

**Pedagogical plan proposal for improving teaching practices of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) for two Colombian bilingual schools.**

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2024

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## Resumen

Este trabajo de grado desarrolla un plan pedagógico para mejorar la competencia comunicativa intercultural en estudiantes de primaria y secundaria de dos colegios bilingües en Bogotá y Cartagena, Colombia. La investigación responde a la necesidad de mejorar las prácticas de enseñanza de la competencia intercultural comunicativa por parte de los docentes de EFL, identificando cuales son los principios pedagógicos implementados en ambas instituciones y contrastándolos con los propuestos por los documentos oficiales del Ministerio de Educación de Colombia que ofrecen una guía para la enseñanza del inglés. Para dicho fin se implementó una metodología cualitativa desde un estudio de caso múltiple, con entrevistas a estudiantes, docentes, directivos y padres de familia, además de observaciones en el aula y análisis de documentos.

El estudio revela que la enseñanza de la CCI en ambientes bilingües promueve el manejo de la lengua meta, su conocimiento cultural, la apropiación de valores pertenecientes a la ciudadanía global, el pensamiento crítico cultural, la construcción de la identidad desde el intercambio multicultural, la implementación de materiales de enseñanza desde la perspectiva de diversidad cultural y el rol del dialogo y la reflexión en los procesos de evaluación y autoevaluación.

**(Palabras clave): Competencia Comunicativa Intercultural (CCI), Conciencia cultural, Estrategia pedagógica, Entorno bilingüe.**

## Abstract

This research develops a pedagogical plan to improve intercultural communicative competence in primary and secondary school students in two bilingual schools in Bogotá and Cartagena, Colombia. The research responds to the need to improve the teaching practices of intercultural communicative competence by EFL teachers, identifying which are the pedagogical principles implemented in both institutions and contrasting them with those proposed by the official documents of the Colombian Ministry of Education that offer a guide for the teaching of English. To this end, a qualitative methodology was implemented using a multiple case study, with interviews with students, teachers, principals, and parents, as well as classroom observations and document analysis.

The study reveals that ICC teaching in bilingual environments promotes the management of the target language, cultural knowledge, the appropriation of values pertaining to global citizenship, critical cultural thinking, the construction of identity from multicultural exchange, the implementation of teaching materials from the perspective of cultural diversity and the role of dialogue and reflection in the processes of evaluation and self-evaluation.

**(Key words):** Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), Cultural awareness, motivation, Pedagogical strategy, bilingual environment

## INTRODUCTION

First and foremost, in today's educational scenario, where innovation and the search for new methodologies become imperatives, Intercultural Communicative Competence (onwards ICC) emerges as a pedagogical approach with transformative potential in language learning, as mentioned by Cuartas (2020), top-down perspectives on ICC have provided frameworks that emphasise the cultural dimension in language curriculum which, in turn, has reverberated into thousands of new teaching materials and textbooks portraying high amounts of cultural contents within them.

Using an Intercultural Communicative approach in English Language Teaching in the second and third grades of primary and the seventh grade of secondary from referenced schools in this research project contributes to increasing learners' motivation, development, and formation of critical thinking.

It is particularly effective and efficient in the scope of an English Language course for bilingual school purposes. Besides, this educational approach, which goes beyond the simple sum of knowledge from language skills and awareness, proposes an intellectual journey that weaves together seemingly cultural awareness, creating meaningful connections and awakening a genuine interest in students as found in Education Scotland Fordham Alba IDL (2020) that says that this enables children and young people to learn new knowledge or skills and helps children to develop new understanding of concepts; draw on prior knowledge, experience and skills; the transfer and apply of that collective knowledge takes them to solve new problems or other areas of learning from the direct contact with cultural events of their surroundings.

At the core of this project, ICC lies the need to improve English teaching practices in the second and third grades of primary school and the seventh grade of high school in two bilingual schools, one in Cartagena and the other in the north of Bogotá.

The aim is to investigate the essential components of the intercultural communicative competence that initially mold in the classroom and then to refer to a pedagogical orientation design to improve direct contact with the culture of the English language in the various contexts that make up the educational community from second and third grades of primary and the seventh grade of middle school in two bilingual schools, one located in Cartagena and the other in the north of Bogotá, directed to enhance in-school immersion programs for students with no opportunities of traveling abroad.

According to Unesco (2013), teaching students with intercultural competence fosters understanding of foreign countries and cultures, meets students from different countries, broadens horizons, and learns more about themselves.

The author Sobkowiak (2019) refreshes this argument by saying that students will also challenge their perceptions of their values and cultures and become more open-minded; our development increases tolerance of other cultures and people so that students can break down stereotypes, promotes cultural awareness and inform others about own country, learning a foreign language also means learning about its culture and people so they can observe that they are not alone. There are other people in different parts of the world.

In this way, direct contact with foreign cultures, experience, and dealing with cultural diversity will significantly contribute to the learning of the schools referenced above for their artistic and academic growth.

Analogously, this research intends to answer the question: *What pedagogical orientations should be considered to teach Intercultural Communicative Competence in EFL classes for the two bilingual schools' second, third, and seventh grades?*

## General Objective

In achieving this purpose, it is necessary to **determine** the key pedagogical orientations for the teaching of ICC in English as a foreign language class by designing a document that proposes improvements to this approach in the second and third grades of primary, as well as in the seventh grade of secondary, in two Colombian bilingual schools.

The following are the **specific objectives** of this project to fulfil its purpose:

1. To identify the pedagogical guidelines for teaching ICC in bilingual learning environments implemented in two Colombian bilingual schools.
2. To analyse the impact of the ICC teaching on students' motivation and interest in learning the English language, using questionnaires and classroom observations.
3. To establish a pedagogical proposal that includes improvements in the teaching of ICC in EFL classes for the second and third grades of primary school and seventh grade of secondary school.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

For the nature of this study, it has been necessary to initially highlight information presented by preliminary research that allows for a clearer understanding of the evolutionary development of the construct of ICC in language education. This understanding helps to explore further how it can be integrated into the pedagogical principles of two bilingual institutions in Colombia. Following this, ICC's contributions to teaching English as a second language, its impact on student motivation for learning, and, finally, defining the pedagogical orientations that improve the teaching of this competence in a bilingual school learning environment.

### **The Notion of Intercultural Communicative Competence in Language Teaching.**

In principle, Byram (2021) presents that in the 1970s, Chomsky and Hymes understood the term competence as the ability of a speaker to manage a language in the real world in real-time, with all its implications. Along the same lines, Patiño et al. (2021) outline the proposal made by Canale in the 1980s, referring to communicative competence as a set of four interconnected competencies: linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence.

Furthermore, considering the development of a skill contrast to the necessity of understanding its cultural context, as Hoff (2024) notes that “in the 1990s, Byram directed ICC expanding the notion of competence—as the ability of individuals to interact in their language with people and interpreting events from another culture, to explain it, and relating it to affairs of their own” (p. 57).

Fortunately, the speakers from the bilingual school contexts addressed in this study operate in a context where they can express experiences of Colombian culture through their mother tongue to craft more explicit messages for foreign speakers. Similarly, they obtain several interpreting messages from the language they are learning as a second language—English—communicated by native speakers of that language.

Individuals engaging in cross-cultural communication discover that they cannot expect others to interpret aspects of their culture in the same manner as they do. Rico-Troncoso (2018) appointment to Tarasheva and Davcheva (2001) shared that the interpretations made of one's own culture are authentic and unique to native speakers. Hence, linguistic identity is a foundation of the ICC through which “the intercultural speaker learns

that they cannot assume that the phenomena of their own culture are understood in the same way by others” (p. 87).

Addressing the dimension of learning culture, Savicki (2023) argues that an intercultural approach should prepare students to succeed in the country where they study and thrive in any culture. This perspective aligns with the insights of Cabrera and Gallardo (2014), who explain that ICC is a contemporary educational trend aimed at facilitating interaction among individuals from different cultures within the same society.

Similarly, they reference Brito (2017), who conceptualizes ICC as both a process and an attitude encompassing essential elements such as respect, tolerance, dialogue, and mutual enrichment. Brito emphasizes the importance of recognizing and appreciating diversity, fostering interaction among social groups, and actively applying knowledge and practices that promote harmonization.

Byram (2021) highlights that ICC, by teaching a foreign language, refers to the ability to interact with people from different cultures and places using the learned language. In light of this perspective, we can affirm that in the contexts of the two selected bilingual schools in Bogotá and Cartagena, the spaces intended for learning English foster constant interaction between diverse cultures. In this environment, the traditions of Colombian cultural diversity coexist and mutually enrich each other along with the American, London, French, Canadian, Brazilian, Chilean, and Belgian cultures that are part of the educational community.

