ese intercambio puede o no ser intercultural mediado por el conocimiento de la lengua ¿sí?

P: Correcto, interesante. ¿Consideras que esto es o no es importante en la enseñanza del inglés? / How important is culture in the teaching of a foreign language?

E: **I think it is VERY IMPORTANT** [énfasis del participante]. Creo que más que importante sería algo crucial, vital... -pausa corta- enseñar la cultura, es definitivamente importante porque lo evidenciamos nosotros mismos cuando hemos viajado a otros países, entonces podemos tener... llegar a un conocimiento lingüístico óptimo sin que esto signifique que podemos tener un desarrollo, un desempeño cultural apropiado. Y creo que pues una ciencia que nos ayuda y que personalmente aplico mucho es la pragmática, a todo por lo que enseñé directamente gramática trato de darle un enfoque más... -pausa corta- eh... “pragmática” y más... -pausa corta- eh... digamos, más de análisis de discurso, que los alumnos puedan en

su meta-cognición reconocer que hay cosas que se dicen, y se dicen porque corresponden a un lugar, porque corresponden a una cultura, porque corresponden a otro hablante y porque tienen un valor, un valor cultural. Creo que hay que enseñarla, particularmente...

-----0:15:17.1-----

P: Particularmente, ¿tú enseñas, tú la incluyes en tus cursos?

E: Yo la incluyo... -pausa corta- no sólo en este curso sino en cierta medida la incluyo en... -pausa corta- en todos los cursos de lenguas posible que, que tengo, siempre... -pausa corta- al final siempre... -pausa corta- trato de que haya un proyecto final relacionado con la cultura.

P: ¿Como una micro-investigación?

E: Una micro-investigación, a veces es algo como un proyecto de aula, a veces es un **“peer project”**, **[Trata de precisar el significado del mensaje]** pero siempre busco una excusa cultural para que ellos eh... traigan cosas del mundo exterior a la clase y saquen esa clase y lo conecten un poco con otras áreas, por ejemplo... -pausa corta- un ejemplo particular recuerdo que estábamos viendo voz pasiva, estábamos viendo modales y todo eso entonces pues... -pausa corta- yo los puse a... -pausa corta- simular una Feria del Libro en Corferias decimos acá, y cada quien tenía que proponer un libro, decir quién lo hizo, por qué se hizo y sobre todo que por qué recomendaría el libro y por qué sería importante para docentes de lengua que leyeran. Fue algo que hice con un nivel tres aquí en [REDACTED] y funcionó... porque ellos tenían que leerse el libro, traerlo, mostrarlo, exhibirlo y tenían que hablar como si fueran el autor del libro y entonces...

P: ¿El libro necesariamente era en inglés?

E: No necesariamente...

P: No necesariamente.

E: ... eso es otra cosa que insisto... -pausa corta- eh... muchas veces nos preocupamos porque el producto a mostrar tenga que ser de esa cultura de llegada pero, creo que... y lo hice en, en... hace algún tiempo, tomé aspectos más de la cultura latinoamericana que de la cultura anglosajona.

P: Pero expresados en inglés.

E: Sí, sí. Eso es lo que siempre les aclaro que... -pausa corta- que no importa realmente la, la cultura de dónde venga, el origen... -pausa corta- eh... les digo que, que pues uno tiene que favorecer todas las culturas del mundo y que... Entonces últimamente he tratado de darle importancia a otros países que igualmente nos “incluyen” porque obviamente no... -pausa corta- no hay el tiempo y pues a nivel de inglés son más de 50 países prácticamente 55 países oficiales, que llaman “de facto” en los cuales pues el inglés se habla oficialmente, pero últimamente he tratado al menos mediante jueguitos, sobre todo en [REDACTED] lo



he hecho en los [REDACTED] ... tratado de ir al África, los he movido de continente y les ha gustado porque han encontrado cosas que ni siquiera en lengua materna “sabían...”

P: Cada continente o cada país se expresa su inglés, entonces eso es bien interesante también.

E: Sí. Sí y pues eh... he descubierto que lo estudiantes se interesan mucho, se interesan mucho y le llegan a uno a decir ‘mira, yo ni siquiera en español sabía que esa lengua existía, que tal cosa existe, que tal cosa...’ ¿sí?

P: ¿Por qué crees tú que los estudiantes se sienten motivados frente a eso? ¿Cuál es tu percepción?

E: Yo pienso que – silencio para pensar – que una de las probables razones sería que, que haya conexiones mucho más fáciles, iba... -pausa corta- su cosmovisión porque ellos saben cosas pero a veces... Hay como diferentes tipos de saberes, a veces sabemos que las cosas existen, digamos el saber qué, pero a veces no sabemos qué hacer con esa información... llaman el saber hacer, el **“savoir faire”**. **[Reconocimiento a Byram]**. Entonces pienso que los estudiantes se sienten, digamos, a gusto porque dicen ‘mira yo no sabía que...’, por ejemplo recuerdo a alguien que decía ‘yo no sabía realmente de dónde venía el té pero ahora comprendo por qué es significativo para los ingleses y... -pausa corta- qué hay detrás de la preparación del té mismo, que no solamente la preparación por ejemplo, sino los utensilios que se usan y por qué los ingleses tienen tanta ceremonia en el momento de prepararlo’, y todo eso es cultura yo les digo; y creo que es porque encuentran... -pausa corta- básicamente conexiones, asociaciones y porque creo... -pausa corta- también algunos estudiantes me manifestaron alguna vez que si se profundiza más en la cultura ellos sienten que eso les ayuda para su vida real, el día que tengan que afrontar el **“cultural shock”**. **[resalta concepto clave]**. Creo que es como un valor agregado...