To achieve a clear and unimpeded gaze, it is necessary to conceptualize ICC as an educational paradigm that extends beyond mere linguistic proficiency, aiming to foster effective and empathetic interaction between individuals from disparate cultural backgrounds. In the bilingual learning environment of the English language, ICC endeavours to dismantle identity-based stereotypes and cultivate cultural awareness, thereby enabling future language learners to develop communicative abilities that transcend mere linguistic competence and to interact effectively in a globalized, multicultural world.

### **Contributions to teaching ICC in a bilingual learning environment.**

Teaching ICC in a bilingual environment requires language instruction beyond mere language proficiency. It must also enhance learners' ability to express their own cultural identity. Dimitrova-Gyuzelev (2019) and Golubeva et al. (2022) advocate shifting from

traditional language teaching methods to a more intercultural and inclusive approach. This shift involves acquiring linguistic skills and developing intercultural competence, which enables learners to navigate diverse cultural contexts effectively.

In a bilingual learning environment like the schools in Bogotá and Cartagena, it is crucial to acknowledge the plurality of non-Colombian dynamics where various idiosyncrasies converge and interact harmoniously. Specifically, Goluveba et al. (2022) emphasise the role of mediation and cultural critique in acquiring a foreign language. By engaging in intercultural dialogue and reflecting on their cultural identities, learners can develop a deeper understanding of other cultures and build bridges between them. This perspective supports Byram, who concurs that effective communication must transcend mere linguistic accuracy and promote intercultural citizenship.

Risager (2021) further agrees with integrating human rights and cultural diversity into language education to sustain this aspect of ICC teaching in bilingual contexts. This approach goes beyond mere language proficiency and aims to cultivate ethical and socially responsible global citizens. With the same in mind, the role of ICC in constructing curricula for bilingual teaching is the need to explore authentic representations of culture, which in turn are opposed to superficial and conventional elements. López- Rocha (2016) demonstrates that:

the current demand to understand identity and appreciate similarities and differences, our responsibility to prepare global citizens, and the result of studying other defining models, such as the US Standards for Foreign Language Learning that define language goals in terms of communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities, aimed at preparing students to develop linguistic and intercultural competence (p. 107).

Thus, the contribution to teaching ICC in the bilingual context of learning is portrayed with the relationship between language teaching and the promotion of democratic and pluralistic values as a central tenet of Byram's argument, as it emphasizes the importance of raising students' awareness of diverse cultural perspectives and the inherent rights of all individuals. Likewise, the deployment of ICC in bilingual education cannot be embraced as a synonym for promoting the socio-cultural domination of a language through ethnographic adaptation practices. Still, according to Jaramillo (2023), it should instead be understood as contributing to a mainstream approach and reflection on one's own and others' beliefs, as well as attitudes and behaviours intertwined with one's language.

## **Pedagogical Guidelines for the Development of Interculturality and Communicative Competence (ICC) in the Bilingual Teaching-Learning Process**

In recent decades, Colombia's Ministry of National Education (MEN) has promoted teaching a second language as a critical strategy to improve competitiveness in a globalized world. Significant programs and projects have been implemented, supported by research that validates the methodologies and tools necessary for their school execution (Zabala, 2023). Bilingual education, in turn, represents a fundamental opportunity to enhance students' intercultural and communicative competencies.

In an interconnected world, it is essential for students not only to learn a language but also to develop the ability to interact effectively with people from diverse cultures (Quintero, 2012). This educational process transcends simple linguistic learning; it involves understanding, valuing, and respecting the cultural diversity of the language. Therefore, pedagogical guidelines aimed at developing ICC are crucial in this context.

To complete this objective, educators need to understand the dynamic nature of interculturality. According to Zabala (2023), the foreign language curriculum should integrate intercultural components that recognize the values, beliefs and attitudes of other cultures while also promoting overcoming stereotypes. Teachers must incorporate content that reflects cultural and linguistic diversity, fostering a more profound respect for other ways of life and thought.

Including relevant educational materials—such as literature, art and music—from the countries where the target language is spoken is essential in foreign language education. Varón (2020) points out that this perspective has its roots in Nelson Brooks' ideas from the 1960s, who advocated for curricula that integrated cultural elements. In the current context of the identity crisis, Zabala (2023) and Quintero et al. (2006) highlight the importance of establishing connections between the past and the future. For Colombia, advancing towards a curriculum that addresses these cultural dimensions could represent significant progress, projecting a 40% advancement in research and scientific fields.

Additionally, Guerra Velásquez (2023) emphasizes the importance of celebrating cultural diversity and ancestral traditions within educational communities, thereby strengthening students' cultural identities in the face of the homogenization processes often present in education. To achieve this, teachers must receive appropriate training to develop an inclusive curriculum and create classroom environments that celebrate cultural diversity. Safe

spaces where students feel comfortable sharing their experiences should be promoted, fostering intercultural dialogue through strategies such as heterogeneous group work and collaborative cultural projects that facilitate exchange and mutual understanding.

Implementing active methodologies is crucial for encouraging student participation in language learning. From the point of view of Martínez (2020), these skills go beyond grammar and vocabulary, encompassing communicative competence and understanding of cultural contexts. Reading practices, for instance, are practical tools for developing language comprehension and critical awareness of cultural and social differences. This author also suggests that activities such as role-playing, dramatizations and debates in authentic contexts allow students to practice both the language and their intercultural skills, empowering them to communicate and engage across diverse cultures.

Continuous professional development for teachers is fundamental to effectively implementing educational guidelines in bilingual or multilingual contexts. They should promote an effective learning environment through differentiated teaching methods and assessments recognizing diverse competencies (Salazar et al., 2024). Training in bilingual pedagogy and intercultural approaches is essential for guiding students' learning process. Organizing seminars and workshops on cultural diversity and inclusive teaching strategies will enrich teaching practice and enhance the learning experience for students.

The assessment of the development of ICC should be comprehensive and flexible, considering both language proficiency and students' abilities to interact with and respect diverse cultural perspectives. It involves implementing assessment tools that include reflections and self-assessments, allowing students to become aware of their intercultural learning process. Furthermore, teachers must recognize their prior knowledge and beliefs regarding ICC, understanding that these can coexist harmoniously (Zabala, 2023).

Therefore, the pedagogical guidelines for developing interculturality and communicative competence in bilingual teaching and learning must adopt a holistic approach that integrates language and culture. This document aims to identify the obstacles that hinder the effective combination of grammatical and communicative competencies and proposes solutions through a plan to strengthen the teaching of ICC in two bilingual private schools. In this way, it seeks to promote an inclusive and dynamic educational environment, serving as a teacher guide and providing continuous training that prepares students to be competent global citizens who respect cultural diversity.

## METHOD

In examining educational practices, strategies, and the necessity for enhancing ICC in English language teaching, this research employs a qualitative approach that may be described as an inductive process within a natural environment. Because of that, the data collection process starts with observing the facts that occur in the development of the research rather than reviewing the theories of certain factors, thus creating an analysis, and giving a concept of them and establishing a close relationship between the participants (Sampieri, 2018, p. 14). This research, whose phenomenon focuses on the need to propose improvements of ICC teaching in the English language classes, includes an external analysis by the researchers to determine what is happening in the selected school contexts and wherefore to provide from their experience a series of improvements to the research problem.

On top of that, it is framed within the case study method, which Viscaíno et al. (2023) have shown how to process data “clearly and thoroughly in research, involving understanding the research problem in detail and in-depth” (p. 9744). The research design of this study corresponds to multiple comparative case studies because, with this one, the researchers want to be able to analyse the data within each situation and across two different Colombian school contexts. Also, Gustafsson (2020) refers to “multiple cases to understand the similarities and differences between the cases and therefore can provide the literature with important influences from its differences and similarities” (p. 11).

In doing so, the model above allows the proposal of a pedagogical guidance document to strengthen the teaching practices of ICC in English classes in educational institutions and to identify the possible weaknesses, shortcomings, and immediate challenges recorded through the various data collection instruments.

## Population

The present study was conducted in two bilingual private educational institutions: one located in a rural setting, specifically at kilometre 12 of the Cartagena Ring Road, and the other in an urban context, at kilometre 8.3 of the Chía-Cundinamarca Road. Based on the definition proposed by Willie (2024), a population is a comprehensive set of interests encompassing all individuals or elements that meet the established inclusion criteria for the study. In this regard, the research carries out these schooling settings, mainly because two of the researchers work there as bilingual teachers and they are keen to apply improvements to pedagogical practices with an ICC approach in their English teaching environment.

The two schools involved in the study have 85 students in the bilingual school from the Cartagena program and 100 in the bilingual school in the Bogotá program. Both schools serve students from socioeconomic levels 4, 5, and 6. The teachers in both schools are proficient in English (B2-C1) and hold relevant teaching qualifications. Prior to participation, to ensure participant privacy both education centres provided endorsement form (**Appendix A**) and all individuals signed a consent form (**Appendix B**) acknowledging the importance of confidentiality and agreeing to the secure handling of their personal information.

The participants for the research included three second-grade groups, one third-grade group from a bilingual school in Cartagena, and four seventh-grade groups from a bilingual school in Bogotá. In total, 185 students, five teachers, two section coordinators, and four parents participated. These courses were chosen due to their similarities for section, second, and third levels in each section. Besides that, the group of second-level students in middle school who are at the bilingual school in Bogotá are the ones who have the opportunity to travel abroad in an academic environment and have interculturalization, while those from the bilingual school in Cartagena do not in that academic context.

As stated by Patton (2002), sample selection should be based on consideration of the target population and the sample's ability to represent that population. In this case, the selection of the two schools and specific grades was based on the consideration of the similarity in their bilingual educational offerings' geographic location, allowing for an interesting comparison between the results obtained in each context.

In conducting this research, the researchers elected to select second and third grade students in accordance with the criteria set forth for intercultural education at the early childhood level. As outlined by UNIR (2021), these criteria aim to integrate students, cultivate empathy, facilitate communication processes, and promote the formation of personal identity from the earliest stages of childhood. Seventh-grade students are selected based on the criteria of teaching interculturality in secondary school, as delineated by UNIR (2021). These criteria emphasize the formation of values pertaining to respect, tolerance, and dialogue for conflict solving, which are regarded as instrumental in eliminating the prevailing hierarchization and Eurocentrism in our society.

## The eligibility criteria

As mentioned by Pimienta and De la Orden (2017) to establish the individuals that constitute the population of this research, they must meet certain conditions, among which the following deserve special mention: a) *homogeneity*: similar qualities or characteristics, considering the variables; b) *time*: to be at the same time; c) *place*: the same environment; and d) *quantity*: total size of the population. The eligibility criteria in this study were that the participants had to

- be part of a bilingual educational community. (*place*)
- be a student, teacher, or student officer in one of the schools at an IB school. (*quantity*)
- belong as a student or teacher to the second or third grade of primary or seventh grade of high school in either of the two institutions from 2023 to 2024. (*time*)
- belong to an educational institution where students interact with people from different cultures, either from the student's home country or from a foreign country. (*homogeneity*)

## Instruments

Withal, this research involves three types of instruments suitable to gather data: first, a field-note format on which a series of participant observations are recorded to verify pedagogical actions in teaching ICC in two bilingual institutions in Colombia. Second, a document analysis matrix is used to compare the pedagogical guidelines of the Ministry of Education with the pedagogical orientations of each institution. In parallel, a multiple-choice questionnaire was used to collect the perceptions of the educational community about teaching English as a second language and its relation to intercultural competence.

## Field-note format

In this study, two researchers conducted a total of 20 observations in the classrooms of the participating schools, distributed as follows: At the Colegio Bilingüe de Cartagena, 12 observations were carried out, organized into 3 for each of the 2B, 2C, 2D, and 3A grades, between May 6 and 31, 2024. At the Colegio Bilingüe de Bogotá, 8 observations were carried out, applied 2 each in the 7C, 7D, 7E, and 7F grades, during the period from May 8 to 24, 2024.

The qualitative data is gathered using field note format according to Trujillo Diaz (2020):

Field notes are qualitative data collected by researchers during or after observing a specific phenomenon in a research project and their purpose is to facilitate the understanding and significance of the object of study, allowing the researcher to observe without interfering or altering the phenomenon (p. 76).

The proper use of this instrument has allowed researchers to observe and record key information about the pedagogical principles implemented for teaching intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in English classes. In addition, relevant behaviours and interactions have been documented for data analysis, such as students' participation, fragments of conversations, and opinions, thoughts, and feelings about how they interact with the cultural values of both their native language and their second language.

Alternatively, as Amos Hatch (2023) puts it "are usually descriptions of contexts, actions and conversations captured in as much detail as possible given the constraints of watching and writing or typing in a rapidly changing social environment" (p.77).

To comparatively analyse the strengths and opportunities for improvement in teaching ICC in second- and third-grade English classes in a British school in Cartagena and seventh grade in a bilingual school in Bogotá. A field note format was designed to conduct twenty-four observations in three sessions, applying seven questions to assess the strategies used to bolster ICC, the use of English in ICC-based contexts, and the application of ICC components in both educational contexts. **(Appendix C)** and **(Appendix D)**.

### **Document analysis matrix**

This matrix helps extensively record the pedagogical guidelines implemented for teaching ICC in both bilingual schools and compare them with those suggested by the MEN. In Martínez et. al. (2023), documentary analysis is a research technique in which we can have different intellectual operations. These operations consist of describing and representing our documents and systematically unifying them to retrieve them as needed.

The documental matrix is divided into three macro-structures: schools, MEN structure in four categories: thematic analysis, bibliometric analysis, methodological analysis and evidence and appraisal. From the point of view of Amos (2023), this instrument is defined “as

a provider of a vision without interfering in the realization of that phenomenon research social” (p. 116).

The first microstructure has three microcategories: subthemes, pedagogical guidance, and population. These micro-categories are further split up into themes related to cultural education, student motivation, and interest in ICC learning to identify if, in the learning environment of the English language area in both bilingual schools in Colombia, these principles are applied in the teaching practices of the ICC.

The development of the matrix begins with the systematic selection of recent institutional documents at the time of the research and pedagogical documents from the Ministry of Education. Subsequently, three sections of document analysis are assigned and a first reading is undertaken in which key words, approach, paradigm, method, instruments, and population are sought; characteristics that make up the texts analysed.

A second reading of the documents recorded in the matrix is made for the purpose of filling in the thematic analysis section. Braun and Clarke argue that this type of analysis is useful for making the research more valid thanks to its accessibility, transparency, and flexibility (as cited in Dawadi, 2020), characteristics that were fundamental to feed the concepts, themes and sub-themes that emerged from the literature review.

In the last stage of filling in the analytical matrix, the evidence and values corresponding to the most representative notes, observations and comments that consolidate and strengthen the arguments about the pedagogical principles proposed for the teaching of intercultural communicative competence in the ELE classes of the two Colombian bilingual schools involved in the study are recorded. The classification of the information is done through the comparative interpretation that Cavendish describes as the method of systematic reading and re-reading of fragments.

The thematic analysis allows us to focus on the pedagogical guidelines proposed in each document. The biometric analysis facilitates the synthesis and the most important findings. The methodological analysis lets us know the methodologies described in the broached files (**See Appendix E**).

## Analytical survey

A third collecting technique was two surveys to gather data on students', guardians', teachers', heads' and 'coordinators' perceptions of cultural diversity and intercultural teaching in English classes. According to Pimienta and De la Orden (2017) "It is a technique that consists of the completion of a questionnaire composed of a set of standardized questions, to know the opinion of a large group of people" (p. 86).

The surveys aimed to understand their views about the importance of ICC and about the challenges they face in implementing it. Hadi et al. (2023) highlights the effectiveness of surveys as a tool for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. In contrast, Vizcaíno et al. (2023) describe implementing a research methodology that includes a survey as a critical tool to collect information on teaching diverse cultures in English classes.

To find out about the impact of intercultural education on students' motivation and interest in learning English, the researchers conducted two surveys, one was done for students, and the other was for teachers, coordinators, and parents. The primary focus was to gather information about how intercultural education is perceived and implemented in their schools, as well as its effect on language acquisition. 20 students from second, third, and seventh grades, along with 13 teachers, coordinators, and parents did the surveys. These surveys allowed the researchers a comprehensive understanding of different perspectives on intercultural education.

The researchers did the surveys online through Google Forms, giving an efficient and accessible platform for data collection. The questionnaires had open-ended and multiple-choice questions designed to give the researchers both quantitative and qualitative feedback. The open questions aimed at detailed responses, while the multiple-choice questions aimed at fast data analysis. This mixed-method approach ensured that the information could be collected, contributing to a good analysis of the topic.

The survey had a period from September 23 to October 25, giving participants enough time to complete their responses, even though students did it in a 2-hour period with the help of the researcher. The researchers gave clear instructions to guide participants through the process.

By analysing their perspectives, the study will identify strengths and weaknesses of cultural learning in their practice. Specific questions focus on the impact of intercultural

training on student interaction with diverse cultures and on concrete activities that foster such interaction. Survey data will be collected and analysed using Google Forms to inform the development of innovative methods and resources to integrate ICC into teaching practices. This questionnaire was presented in Spanish for institutional stakeholders, students, and parents to ensure better understanding among all participants (**See Appendix F** ) and (**see Appendix G**).