P: Es un valor agregado.

E: ... que uno tiene.

P: Estoy de acuerdo contigo.

E: Perdón, hablo mucho.

P: No, ¡no!, yo feliz. Estoy feliz escuchándote, me parece bien interesante y sobre todo que has podido eh... conversar con tus estudiantes y determinar esas cosas. Ya luego que los estudiantes te cuenten esas cosas es bien valioso también. Una pregunta, vi que ahorita mencionaste el... ah... primero tú me dijiste que hacías proyectos, micro-investigaciones y me diste el ejemplo de la Feria del Libro, antes de pasar a la siguiente pregunta, ¿podrías darme otro ejemplo de esos proyectos o de esas micro-investigaciones? Otro ejemplito concreto “donde” la cultura esté como inmersa.

E: Bueno. Mmm... también he hecho un proyecto que yo le llamo **“Shared Skies”**, **[Nombre propio del proyecto]** entonces los alumnos escogen un tema de la cultura de llegada,

investigan durante un mes al menos, tienen una pregunta concreta, algo que quieran descubrir, algo que todavía les parezca por así decirlo, misterioso... de la lengua inglesa, de su literatura, cualquier aspecto. Luego nos reunimos fuera del salón de clase, buscamos un ambiente, por ejemplo un bosque, eso se facilita más allá o a veces nos sentamos en el césped y esa persona nos viene a contar, desde su perspectiva, desde su investigación, qué conclusiones llegó; entonces preguntas cómo eh... pueden ser preguntas nimias pero después descubren que en cultura no hay nada nimio, como realmente... voy a dar un ejemplo ‘¿realmente el Fish’n chips [Nombre específico-cultura material], sí es el plato nacional de Inglaterra?’ y exploran el origen, por qué el nombre, si por ejemplo si es un plato de clase social media, si la clase social media existe, por qué sí, por qué no. Y ellos eh... realmente no es la cantidad de tiempo que hablan porque no les doy demasiado tiempo, limito siempre a diez, quince minutos por la cantidad de estudiantes...

P: Claro.

E: ... pero he notado que, que, que sirve sobre todo para esa parte de la cultura que se llama “Perspectives” . [Nombre propio del proyecto] y el poder entender prácticas que nosotros realmente no hacemos, entonces ese sería otro ejemplo...

P: Qué bueno.

E: ... de un proyecto.

P: Qué bueno, ¿ese sí es individual? O sea que hay una especie como de autorreflexión, de interpretación en los estudiantes si bien...

P: Sí.

E: ... porque ellos están haciendo su investigación solos.

E: Exacto. Y lo otro es, que en el caso del Reino Unido, algo curioso con lo que me he encontrado es que al comienzo cuando la gente... -pausa corta- no tiene nociones del Reino Unido casi siempre escogen temas de Inglaterra, entonces por ejemplo en el último semestre... porque no lo he hecho, lo voy a hacer, de hecho en 20 días este proyecto... Es sorprendente que ya... -pausa corta- se han mentalizado un poco que es más allá de la propia cultura inglesa “per se”, y ya por ejemplo quieren explorar Irlanda del Norte, Irlanda, Escocia e incluso hay chicos que ya se han preocupado por “Commonwealth” entonces...

P: Bien.

E: ... hay unos que ya van a investigar sobre las Malvinas, Gibraltar, porque alguien se preguntó por qué Gibraltar queda en España pero necesito Visa, y eso me encanta porque ellos salen con preguntas puntuales y de eso se trata el proyecto.

P: Qué interesante.

E: Sí, entonces las pasan...

P: Y usted ha registrado esto, porque eso es oro, lo que usted me está contando.

E: En parte. No me culpo porque no hay tiempo, he tratado de registrarlo en el último año eh... tengo ya algunos registros ya puntuales de... -pausa corta- de digamos... -pausa corta- no he podido hacer como encuestas, encuestas escritas sí pero no entrevistas por la cantidad de trabajo y esto, pero sí tengo impresiones que ellos van escribiendo.

P: Y las muestras, los “samples” [code switching aclaratorio], los reportes, las narrativas... E: Y tengo las, tengo las eh... los, las narrativas y sobre todo los vídeos con los permisos de ellos...

P: Qué interesante.

E: ... y pues a futuro pues pensaría en, en escribir algo...

P: Ahí tiene un proyecto muy grande.

E: Pero, pero sí, sí lo he venido trabajando sobre todo porque el curso lo, lo permite ¿no?, creo que... -pausa corta- no es a la pregunta pero, una de las dificultades de pronto que, que... -pausa corta- puedo ver que se experimenta en otros cursos es que prima la lengua por encima de la cultura, y aquí es al revés, aquí lo importante... siempre le he insistido a ellos que independientemente del nivel de lengua que ellos tengan lo importante es la cultura y que aprovechen.

P: Y usted cree que... [REDACTED] ¿tú crees que ese es un enfoque generalizado o es más personal, más personal suyo?

E: Mi visión de...

P: Sí. ¿Su visión es que el predominio de la cultura es algo más generalizado en la enseñanza del inglés o eso es una visión más personal suya?, por lo que usted sabe de sus colegas, de otras universidades.

E: Pues tal vez... no lo, no lo podré decir tan sistemáticamente y abiertamente pero eso nace de... -pausa corta- digamos de, de charlas con otros docentes que... -pausa corta- no sólo de inglés sino todos amigos de otras áreas, de otras lenguas, y manifiestan eso y de pronto al comienzo al intentar trabajar en cultura me di cuenta de eso que... -pausa corta- que de todas maneras la lengua puede ser un, un, un amigo pero puede ser un enemigo también porque... -pausa corta- digamos muchas veces uno tiene en su esquema mental, su esquema metodológico, quiere hacer muchas cosas pero, pero a la vez se va como restringiendo ‘¿pero sí tendrán ellos el nivel para llegar allá?’... pienso que, que si uno... -pausa corta- tiene esa libertad de ensayar, porque todo es un ensayo-error creo, uno descubre cosas maravillosas y descubre que ellos pueden hacer mucho más... Clase y pues la cultura permite... por ejemplo, aquí en la Pedagógica lo hacemos, eh... algo que valoro de esta universidad es que en el “syllabus” [Aclaratorio] sí está incluida la cultura, el problema es el tiempo porque aquí d

hecho... -pausa corta- aquí no se llama Ingles V o Ingles IV, aquí se llama [REDACTED], lo que pasa es que no hay tiempo para tanta cosa, porque a veces tienes 3 horas, 4 horas y tienes necesariamente que cubrir contenidos...

P: Sí porque hay que acumularlos en algún momento, está el benchmark que toca... un ratito [REDACTED] me mencionase el *savoir*...

E: El *savoir faire*.

P: *Savoir faire* que es de Byram, entonces viene la pregunta, ¿dónde fue la primera vez que te asociaste con el concepto de “interculturalidad”...?, ¿en qué momento de tu carrera, de tu praxis docente, en qué momento conociste el concepto y cómo lo entiendes?

E: Amm... veo que la primera vez lo había escuchado, sin embargo... -pausa corta- creo que todo surgió en el 2000. Había leído en algún lado, no me acuerdo exactamente, pero había leído a Byram y a Fantini, y había leído... -pausa corta- me, me interesé porque precisamente en el 2000, alrededor de 2005, 2006 tal vez, me pidieron que liderara un curso de precisamente de... -pausa corta- que se llama [REDACTED] y tenía un compañero en la [REDACTED] que había estado también en Inglaterra entonces él me decía... empezamos alguna vez a hablar de... pues de la enseñanza del inglés, entonces casualmente aquí en [REDACTED] nos pusieron que fuéramos parte de un proyecto con la Secretaría... se llamaba en ese entonces [REDACTED] y ese proyecto era parte del programa nacional de bilingüismo, entonces nuestra misión era asesorar algunos colegios, yo tuve [REDACTED], y pues parte de nuestra función era redactar un documento y entonces en ese documento recuerdo que teníamos que redactar un capítulo que se llamaba [REDACTED]; entonces lo conecto con Byram y Fantini porque en ese tiempo no había como tanto material y recuerdo haber leído algo en francés y ahí leí lo del *savoir*, *savoir faire*, “*savoir apprendre*”, me pareció muy interesante eh... los conceptos de... -pausa corta- los... yo lo dimensionaría como... -pausa corta- pues refiriéndome a Byram como que no hay un sólo saber, sino el saber tiene, como una cebolla, varias capas que uno va descubriendo a medida que pela la cebolla. Entonces, lo asocio con la cultura porque siempre hemos residido en el saber pero no hemos explorado otros tipos de saberes entonces la pregunta es ‘¿para qué le pido a un estudiante que se aprenda las capitales del mundo si ni siquiera ha vivido en una de ellas?’, por ejemplo me pregunto, o ni siquiera sabría cómo comportarse en una situación específica... el saber hacer. Qué hago hoy en día con toda esa información que me aporta Wikipedia, y lo otro, cómo puedo ser mejor persona y no sé... -pausa corta- cómo puedo ser. Entonces recuerdo ese capítulo muy interesante...

P: Sí, ese capítulo... es decir eso, eso me apunta bien hacia una definición de interculturalidad. ¿Tú cómo entiendes la enseñanza intercultural de lenguas extranjeras?, ¿cómo entiendes interculturalidad y cómo lo entiendes en la enseñanza? / What do you understand “an intercultural approach to English language teaching” to be?