*Table 1.*

*Applied instruments*

Instrument	Objective	Measures	Place	Time	Participants
Field-note format	To identify the pedagogical guidelines for teaching ICC in bilingual learning environments implemented in both institutions.	Reinforcement strategies for English language skills, developing cultural awareness, and implementing ICC-based activities were aspects to tackle the instrument's feasibility.	Bilingual School in Cartagena	6 <sup>th</sup> - 31 <sup>st</sup> of May	2B, 2C, 2D, 3A students and English teacher 1
			Bilingual School in Bogotá	8 <sup>th</sup> - 24 <sup>th</sup> of May	7C, 7D, 7E, 7F students and English teacher 2
Document analysis matrix	To establish a pedagogical proposal that includes improvements for the development of ICC in English language classes.	The following documents: Curriculum, annual plan, lesson planners, planning term, the school's coexistence manual, the fundamental learning rights for transition to eleven grades, the curriculum suggested by the MEN for transition to eleven grades, and the pedagogical principles and guidelines for transition to eleven.	Bilingual School in Cartagena  Bilingual School in Bogotá	30 <sup>th</sup> of Aug.- 18 <sup>th</sup> of Oct	Researchers
Analytical survey	To analyse the impact of intercultural education on students' motivation and interest in learning the English language, using tools such as questionnaires and classroom observations.	The open-ended, multiple-choice questionnaire elicited those practices that are significant for students, parents, teachers, and coordinators in teaching ICC in EFL classes.	Bilingual School in Cartagena  Bilingual School in Bogotá	23 <sup>rd</sup> of Sep- 25 <sup>th</sup> of Oct	Students, parents, English teachers, and academic coordinators  Students, parents, English teachers, and academic coordinators

**Note:** Authors' elaboration (2024)

## ANALYSIS OF DATA

In this sense, the thematic analysis defined by the author Dawadi, S. (2020), as follows:

Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method that researchers use to systematically organise and analyse complex data sets. It is a search for themes that can capture the narratives available in the account of data sets. It involves the identification of themes through careful reading and re-reading of the transcribed data. (p.60)

This exercise develops from data obtained from the records of the application of twenty field diaries, a comparative matrix, a documentary analytical matrix, and two questionnaires with single-response multiple-choice and open-ended options for the development of the project “Pedagogical Plan Proposal for proposing improvements for the Teaching Practices of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in Two Colombian Bilingual Schools”.

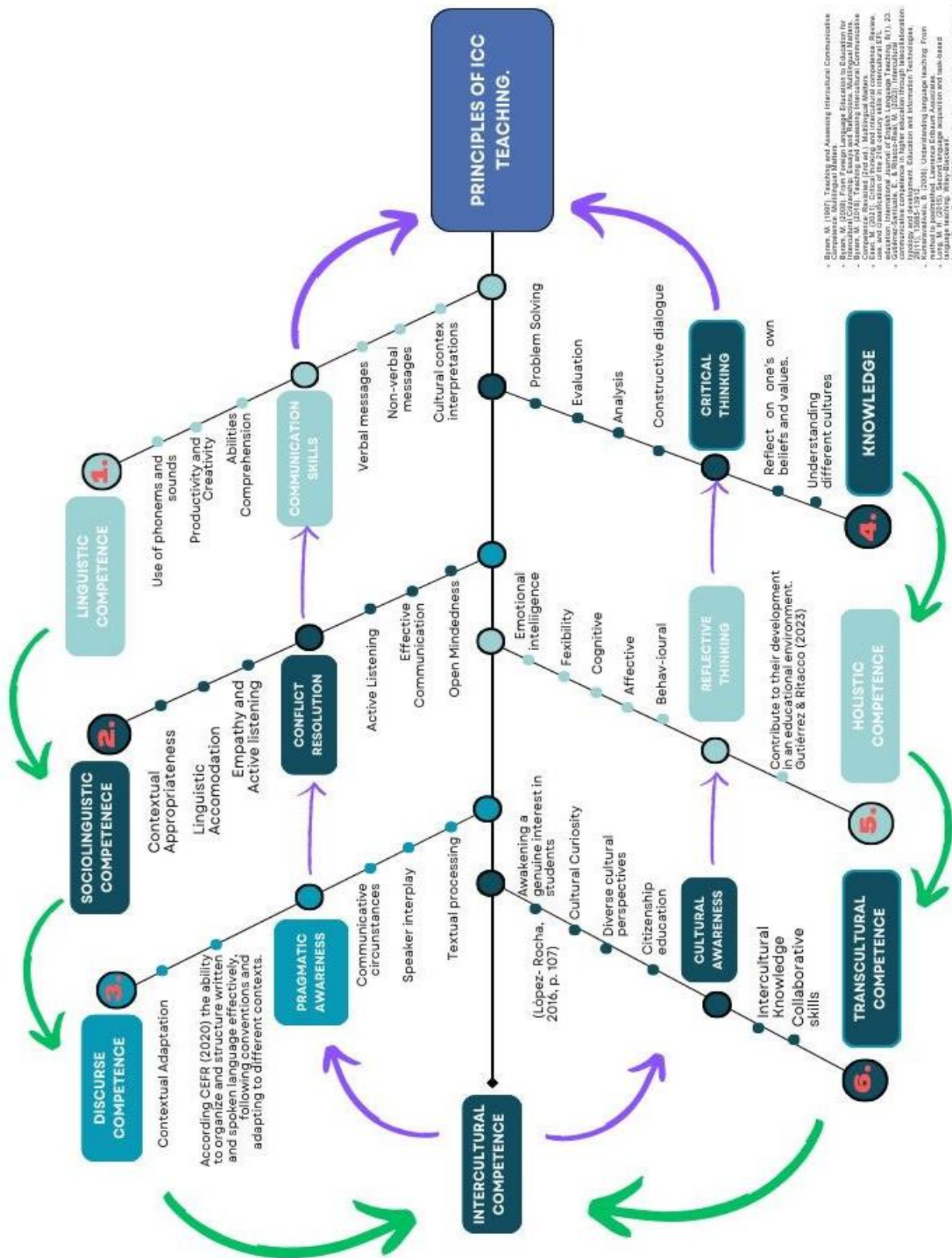
To execute the analysis of the data of the present research, the methodology of thematic analysis was followed, with the prospect of obtaining results compatible with the pedagogical suspicions that feed the improvements in the teaching of ICC. The steps to be followed with this methodology were the forgoing:

The first step was the creation of the code manual, which was designed to define a priori codes based on the theoretical framework (see **Figure 1**) and then to enrich them with emerging codes. This process is known as deductive coding. With this in mind, Dawadi (2020) believes that “a deductive approach can be used as the starting point which allows analysing data in relation to the themes that have emerged through the review of literature done for the study or the research questions designed for the study” (p.63), for this of cause, the process made it possible to focus the interest first on the pedagogical principles of the ICC.

The second phase comprised the application of the code manual, which enabled a deductive analysis to be carried out by applying the codes to the data collected and searching for significant units, thus maintaining triangulation between different data sources.

**Figure 1.**

*Framework for understanding principles of intercultural communicative competence*



- Byrne, W. (1997). Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence. *Multilingual Matters*.
- Byrne, W. (2008). From Foreign Language Education to Education for Intercultural Understanding. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 31(1), 1-10.
- Byrne, W. (2018). Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 41(1), 1-10.
- Canale, M. (1983). *Contextualization of the 21st century skills in intercultural EFL use and communication*. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 12(1), 23-30.
- Canale, M., & Kasper, G. (1999). *Intercultural Competence in Higher Education through Intercultural Dialogue*. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 18(1), 1-10.
- Canale, M., & Kasper, G. (2001). *Intercultural Competence: An Overarching Framework for Foreign Language Teaching*. *Foreign Language Annals*, 24(1), 1-10.
- Canale, M., & Kasper, G. (2015). *Intercultural Competence and Language Learning: A Review of the Literature*. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 24(1), 1-10.
- López-Rocha, Sandra. (2016). *Intercultural communicative competence: A review of the literature*. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 25(1), 1-10.
- Gutiérrez, Ritacco. (2023). *Intercultural communicative competence: A review of the literature*. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 32(1), 1-10.

**Note:** Authors' elaboration (2024)

Its development made it possible to achieve what it stipulates Naeem et., all (2023) when they claim that “Inductive coding, linked with interpretative analysis, is a bottom-up approach where codes emerge from the data and reflect the unique contexts and experiences of participants” (p.9).

Another phase considered was axial and selective coding, in which a priori and emergent codes were used to construct themes and sub-themes by linking codes, identifying patterns and new themes. Finally, the verification and corroboration of the information is applied, verifying that the identified themes respond to the research question and are directly related to the phenomenon studied, through the review of fragments, interpretations, and analysis notes. For the coding process results (**see appendix I**)

If the “essence” of what it is a researcher seeks to understand fits within one of these research question types, then reflexive Thematic Analysis is likely a method that will suit their research, as long as it is used within a conceptually coherent design. The types of questions reflexive Thematic Analysis cannot address are those that require a technical understanding of language practice and/or narrative structure—these are associated with some types of discursive psychological (e.g., Wiggins, 2017), conversation analytic (e.g., Schegloff, 2007) and narrative (e.g., Reissman, 2007) approaches; those approaches are best suited for addressing such questions. (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p.10)

According to the mixed approach of this research, since it is developed under the design of thematic analysis, it is defined from two approaches of inductive analysis (grounded theory) and deductive analysis (narratives), in this sense:

Thematic analysis (**TA**) is widely practiced in qualitative psychology. What distinguishes **TA** from most other qualitative analytic approaches—such as grounded theory and narrative analysis—is that it is more like a method (a transtheoretical tool or technique) than a methodology (a theoretically informed framework for research).