E: Yo creo que todos tenemos un ego, lo ligo un poco también con otro autor, yo creo que todos tenemos un ego cultural, creo que Byram se refiere a que... -pausa corta- somos sujetos interculturales, podemos explorar todos esos saberes que tenemos. Para mí la interculturalidad sería una activación de todos los saberes, no sólo a nivel lingüístico claro, sino también... -pausa corta- a nivel por ejemplo intrapersonal, interpersonal, a nivel de emociones, ¿por qué digo que no solamente lingüístico?, porque hay manifestaciones culturales que no necesariamente pasan por la lengua, o son verbales, entonces eh... digamos... -pausa corta- siempre me ha causado impresión el, el comportamiento de otras culturas, el qué se puede decir, el qué se puede hacer, para mí eso es interculturalidad. Eh... por qué... -pausa corta- por qué hago determinada pregunta, por qué no puedo hacer determinada “pregunta”... por qué un color en cierto país es adecuado, en otro país no es adecuado, entonces, por ejemplo ya corresponden otros niveles semiológicos, semánticos, eh... visiones de mundo, no sé, es, es como un capítulo interesante pero yo diría que es esa activación de saberes de los cuales habla, habla Byram y... -pausa corta- y es apuntar mucho más al, al saber... formaciones... -pausa corta- es como esa activación de la información que quiere ese individuo, no sólo en lengua extranjera sino la que ya porta en su lengua materna, por eso creo que sí es importante rescatar eso... lengua materna, y muchas veces se pierde.

P: Se pierde. Y eso tú... todo esto que me has contado de la “interculturalidad”, ¿cómo lo ves en la enseñanza del inglés?

E: Yo creo que últimamente... -pausa corta- por las experiencias mismas que he vivido y por lo que me cuentan otros compañeros, creo que la interculturalidad vendría a ser una parte fundamental de cualquier syllabus de cualquier currículo, ya pienso que no, no es un terreno... -pausa corta- a ensayar sino ya es un terreno “prácticamente”... ¿Por qué? Porque la misma... -pausa corta- puede sonar a frase de cajón, pero la misma globalización eh... el mismo hecho que ya el inglés como tal sea una lengua internacional con todo lo que ello implica, el mismo hecho que las estadísticas implican que ya son más los no nativos los que hablan inglés que los nativos, eso te dice mucho. Eso te dice que... -pausa corta- hay que ser intercultural no sólo porque vas a hablar inglés con un nativo, sino yo les insisto, porque te va a encontrar con personas no nativas que tienen muy buen nivel de inglés con las cuales vas a interactuar, y vas a encontrar situaciones aquí mismo en Colombia donde vas a interactuar con un nativo. Entonces, yo siempre les digo ‘ojo, porque ustedes se preparan para hablar inglés con algunos acentos, con algunas personas, pero hay que ir más allá’. Entonces pienso que la interculturalidad para mí es crucial, es vital, yo le daría... -pausa corta- sería como una dimensión importante dentro del currículo, seriamente necesaria.

P: ¿Crees que la enseñanza intercultural del inglés tendría algún tipo de caracterización?, ¿características, rasgos, elementos esenciales dentro de ella? Si yo te digo ‘enseñanza intercultural del inglés’... ¿crees que hay ciertos requisitos, ciertos elementos, ciertas variables dentro de esto que deben ser vitales, básicas?

E: Bueno, pues si hablamos de la palabra currículum como tal creo que sí, habría algunas condiciones, por ejemplo eh... primero que todo el maestro mínimo debería ser un sujeto intercultural. Y cuando digo intercultural no necesariamente y de manera estereotipada, no necesariamente tiene que ser un maestro de mundo ¿sí?, porque ese es otro concepto. Creo que... -pausa corta- es una persona que sí obviamente es importante que haya tenido contacto cultural, “cultura dice acá”... pero creo que es más por la mentalidad del maestro, la eh... un maestro que sea activo en cuanto a temáticas... dispuesto a, a favorecer el debate, esto por ejemplo que esté dispuesto a lidiar con el conflicto en clase... cultural... cómo a través del inglés podemos “favorecer” el debate el conflicto ¿sí?, un maestro que siempre esté preocupado, por ejemplo, por escoger materiales. Entonces creo que esa sería la segunda condición... para un, una clase o un currículum intercultural hay que escoger materiales que así lo propicien... es... yo siempre insisto en metodología que una pequeña decisión te puede marcar toda una clase, entonces si vas a enseñar por ejemplo... -pausa corta- que es lo que a veces no entiendo algunos maestros, si vas a hacer... en lugar de tener el libro... por ejemplo, yo cuando viajo al exterior... trato de estar buscando... un menú de un restaurante, un tiquete de avión, un tiquete de...

P: Trabajas con “Realia”.

E: Sí... “Realia and Memorabilia”

P: Interesante.

E: Entonces pienso que sería el maestro, los recursos materiales que el escoja, eh... la preparación misma de las clases ¿no?, ya... vuelvo a lo mismo, un eje central ya no sería la lengua como tal sino la cultura y todas sus dimensiones.

P: Me llama mucho la atención que cuando hablas como de las características, hablas bastante del rol del maestro. O sea si bien entiendo tú... o aclárame una cosa, ¿tú harías una distinción o no la harías, sería más o menos lo mismo o sería diferente entre el profesor, entre la profesora que tú tuviste, los profesores que te enseñaron... con los enfoques que me dijiste, con las estrategias metodológicas que me dijiste, a lo que tú estás haciendo, a lo que haría un profesor intercultural?, ¿eso sería diferente o sería parecido? ¿Cómo lo ves? / How would you describe English language teachers' roles in the light of an intercultural approach to teaching English?

E: Lo que pasa es que creo que... -pausa corta- creo que de cierta manera, me atrevería a afirmar que todos en algún momento hemos favorecido la interculturalidad en clase, a veces sin saberlo, entonces creo que... crea un maestro un tanto diferente en cuanto tiene esa... -pausa corta- meta-cognición a nivel cultural, es un maestro que está consciente que lo está haciendo y... -pausa corta- por ello... -pausa corta- hace esas escogencias, digamos, directamente las hace, o sea no las hace por accidente, a eso me refiero

P: No es “by the way methodology” pero...

E: No, es algo que lo hace **“purposely”** ¿sí? Y es un maestro que tiene eso, el esquema claro. “No” podemos hablar del tema de cultura pero por lo menos es un maestro que conecta todo su saber a nivel lingüístico, lo conecta también con la cultura. E insisto, la cultura no solamente sería ese saber que ese maestro tiene sino todas esas manifestaciones, todo lo que ahí venga en adelante, como dicen, es ganancia ¿sí?, ¿por qué? Porque yo siento que muchas veces sí trabajamos cultura pero a veces nosotros no, no somos conscientes de ello y no hacemos a los alumnos conscientes de ello, entonces... ¿por qué insisto tanto en el rol del maestro? Porque yo creo que el maestro por su experiencia tiene que ser líder para ello, y pues obviamente no, no le estoy dando al estudiante un rol pasivo secundario, sino que creo que el estudiante para trabajar cultura pues puede recibir también una formación ¿no?, de mirar las cosas de manera diferente, eh... doy un ejemplo, yo no puedo pedirle a mis estudiantes, por ejemplo, que sean críticos al, al mirar un comercial si yo no les he enseñado cómo hacerlo o por lo menos pedagógicamente no los he expuesto a ello, que es otro proyecto que recuerdo del semestre anterior; trabajando análisis... puede entender cómo la cultura inglesa, mediante comerciales

¿sí?, pero ¿por qué digo que el maestro tiene mucho que ver? Porque el maestro selecciona “actividades”, busca la teoría... -pausa corta- el estudiante debe ser autónomo en cuanto a por ejemplo, ellos tienen la libertad de escoger el tipo de comercial, justificarlo, por qué, los aspectos que quieren resaltar, pero sin duda creo que para un modelo intercultural, en resumidas cuentas, el maestro tiene que ser un líder, líder que... -pausa corta- yo conozco maestros que dicen ‘ay, pero es que yo no he viajado’... por eso... y critico esa... no se trata de viajar solamente, porque yo conozco a gente que ha viajado de mentes muy cerradas; es un maestro que sea líder y que esté dispuesto a explorar otros terrenos. Yo vislumbro un maestro creativo, un maestro que sea capaz de el inglés **“bring it down to earth”**, [expresión] toda esa teoría aterrizarla y mostrarle al estudiante que la cultura no es algo... ese modelo de cultura con C mayúscula, o sea la cultura no es solamente saber hechos, saber cosas y no... -pausa corta- poder decir, yo por ejemplo, yo le digo al estudiante ‘nunca se sientan minimizados, reducidos a lo mínimo porque no saben hablar una...’ intercultural también es expresar las cosas... siempre hay algo que decir, por ejemplo los pongo a improvisar con cosas sencillas como... -pausa corta- el café, compárelo con el té y les digo ‘ustedes creen que eso no es cultura’ pero no sólo nos quedamos en el producto estamos... a mí me encanta digamos la teoría de Fantini... Kramersch...

P: Si, es muy bueno.

E: Entonces pues yo, yo insisto en eso, es un maestro consciente, líder, creativo, es un maestro dinámico y es un maestro que debe estar abierto a las propuestas de los estudiantes. Por ejemplo, soy muy metódico en cuanto a que les pongo fechas, cómo hacer, pero me encanta cuando tengo ese estudiante que te rompe el molde también, que te dice ‘mira yo creo que, que en lugar de hacerlo... en vez de...’. El grupo que tengo este semestre por ejemplo es mucho más proactivo que el semestre pasado, el del semestre pasado sentía que todo lo que yo decía era como palabra y lo hacían, pero este grupo me dice ‘en lugar de hacerlo en el bosque porque no lo hacemos en tal “sitio”...’ por ejemplo, eso me gusta.

P: Como más proactivo, más participativos.

E: Eh... ‘¿Por qué no lo organizamos...?’ por ejemplo a un chico se le ocurrió este semestre, eh... me decía... -pausa corta- él nos comentaba que, que casi todo era sobre Inglaterra, y este semestre hay digamos varios países porque no lo organizamos temáticamente.

P: Participación, construcción activa por parte de los estudiantes.