Approaches such as grounded theory and narrative analysis have been dubbed “off-the-shelf” methodologies (Chamberlain, 2012), in that they embrace both analytic techniques and philosophical assumptions, a theoretical framework, and are oriented toward particular types of the research question, participant/data selection practices, data collection methods, and quality procedures. of participants/data, data collection methods and quality procedures (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p.03).

For this purpose, the present analysis is carried out according to the fulfilment of the specific objectives, categories and subcategories, instruments, codes, and order:

**Table 2.**

**Macro and micro pedagogical themes**

Categories	Subcategories	Frequency in the data
<b>1. Inclusion of the Intercultural Communicative Competence in Language Teaching</b>	1.1 ICC through the Management of Language	1-87
	1.2 Inclusion of the Cultural Knowledge	1-119
	1.3 Integration of Global citizenship's plural values with a teaching perspective of cultural diversity	1-156
<b>2. Contributions to teaching ICC in a bilingual learning environment</b>	2.1 Development of a Critical Cultural Awareness	1-176
	2.2. Construction of students' identity through the Multicultural Exchange	1-121
<b>3. Pedagogical Guidelines for the Development of Interculturality and Communicative Competence</b>	3.1 Teaching materials for the use of language from the perspective of cultural diversity	1-192
	3.2 Strand for dialogue and reflection on assessment and self-assessment	1-113

**Note:** Authors' elaboration (2024)

Post-reading of the documents and their respective analysis under the instruments used, a count is made to determine the order of frequency which is equivalent to the number of times that the code corresponding to each category appears and the number of times that the sub-categories appear in the data. Correspondingly, **Table 2** sets out the broad themes that became categories and the sub-themes that became sub-categories.

There, the findings for each of the categories and subcategories are not presented, since the procedure of the fragmentation of the documents that support each of them was started in the result analysis procedure, where these were included to explain each of the categorical codes. This procedure can be seen in the following section entitled results.

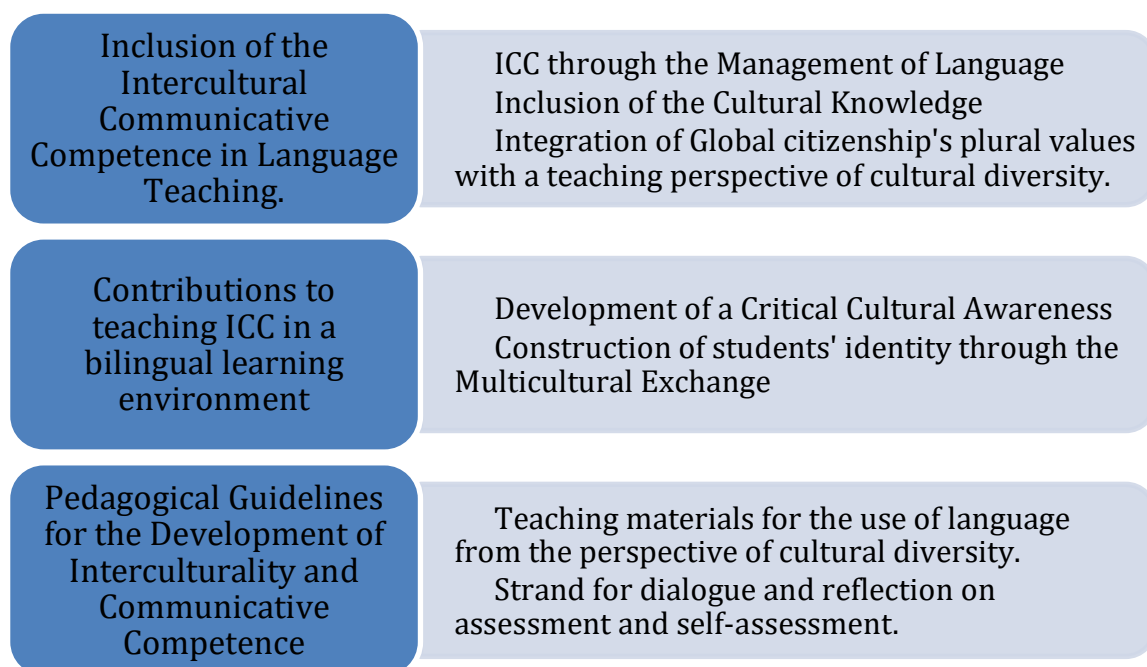
## RESULTS

To provide a better understanding of the findings, the analysed data is organised in terms of the relevant fragments and concluding questionnaires of this analysis, taking into consideration the themes that emerge from the analysis, namely: 1. Inclusion of the Intercultural Communicative Competence in Language Teaching. 2. Contributions to teaching ICC in a bilingual learning environment. 3. Pedagogical Guidelines for the Development of Interculturality and Communicative Competence.

After the analysis process, the following categories and subcategories were determined to answer the research question: *What pedagogical orientations should be considered to teach intercultural communicative competence in EFL classes for second, third, and seventh grades in two bilingual schools?*

**Figure 2.**

### *Categories and subcategories*



**Note:** Authors' elaboration (2024)

### **Category 1. Inclusion of the Intercultural Communicative Competence in Language Teaching.**

Inclusion of the Intercultural Communicative Competence in Language Teaching defines the category. This category is made up of three subcategories: ICC through the Management of Language, Inclusion of Cultural Knowledge, and Integration of Global

citizenship's plural values with a teaching perspective of cultural diversity. ICC stands as the key competence in contemporary foreign language education, it is widely agreed that the goal of foreign language curricula is to equip students with the ability to function as linguistically and interculturally competent English speakers who can take part in complex and multicultural settings (Lee et al., 2023, p. 2).

The results for each subcategory and its component aspects are presented below:

### **Subcategory 1.1. ICC through the Management of Language.**

Based on the information analysed, it became evident that promoting experiences in several languages in the classroom, as a foreign language teacher, improves the development of intercultural communicative competence using the target language. In this way, as per the data recorded in the field diary in the observation (O1), students are encouraged to share their awareness of their own culture, from the different nationalities and identities to which they belong, expressing their experiences in their mother tongues before transmitting them in English. Language management occurs through “the explicit and observable effort by someone or a group that has or claims authority over participants in the domain to modify their practices or beliefs” (Nevkapil & Sherman, 2015).

By the same token, the information from the comparative analysis matrix of the field diaries shows that “in both educational institutions, language management is crucial to achieving a better performance of the intercultural communicative competence (ICC) approach in EFL classes, fostering both language proficiency and cultural awareness of learners” (CM). Following Byram (2020), this reflects the idea that understanding cultural nuances and being able to adapt communication to cultural expectations is as pivotal as mastering the language itself.

Yet another finding is that not all students are very comfortable interacting with people from other cultures in English, as 60% of them stated that they had difficulties interacting with their teachers in question 11 of the student questionnaire in which they are asked: “How comfortable do you feel interacting with people from different cultures in English?” Concerning the most important skills to develop in language, the analysis of the Ministry of Education's pedagogical principles and guidelines for the teaching of English (2016), provides evidence that “the practice of active control and management of language used in a specific context such celebrating Mother’s day, asking for an address, ordering in a

restaurant, or interacting in a zoo to buy tickets, aims to ensure clear communication in a creative way”(p.40). This approach promotes inclusiveness and the solving of possible language problems among diverse audiences.

Therefore, language management in the foreign language classroom unfolds as an essential pedagogical guideline to improve ICC teaching. As the field diary finding observation # 1 in Bilingual Bogotá School points out: “By interacting in English with people from other cultures, the student comes to recognize the importance of continually working on active language management and through conscious and directed practice, dominating not only linguistic aspects but also dominating the competence to mediate between cultures, always striving to reach agreements of mutual understanding”. This highlights the need for comprehensive teaching that considers both linguistic development and intercultural training, preparing students to confront and overcome communication barriers and mitigate the use of cultural stereotypes that lead to discrimination.

### **Subcategory 1.2. Inclusion of cultural knowledge.**

The inclusion of cultural knowledge refers to the understanding of cultural systems practices, beliefs, and values. It goes beyond only awareness and involves a deeper comprehension of how cultures shape behaviours, communication, and social norms. Cultural knowledge is important in terms of developing intercultural competence and effective cross-cultural interactions. All this is said by Byram (2020) when discussing the importance of teaching ICC not only to facilitate communication but also to promote democratic intercultural citizenship.