E: Y entonces yo les dije ‘bueno y ustedes, ¿ustedes cómo lo harían?’ entonces dije bueno, salieron al tablero y pues yo les decía ‘¿cómo conectan ustedes todos estos temas?, entonces escojan’ y les di la libertad, les dije ‘bueno escojan, como tenemos cuatro días o cuatro países, qué país escogerían primero, justifíquelo y convénzanme’ empecé... y me pasaron la propuesta, luego yo hice unos cambios y les dije ‘pues yo creo que podría ser así’...

P: Perfecto.

E: ... entonces, ahí pienso que hay interculturalidad también.

P: Claro que sí. Y ya para terminar [REDACTED], qué limitaciones, si alguna limitación identifica,

¿vería usted limitaciones cuando se habla de comenzar un proceso de interculturalización de las lenguas extranjeras en Colombia o del inglés más específicamente?, ¿qué tipo de limitaciones, si las ve, podría señalar en caso de que identifique alguna? / Do you find any limitations in the idea of an intercultural approach for English language teaching?

E: Pues yo creo que como en todo proceso, digamos, al comienzo... -pausa corta- habría muchas dificultades, pero creo que esas dificultades son de diferentes órdenes. Uno, administrativo: la institución tiene que estar convencida de que es un modelo que funciona, es un modelo... -pausa corta- que se puede aplicar. Entonces pienso que... -pausa corta- que dificultades pues obviamente sería la redacción misma de cómo se muestra la propuesta eh... de pronto el que los maestros quieran hacerlo, pienso que esa es una gran dificultad, el que los maestros estén convencidos porque vuelvo y te repito, creo que sí lo hacemos pero podemos ir más allá y lo que pasa es que somos maestros de lenguas y como maestros de lenguas siempre, en nuestra... -pausa corta- perspectiva apuntamos a eso y creo que la dificultad es en la visión de lengua que tengamos cada uno, que allí es donde va a haber un **“clash”**, **[reemplazo de vocabulario]**

P: Un conflicto.

E: Un conflicto, porque si la persona, si el profesor sigue dimensionando la cultura como algo auxiliar y la lengua como algo utilitario, sin **“mentalist”**, que sabes inglés porque lo hablas... entonces allí... -pausa corta- eso va a entrar en pugna. Entonces yo pensaría que... -pausa corta- que las dificultades pueden surgir, no tanto en los estudiantes porque fíjate que yo he notado buena recepción de los estudiantes, yo todavía no he tenido un curso que me diga ‘ay profe no...’, a mí me preocupa más es que el maestro no se convenza de que lo puede... y obviamente el apoyo que la institución le dé, ahí sí podríamos hablar de por lo menos de un...



Y lo otro podría, de pronto la limitación, podrían ser los recursos ¿no?, o los recursos no necesariamente que tenga la institución sino los recursos... Esas podrían ser las... Yo no pondría como... -pausa corta- algunas tesis que he leído, yo no pondría el nivel de lengua como una dificultad realmente, yo no porque... -pausa corta- yo... -pausa corta- he trabajado con temas culturales incluso con cursos bastante básicos, bastante básicos y alguna vez lo hice, por ejemplo con... uno traía la... la exponía, la explicaba... después de todo y en clase se toma... bueno, con algunos permisos que si era “pública no”, pero por ejemplo eso lo hice con un básico II.

P: Y lo lograron.

E: Claro, porque yo les decía ‘chicos no se limiten’... vuelve una limitante, igual, yo por ejemplo siempre estoy pendiente, me lleno de papeles porque yo creo en un modelo intercultural... y bien la lengua no está allá, donde tú no... obviamente tome apunte y eso lo hago yo para... -pausa corta- no descuidar esa parte.

P: Bien interesante, estoy pegada a la silla. ¿Quieres agregar algo más, algo que te gustaría aportar?, has dicho muchísimas cosas interesantes y te lo agradezco. Me gustaría saber si te gustaría agregar algo más al final de esta entrevista sobre el tema.

E: Eh... pues, yo leí lo que digamos... -pausa corta- la encuesta que tú pusiste ahí online, lo que percibo es algo muy interesante, no sé si lo entendí bien y es, ¿tú buscas como una propuesta intercultural para crear un currículo?

P: Estoy buscando... quiero saber dónde estamos parados como profesores de esto, frente a la interculturalidad, qué potencial tenemos para avanzar hacia allá.

E: Pero como tal no, no estás proponiendo un currículo todavía.

P: Voy a proponer un tipo de perfil, es decir, nosotros somos así en este momento de cultura, de nada, de cultura, de interculturalidad y con esos elementos estamos así de alcanzar llegar a la interculturalidad, o estamos así o estamos así y sería aconsejable...

E: Como un estado de la cuestión.

P: Total. Es exploratorio, descriptivo e inicial. Y tampoco le estoy dando mayor relevancia a la cuestión lingüística porque también considero que no está asociada. Muchas gracias por tu tiempo. Muchísimas gracias.

*Fin de la entrevista*

## Appendix 9: ATLAS-Ti coding of emerging themes

Administrador de códigos [UH: textos1]

Códigos Edición Miscelánea Imprimir Visualizar

Buscar

Familias	Nombre	Fu...	De...	Autor	Creado	Modifi...	Familias
todos	1. REFLECTIONS ABOUT CULTURE (Category 1)	0	4	Super	23/06/...	18/07/...	
	1.1. Definitsons of Culture	71	6	Super	09/06/...	18/07/...	
	1.1.1. False definitions of Culture	2	2	Super	18/06/...	18/07/...	
	1.1.1.1. Former definitions of Culture	6	2	Super	14/06/...	18/07/...	
	1.1.2. Culture L1-L2~	11	6	Super	09/06/...	18/07/...	
	1.1.3. The relationship Language-and-culture	12	4	Super	09/06/...	18/07/...	
	1.2. Importance of Culture	24	1	Super	09/06/...	26/06/...	
	1.2.1. Importance of L2 Culture	43	2	Super	20/06/...	26/06/...	
	1.3. Teaching Culture 1	8	4	Super	09/06/...	26/06/...	
	1.4. Teaching Culture 2/ How	40	5	Super	20/06/...	26/06/...	
	1.5. How to teach culture	47	4	Super	09/06/...	26/06/...	
	1.6. Teaching Culture and Motivation	13	2	Super	09/06/...	26/06/...	
	1.7. Cultural Contents	48	2	Super	09/06/...	26/06/...	
	2. APPROACHING INTERCULTURAL ENGLISH LAN...	0	0	Super	24/06/...	26/06/...	
	2.1. Definitions of Interculturality	74	1	Super	09/06/...	26/06/...	
	2.1.1. Positive Aspects of Interculturality	15	3	Super	10/06/...	26/06/...	
	2.1.2. Importance of Interculturality	4	3	Super	10/06/...	26/06/...	
	2.1.3. Including IC Teaching/How	40	1	Super	20/06/...	26/06/...	
	2.2. Interculturality and L2	41	5	Super	20/06/...	26/06/...	
	2.2.1. Interculturality and L2-01	41	3	Super	19/06/...	26/06/...	
	2.2.2. Intercultural approach to L2	40	3	Super	20/06/...	26/06/...	
	2.3. Intercultural teaching	34	4	Super	09/06/...	26/06/...	

63 Códigos

No hay elemento seleccionado

Administrador de códigos [UH: textos1]

Códigos Edición Miscelánea Imprimir Visualizar

Buscar

Familias	Nombre	Fu...	De...	Autor	Creado	Modifi...	Familias
todos	2.3. Intercultural teaching	34	4	Super	09/06/...	26/06/...	
	2.3.1. Intercultural Competence	93	8	Super	09/06/...	26/06/...	
	2.3.1.1. Intercultural encounters	31	1	Super	10/06/...	26/06/...	
	2.3.1.1.1. Examples intercultural Encounters	6	1	Super	14/06/...	26/06/...	
	2.3.1.1.2. Critical Events	1	1	Super	17/06/...	26/06/...	
	2.3.1.2. Intercultural contact/Short stays	21	1	Super	10/06/...	26/06/...	
	2.3.1.2.1. Benefits shorts stays abroad	10	1	Super	10/06/...	26/06/...	
	2.3.1.3. First contact with Interculturality	9	1	Super	10/06/...	26/06/...	
	2.4. Intercultural Contents	68	2	Super	09/06/...	26/06/...	
	2.4.1. Resources for interculturality	3	1	Super	14/06/...	26/06/...	
	2.4.2. Cultural/Intercultural Projects	24	1	Super	10/06/...	26/06/...	
	2.4.2. IC Curriculum and Materials	23	0	Super	10/06/...	24/06/...	
	2.4.3. Intercultural research	4	1	Super	14/06/...	26/06/...	
	2.4.4. Limitation	32	1	Super	10/06/...	26/06/...	
	3. TOWARDS BUILDING A POTENTIAL ICC EFL TE...	0	0	Super	24/06/...	24/06/...	
	3.1. English Teachers' self concepts	16	2	Super	09/06/...	26/06/...	
	3.2. Current EL Teacher Profile	29	3	Super	10/06/...	26/06/...	
	3.2.1. Teachers' L2 Learning Process	45	1	Super	10/06/...	26/06/...	
	3.2.2. ET Old Didactics	7	1	Super	12/06/...	26/06/...	
	3.3. Former EL Teacher Profile	12	1	Super	10/06/...	26/06/...	
	3.4. Intercultural Foreign Language Teacher Profile	97	2	Super	09/06/...	26/06/...	
	3.5. The EFL Teacher as a researcher	7	1	Super	10/06/...	26/06/...	