Cultural knowledge is crucial for effective intercultural communication and relationships, as it helps individuals understand and navigate cultural differences respectfully and effectively. (UNESCO, 2020), leads an understanding of the values, beliefs, and practices of other cultures to facilitate better interactions from the intercultural point of view: In response to Strategies to reinforce the English language abilities in learning environments based on ICC.

It is also evident to see this subcategory in the questionnaire that researchers did to the teachers and coordinators in question 7 which is “Why do you think it is important to teach a culture different from one's own in English classes?” When coordinators and teachers answered, researchers obtained 13 answers of which 61% said that it is helpful in order to

develop other ways of thinking, and 38% answered that it is useful for having a global understanding of the world and in this way broadening the cultural horizons in their students.

Similar answers can be seen in the questionnaire for students in question 6, which is the same question as before. When the students in both institutions answer that this subcategory is important to open their minds to learning other cultures and, in this way, they can have a better relationship with students from other countries and cultures, that is what researchers can make a connection with.

The Cultural knowledge inclusion in EFL classes, shall be a pedagogical orientation for ICC teaching, because this approach not only provides a broader understanding of values that projects in different cultures that students are related to, but also because it allows them to expand from a personal vision to a more diverse one which comes from different places. In this way, cultural knowledge goes far beyond the act of just learning a language to an act of learning purposes and behaviours that accompany communicative intentions in relation with the context, just as it is shown by Byram (2020) that expresses the importance of cultural knowledge and attitudes in language learning. Learners should develop the ability to navigate between cultures, as a way of getting both linguistic proficiency and cultural understanding.

An analysis of this subcategory showed that cultural stereotypes are not present in the second and third grades of the bilingual school in Cartagena, so there is no identification of cultural stereotypes among the students at these levels. Whereas, in the bilingual school in the north of Bogotá, the lack of in-depth knowledge of cultural differences leads to the use of cultural stereotypes among students in the seventh grade. Evidence of this is given in the classroom observation of 7F on May 6, 2024, which notes verbatim the way in which the characteristics of English language proficiency are generalised just because they belong to an ethnic group. “His accent is more fluent because you can tell that his origins are from the Caribbean” (O14).

Although in the seventh-grade groups observed in this research, there is no evidence of economic deprivation since their stratification is at a high level, as shown in the description of the population, cultural stereotypes of economic aspects are implemented and reproduced through jokes and humorous comments. It is considered, as shown in the observation of the 7C class on May 7, 2024, that students perceive generalities of better economic opportunities and therefore better

social relations to those who live near the school and not far from it, when they express that “all the amenities, such as arriving early, living closer to the school, being able to come to the library at any time, being part of the English club and attending it at any time, including other activities, so they take it into account to represent the school” (O15).

In the seventh-grade groups more than in the second and third grade groups - where the research results do not show the use of cultural stereotypes among students - another practice is the generalisation of groups as unique and non-diverse. This refers to the fact that it is presumed that by belonging to a specific group of students, equality is generated and there are no differences as such. This act is defined by Aufa (2017) as “ Viewing “the others” as a homogenous group is considered as a feature of stereotypes, which we use to simplify stimulus from the world and make sense of it” (p.2). This is also clear by the beholding of the observation in 7E classroom on 14 May 2024 where one of the students expresses that “all of us who are at B2 level in English have better reading comprehension skills than the others” (O17).

Given the cultural, economic and social biases that the findings of this research show can be generated in the EFL classroom, one of the challenges will be that through the inclusion of cultural knowledge the participants will be incorporated as proposed by Zhukova et al. (2024) from intercultural communication to a strategy of deep understanding of cultural codes which effectively overcome barriers such as indifference, misunderstanding, violence and discrimination caused by both ethnic and cultural stereotypes.

### **Subcategory 1.3. Integration of Global citizenship's plural values with a teaching perspective of cultural diversity.**

Integration of Global citizenship’s plural values with a teaching perspective of cultural diversity refers to the principles, actions, and perspectives that promote a sense of responsibility, understanding, and active engagement in addressing global issues, contributing to a more equitable, sustainable, and peaceful world. These values are central to fostering individuals who think beyond their immediate surroundings and act with an awareness of their interconnectedness with others across the globe.

Integration of Global citizenship's plural values with a teaching perspective of cultural diversity is a key component of the inductive methodology framework, particularly in the problem-solving matrix. As outlined by Funque, J. (2020), problem-solving is a cognitive process that involves identifying, analysing, and finding solutions to challenges, as well as evaluating and implementing those solutions effectively.

In practice, this concept was registered in the 7C classroom observation on May 7, 2024. For example, in response to the second guiding question *"What activities develop intercultural communicative competence in the classroom?"* The teacher conducted a reading activity, where students were asked to read a text written by a European author, with the teacher explaining the cultural background of the text. This activity encouraged students to identify and reflect on principles, actions, and perspectives from both the writer and their own viewpoints, fostering an understanding of diverse global perspectives (O15).

Additionally, Integration of Global citizenship's plural values with a teaching perspective of cultural diversity connects with guiding question four —*"How do teachers adapt communication styles to suit different cultural norms?"*—as seen in the teacher's approach to giving instructions. For instance, norms and language used in some classrooms differed from those used by students preparing to travel to Canada, reflecting tailored communication strategies that align with specific cultural contexts (O15).

Integrating global citizenship into teaching practices is essential. By considering this approach, students not only develop language learning but also get the ability to understand cultural differences and effectively solve problems using both languages. This holistic method promotes critical thinking, empathy, and adaptability, facilitating students with the right skills to explore diverse cultural contexts. Deardorff, D. K. (2006)

This sub-category analysis, from the reading of the documents of the bilingual school of Cartagena, shows that the institution promotes and integrates a global citizenship approach for the second and third grades, considering the annual learning project of the participants by including in its Institutional Coexistence Manual (2021):

... training for the exercise of human rights, education for sexuality and the prevention and mitigation of school violence', and which aims to 'contribute to the formation of active citizens who contribute to the construction of a democratic, participatory, pluralistic and intercultural society, in accordance with the constitutional mandate and

the General Law of Education - Law 115 of 1994 - through the creation of the national system of school coexistence and training for human rights, education for sexuality and the prevention and mitigation of school violence, which promotes and strengthens citizenship training and the exercise of human, sexual and reproductive rights of students at pre-school, elementary and middle school levels, and prevents and mitigates school violence and teenage pregnancy. (p.14)

## **Category 2. Contributions to teaching ICC in a bilingual learning environment.**

This second category, identified as Contributions to teaching ICC in a bilingual learning environment, consists of two subcategories: development of a critical cultural awareness and construction of students' identities through the multicultural exchange. According to Stibi and Hird (2018), it is essential to explicitly teach intercultural communication skills in bilingual environments to ensure that students not only develop language skills but also the ability to communicate effectively and respectfully with people from diverse cultures.

The results of each subcategory and its components are presented below:

### **Subcategory 2.1. Development of a Critical Cultural Awareness.**

In the context of teaching ICC within bilingual learning environments, fostering critical cultural awareness is a crucial component. According to Stibi and Hird (2018), this not only involves understanding cultural differences but also critically reflecting on the values, beliefs, and practices that shape these differences. One of the strategies to achieve this from the teaching perspective is to create opportunities for students to explore and question cultural norms, both their own and those of others, which will allow them to develop a deeper understanding of how culture influences communication.

In the framework of this research, it has been shown that, from the teaching role in bilingual institutions in Cartagena and Bogotá, a pedagogical reflection arises on the practices to be improved in the teaching of ICC in English classes.

The findings derived from question 8 of the Teachers and Coordinators Questionnaire: *"What intercultural aspects do you consider need to be improved in the teaching of your English class?"* reveal that 62% of the respondents consider that, in order to optimize their practices, it is essential to improve cultural teaching in bilingual environments through

authentic cultural immersion, achieved through experiential activities and practical projects, instead of resorting only to theoretical exercises. In addition, his open-ended question allowed participants to argue their answers by highlighting the need to train teachers, parents, and students, as well as access to adequate teaching resources and true collaborative work with native people to enrich teaching. On the other hand, they emphasize the importance of conducting deeper research and restructuring the curriculum to promote more authentic and enriching intercultural teaching.

Another finding by the researchers that supports the importance of developing critical cultural awareness is that schools seek to foster an open-minded student profile, as described in the Manual de Convivencia Colegio Bilingüe de Cartagena (2023), where “the student profile emphasizes the need for students to be aware of their own culture and personal history while also being open to the perspectives, values, and traditions of others” (p.4). This openness is crucial to developing intercultural competence as it allows students to interact with and appreciate cultural diversity in a meaningful way.

Within the findings of the present investigation, it is also evident that in the seventh grade, there is a brief level of indirect discrimination that can generate feelings of exclusion in the school environment. This type of discrimination arises from statements related to gender and the level of proficiency in English as a second language. In the observation of classroom 7D on 7 May 2024, it is shown that some comments towards a peer would generate adversity to learning and even fear. “Boys who keep thinking about football find it more difficult to understand the vocabulary of the story, that's why no one asks to get hold of them” (O16).

Ergo, thinking about the development of a critical view of culture and awareness of all the components it encompasses leads to the development of a critical intercultural awareness which as Hazaea (2020) presents “is the ability of EFL students to effectively and appropriately decode and encode cultures of self and others as interculturally competitive discourses associated with an intercultural topic in intercultural texts” (p. 19).

Developing critical cultural awareness in bilingual learning environments is critical to fostering effective and meaningful intercultural communication; by integrating pedagogical approaches focused on cultural immersion and critical reflection, schools can create a

learning environment that not only enhances students' language skills but also prepares them to interact empathetically and competently in a globalized and multicultural world.

As highlighted in Module 4 of Globalization MEN (2016):

Students engage in recognizing the cultural characteristics of various countries. They do this by creating short descriptive texts that highlight the characteristics of people and places, both orally and in writing. Through structured question-and-answer exchanges, students share information, using phrases and expressions to describe specific features of the people and places found in their texts. (MEN, 2016, p. 34).

This interactive and participatory approach not only strengthens the use of descriptive language but also encourages students to effectively apply and identify intercultural characteristics, contributing to a more inclusive and global education.

### **Subcategory 2.2. Construction of students' identity through the Multicultural Exchange.**

In multicultural classrooms, students' identity is constructed through interaction with diverse cultural perspectives and values, allowing them to reflect on their backgrounds and compare their experiences with those of their peers. This exchange fosters key skills such as self-awareness, cultural empathy, and intercultural competence, which are essential to strengthening their identity in a diverse environment. Valuing and respecting different cultural identities in the classroom not only reduce stereotypes but also creates an inclusive environment where all identities are recognized and respected (Mili & Towers, 2024).

One important aspect of teaching ICC in bilingual contexts is the role that multicultural exchange plays in forming students' identities.

One of the pieces of evidence found in question 14 of the Student and Parent Questionnaire, which asks “*how studying and learning a different culture has contributed to their lives*”, shows that 80% of respondents, from both bilingual institutions in Cartagena and Bogotá, consider that this learning has a positive impact on their personal and social development and cultural empathy. Studying a different culture broadens perspective, fosters empathy, and improves communication with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. In addition, it facilitates adaptation to new contexts, especially when traveling or interacting with individuals from different cultures and languages. Likewise, knowledge of other cultures

opens up professional opportunities by mastering languages and understanding diverse customs. This learning benefits not only those who acquire it but also future generations.

For the above reasons, the data reflects that the parents surveyed mention that their children feel more comfortable communicating in other languages. Therefore, studying and learning about different cultures contributes to personal growth, fosters tolerance, and strengthens ties at a global level.

Another observation that supports the construction of students' identity through multicultural exchange is found in the Seventh Grade Subject Plan English Language Arts. In this Annual Plan, Arce (2023) mentions that "Students will develop speaking skills through the use of critical thinking and respectful communication practices in order to gain the ability to express their opinions and preferences, understand the perspectives of others, and address both agreements and disagreements in a constructive and respectful manner" (p.1).

As a result of the foregoing, respect and communication are two links to get the learner to express opinions and preferences reflectively and critically about their culture, without excluding the experiences of the different linguistic identities with which they interact. As reinforced with their perspective Yazykova et al. (2020), the learner's readiness and ability to use the English language for successful interpersonal cross-cultural communication in a multicultural environment, allowing students to go beyond their own culture while moving through diverse discourses and identities without losing their own national-cultural identity (p. 1129).

In the 2C classroom observation on May 6, 2024, a clear promotion of one's own culture was evident during the development of the English class. "The teacher strengthens the culture and identity of her students, mostly Latin American, by integrating the use of their native language and activities that reflect their cultural experiences. Despite the challenges with disruptive students, she manages to establish a welcoming and safe environment using humour and authority. In addition, she encourages collaboration by allowing students with better language skills to help their peers and enriches learning with audiovisual resources. The classroom decoration, which celebrates various holidays and significant moments in various languages, contributes to a sense of belonging and intercultural connection among students" (O2).

This can be interpreted as a strategy by the teacher to encourage ICC in a bilingual environment; by doing so, she helps students develop key skills such as self-awareness, cultural empathy, and intercultural communicative competence. This approach contributes to the creation of an inclusive learning environment that respects diverse cultural identities, which is a good route to successful, self-aware, and multicultural bilingual education.

Observations and interpretations given by researchers indicate that to teach ICC in EFL classes in bilingual schools, it is essential to integrate pedagogical approaches that promote multicultural exchange, which implies encouraging the use of language as a tool for the expression and understanding of different cultural perspectives, strengthening students' identity by valuing their culture and experiences, and developing key skills such as cultural empathy, self-awareness, and intercultural communicative competence.

Similar to this, fostering an inclusive learning environment that values cultural diversity and enables students to move between various identities and discourses without losing their sense of national and cultural identity is a strategy that supports students' social and personal growth as well as the development of deep cross-cultural relationships.

### **Category 3. Pedagogical Guidelines for the Development of Interculturality and Communicative Competence.**

The third and final category, identified as Pedagogical Guidelines for the Development of Interculturality and Communicative Competence, consists of two subcategories: Teaching materials for the use of language from the perspective of cultural diversity and Strand for dialogue and reflection on assessment and self-assessment. Consequently, going beyond the mere use of spoken language provides the opportunity to expand the evaluative resources of intercultural communication.

Brandt (2024) states that:

Educators can leverage evidence from peer feedback, self-assessment, observations, and structured self-reflection to support the skills and attitudes that intercultural understanding requires. By investing in formative assessment practices, educators foster an environment in which students can develop their intercultural understanding through ongoing and targeted practice and reflection.

In the same way, the results of the analysis matrix show in the categories-interpretation section that “Pedagogical guidelines for developing interculturality and

communicative competence in second language learning focus on equipping students with the skills necessary to thrive in a globalized world characterized by cultural diversity. These guidelines advocate for effective interaction with various cultural backgrounds, integrating multicultural teaching components that reflect both global and local cultural contexts, as stated in the matrix done by the researchers” (DEM). (see **appendix I**) and (**Appendix J**).

The results of each subcategory and its components are presented below:

### **Subcategory 3.1. Teaching materials for language use from the perspective of cultural diversity.**

Teaching materials for the use of language from the perspective of cultural diversity are helpful to present language in different ways, ways that can integrate cultural contexts and intercultural competence. These materials go beyond grammar and vocabulary to include cultural references, authentic texts, and real-world scenarios. They help learners understand the culture, values, beliefs, and communication styles of different communities, promoting respect and empathy. By using these types of material, students develop critical thinking, reflect on their own identities, and improve their ability to interact in multicultural settings. Byram (1997) and a more developed and more modern concept by Byram (2020).

Teaching materials for the use of language from the perspective of cultural diversity can be seen through the field notes #20 at Bilingual School North of Bogotá when researchers observed the framing question from the field diary on the observation at Gardo 7D on May 16 What activities develop intercultural communicative competence in the classroom? and they came up with the following conclusion. “The class began with an activity of reading from the textbook, the Intercultural Communicative Competence was introduced by the teacher when explained the students that the core book uses a lot of European texts written by European writers, but also the core book has some American reading exercises.

The previous idea is reflected, according to Byram (2020), by stating that students develop through their own experiences the challenge of analysing their assumptions about culture while becoming involved in various and diverse perspectives.

Researchers were looking at some questions from the interviews done with the students and they came up with some answers important enough to define well this subcategory, the question was number 7 which says “*How would you rate learning about a*

*culture other than your own in English classes?”* investigators obtained some answers developed like this: 50 % of the respondents say excellent, 40% of the respondents say good and 10 % of them say regular. These responses can make us think that even though schools are working with material that can be very helpful to understand and work on cultural diversity, a few students still believe there is more to do with this topic.

To have a good intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in EFL classes for second, third, and seventh grades in these bilingual schools, it is important to follow pedagogical orientations that make emphasis in the integration of culturally diverse teaching materials. These materials should be less traditional in terms of grammar and vocabulary and include authentic texts, cultural references, and real-world scenarios that reflect diverse perspectives. According to Byram (1997, 2020), such materials encourage students to reflect on their own cultural assumptions and interact with different worldviews, promoting empathy and respect.

### **Subcategory 3.2. Strand for dialogue and reflection on assessment and self-assessment.**

The dialogue and reflection axis on assessment and self-assessment involves allowing students to assess their progress in intercultural understanding and communicative effectiveness while allowing teachers to assess students in the same areas.