63 Códigos

No hay elemento seleccionado

Administrador de códigos [UH: textos1]

Códigos Edición Miscelánea Imprimir Visualizar

Buscar

Familias	Nombre	Fu...	De...	Autor	Creado	Modifi...	Familias
todos	3.4. Intercultural Foreign Language Teacher Profile	97	2	Super	09/06/...	26/06/...	
	3.5. The EFL Teacher as a researcher	7	1	Super	10/06/...	26/06/...	
	3.6. Social representation of the teacher	1	1	Super	20/06/...	26/06/...	
	3.6.1. What Society expects from teachers	3	1	Super	17/06/...	26/06/...	
	3.6.1.1. Teachers' must	1	0	Super	17/06/...	24/06/...	
	4. AN EMERGING INTERCULTURAL ENGLISH LAN...	0	0	Super	24/06/...	26/06/...	
	4.1. Challenges	4	0	Super	17/06/...	24/06/...	
	4.2. Students strategies/Competences	15	0	Super	10/06/...	24/06/...	
	4.3. Students characteristics	9	0	Super	10/06/...	24/06/...	
	4.4. EL Teachers queries	3	0	Super	17/06/...	24/06/...	
	4.5. Critics to Colombian Educational Model	25	0	Super	09/06/...	24/06/...	
	5. TEACHERS' FINAL REMARKS AND EXPECTATIO...	0	0	Super	24/06/...	24/06/...	
	5.1. Suggestions, opinions, queries	10	0	Super	12/06/...	24/06/...	
	Comentario entrevista	2	0	Super	10/06/...	10/06/...	
	Comentarios/Preguntas sobre mi investig	3	0	Super	10/06/...	12/06/...	
	Def Lengua	2	0	Super	09/06/...	17/06/...	
	Entorno social	5	0	Super	09/06/...	20/06/...	
	Hegemonía inglés	2	0	Super	09/06/...	12/06/...	
	Identidad y L1	1	0	Super	10/06/...	10/06/...	
	Intercult en Col	3	0	Super	09/06/...	09/06/...	
	Monoculturalismo/identidad naciona?	3	0	Super	12/06/...	12/06/...	
	Profundizar sobre	1	0	Super	09/06/...	09/06/...	

63 Códigos

No hay elemento seleccionado

**Appendix 10: Relationship between Byram’s (1997) model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) linked to examples of L2 classroom activities. Adapted from: Müller-Hartmann, A., Schocker-von Ditfurth, M. (2007).**

<p><b>Savoirs / Knowledge</b></p> <p>What? (explanation) not primarily knowledge about a specific culture but rather k. of how social groups and identities function (own and others)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knowledge of social processes, + knowledge of illustrations of those processes and their products, k. about how other people see oneself as well as k. about other people, knowledge about self and other, of interaction (individual and societal)</li> <li>• comprises traditional L2/foreigner knowledge (stereotypes (+/-) stereotypes a person has about his/her own culture), hetero-stereotypes (+/-) stereotypes do has about other cultures]]</li> <li>• knowledge about social interaction</li> </ul> <p>How can it be developed in class?  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ facts (film, texts, internet, authentic material), working with stereotypes in class, guest speakers ...</li> </ul> </p>	<p><b>Savoir comprendre / skills of interpreting and relating</b></p> <p>What? (explanation) = ability to interpret a document/event from another culture, to explain and relate it to documentary events from one's own culture, learners relate oral and written texts to each other and try to interpret each in the light of the other, involves the skill of mediation</p> <p>How can it be developed in class?  tasks that allow careful reading, analysis, interpretation of texts – in order to achieve a change of perspective  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ creative tasks working with literary texts (writing new scenes, new endings), look at action in literary text from the point of view of minor characters, project/simulations – learners experience a situation from different cultural point of view (how does the American school work – what is a typical day like at such a school), role plays / certain games</li> </ul> </p>	<p><b>Savoir être / Attitudes (savoir être)</b></p> <p>What? (explanation) attitudes, values (one holds because of belonging to social groups (no a given society), attitudes of the <i>minor</i> cultural speaker and mediator = foundation of ICC, curiosity, openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own, willingness to re-examine one's own values, beliefs, behaviours, willingness not to assume own beliefs etc. are the only possible and correct ones, ability to de-centre – ability to see how own values, beliefs, behaviours might look from the perspective of an outsider who has a different set of values, beliefs, behaviours</p> <p>How can it be developed in class?  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ using brainstorming, visual aids when working with texts to create curiosity and interest, using texts written by or about learners from other cultures (telling about their lives), children's and young adult literature, authentic texts – brought by learners (songs, interviews), virtual and face-to-face encounter projects (e-mail, exchange) – getting-to-know phase important, cultures similarities in forefront.</li> </ul> </p>
<p><b>Savoir s'engager / critical cultural awareness</b></p> <p>What? (explanation) ability to evaluate critically on basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices, products in one's own culture / other cultures, countries, closely connected with cultural studies, dealing with speakers from another culture always involves the evaluation of a culture – this often leads to an exchange of stereotypes, aiming for a critical evaluation of another culture – development of all the other 4 levels (competences necessary), including a critical perspective on one's own culture</p> <p>How can it be developed in class?  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ critical comparison how Australian and German society deals with immigration.</li> </ul> </p>	<p><b>Savoir apprendre / faire / skills of discovery and interaction</b></p> <p>What? (explanation) = ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture/cultural practices and to operate knowledge, attitudes, skills in real-time communication and interaction</p> <p>How can it be developed in class?  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ comparing e-mails, face-to-face and virtual encounter projects (web cam), chat, study visits – ethnographic observation tasks (sounds, images, smells ...), negotiation of cultural misunderstandings, role plays, critical incidents.</li> </ul> </p>	

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