This concept, derived from the matrix, not only encourages students to reflect on their own performance but also helps them identify areas for improvement and recognize achievements within a collaborative and culturally responsive framework (Byram, 2020).

Peer-assessment and self-assessment are essential tools for assessing how effectively students can interact with diverse cultures and communicate appropriately in diverse contexts. When students are encouraged to reflect on their own cultural assumptions, greater intercultural sensitivity is fostered. Through self-assessment, students take responsibility for their progress in both understanding and interacting with cultures, including their own (Deardorff, 2006).

In relation to other instruments used in the research, the researchers observed that questions 11 through 14 of the student and parent questionnaire prompted students to engage in metacognitive processes to reflect on their beliefs and assumptions regarding the axis of dialogue and reflection on assessment and self-assessment.

Question 11 of the questionnaire asked, “How comfortable are you interacting with people from different cultures?” Sixty percent of students said they felt comfortable, while 40% said they felt very comfortable. These responses suggest that students have had previous interactions with people from different cultural backgrounds.

Question 12 asked, “What skills do you consider most important for learning about a culture other than your own in an English class?” 40% of students highlighted active listening, a skill closely related to self-assessment, while 20% emphasized intercultural communication, another key aspect of self-reflection and self-assessment.

In addition, two additional questions also encouraged dialogue and reflection on self-assessment. Question 13 asked: “What are the biggest difficulties you have faced when learning about other cultures and communicating in a different language?” The researchers provided several response options, with dialectal varieties being the most common at 30% and cultural differences at 20%.

These responses align with the line of dialogue and reflection on assessment and self-assessment, as described by Byram (2020), who emphasizes the importance of both students and teachers reflecting on their own performance, identifying areas for improvement, and recognizing achievements in a collaborative and culturally responsive context.

Based on the above, to effectively teach ICC in EFL, it is essential to incorporate pedagogical guidelines that emphasize the role of dialogue and self-assessment, as well as encouraging students to reflect on their own intercultural interactions and cultural assumptions, fostering greater sensitivity and responsibility for their learning. Likewise, by integrating self-assessment and peer assessment tools, teachers can help students recognize areas for improvement and celebrate their progress, promoting a collaborative and culturally responsive learning environment.

## CONCLUSIONS

The study has made it possible to identify and analyse the key pedagogical guidelines for teaching Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC) in English as a Foreign Language classes in two Colombian bilingual schools: one in Cartagena and the other in Bogotá. The evidence obtained through the identification of these guidelines and the analysis of the impact of intercultural education led to the suggestion of significant improvements in this pedagogical approach.

On the one hand, it was possible to identify several pedagogical strategies used in the schools studied that seek to integrate ICC into the English language teaching process. However, it was observed that although there are efforts in both institutions to incorporate intercultural aspects, there is a need to structure in a more coherent and explicit way the content and pedagogical methods that address intercultural teaching in the English language classroom.

Adjacent to, some students expressed confusion when answering the data collection questionnaire, finding questions that did not seem to have a direct relationship with their experience regarding the topic of focus and competence (interculturality). This disconnection was reflected in their answers.

In the context of the training of the researchers, the dissolution of work teams emerged as a significant implication. From the first semester of project development, the researchers faced the separation of the groups with which they had begun their master's degree. This situation led to the need to completely rethink the original proposal before the middle of the second academic semester. As a result, the time allocated to the research phases was significantly reduced compared to that stipulated in the academic program.

On the grounds of the findings, a pedagogical proposal has been developed which includes recommendations for improving the approach to ICC in English language teaching (**see Appendix K**). This proposal emphasises the need for more effective integration of activities that encourage critical reflection on different cultures and the use of didactic resources that allow for active exploration of intercultural issues. It also suggests the use of teaching materials that reflect cultural diversity and encourage dialogue and reflection in assessment and self-assessment processes.

In brief, the development of intercultural communicative competence in English language teaching not only improves language teaching, but also contributes to the holistic development of students by promoting respect for and appreciation of cultural diversity. It is recommended that this proposal be adopted and adapted in other similar educational contexts in order to maximise its impact on bilingual education. The implementation of these pedagogical guidelines can serve as a guide for teachers and provide ongoing training that prepares students to be competent global citizens who respect cultural diversity.

### Pros and cons

The present research and its pedagogical proposal for the improvement of ICC teaching has evidence advantages such as improving student engagement and motivation in ICC-related activities as observed in student feedback. Although the researchers have evidenced some disadvantages as well such as some resistance from some stakeholders to adopt new pedagogical approaches, which required additional support and training.

A parallel benefit is that, through the global citizenship approach, students deepen values such as inclusion, understanding, sensitivity and respect for the diversity of others in their ethnic, social, and economic origins, thus avoiding discrimination and the establishment of cultural stereotypes that can lead to feelings of aversion, disinterest and rejection of learning and the development of one's own identity.

Alongside, an extra advantage is to improve language acquisition by integrating cultural elements into the language teaching process, understanding and retention of vocabulary, grammar and idiomatic expressions is facilitated. In addition, students will be more motivated to learn a language by associating it with authentic cultural experiences.

But despite the benefits outlined above, curricular adaptation and resources often becomes a bottleneck to achieving the improvements in ICC teaching envisaged in this plan. Implementing a proposal of this type requires a significant adaptation of the curriculum and the creation of new didactic materials. This implies an investment of time and resources on the part of teachers and educational institutions, which can be a challenge, especially in contexts with budget constraints.

## Critical analysis

Albeit there were no significant obstacles to carrying out the study, it was observed that in both institutions there was an atmosphere of some tension, given that it was an external investigation that could reveal unfavourable results in relation to the educational proposal they were implementing. However, the institutions showed a notable willingness to allow the development of the study within the established deadlines, facilitating the observers to carry out direct observations in the classrooms without interfering with the teaching and learning dynamics.

The institutions demonstrated resilience in recognizing that the development of the project could contribute positively to their cultural context, beyond simply learning English. Although they did not adopt a direct stance on interculturality, a slight atmosphere of tension was perceived, given that the external investigation could contrast the educational proposal of the school with the reality observed in the classrooms and in the school life of both educational centres.

An example of this tension was the constant request for approval documents necessary to access institutional information, such as letters that allowed the development of the research. Relevant documents for the study, such as the Institutional Educational Project (PEI), were not accessible, which caused delays in the request. Despite these difficulties, the research continued, searching for information on the institutions' websites, although without success. The coordinators of both institutions informed the researchers that said information was under the responsibility of the rector's office.

The research also shows that although significant progress has been made, important challenges remain in the implementation of ICC. One of the main challenges is the need for continuous and specialised training for teachers to enable them to develop and implement intercultural pedagogical strategies effectively. Teacher training should include not only the development of language skills, but also the ability to facilitate intercultural dialogue and critical reflection among students.

Another challenge identified is the need for appropriate teaching resources that reflect cultural diversity and promote inclusion. Teaching materials need to be carefully selected and designed to ensure that they represent a variety of cultural perspectives and promote mutual respect and understanding. It is also essential that these resources are accessible to all learners, regardless of their socio-economic background.

The research also highlights the importance of involving the educational community in the ICC teaching process. This includes not only students and teachers, but also parents and other members of the school community. Collaboration between all educational stakeholders is essential to create an inclusive and enriching learning environment that values and respects cultural diversity.

## Recommendations

In order to address these challenges, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Continuous teacher training: Implement in-service training programmes that focus on the development of intercultural competences and the application of inclusive pedagogical strategies. These programmes should be accessible and designed to meet the specific needs of teachers in different educational contexts. Like so, bilingual institutions would need to ensure:

- Continuing professional learning: through teacher training programmes that address the theory and practice of ICC teaching.
- Communities of practice: through the creation of collaborative spaces for teachers to share experiences and good practice.
- Mentoring: through the assignment of mentors to teachers who are new to ICC teaching.

2. Development and selection of teaching materials: Develop and select teaching materials that reflect cultural diversity and promote inclusion. These materials should be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that they remain relevant and effective.

3. Assessment and self-evaluation: Implement assessment and self-assessment systems that enable learners and teachers to reflect on their progress in developing intercultural competences. These systems should be flexible and adapted to the individual needs of learners.

4. Promoting inclusion and diversity: Create learning environments that value and respect cultural diversity. This includes promoting inclusive policies and practices that ensure that all learners have equal opportunities for learning and development.

5. Bilingual institutions should promote a systemic view of culture in their curricula. This perspective implies:

- An interrelated approach: Inviting teachers to analyse culture as a complex system in all its linguistic, social, historical and political elements. This holistic view enables students to understand culture in its totality and to appreciate the multiple dimensions that make it up.
- Holistic pedagogical practices: Design activities that enable students to understand culture as a whole, beyond stereotypes or generalisations.
- Explore cultural diversity: Recognising the variety of cultural expressions and valuing the diversity within each culture.
- Develop critical thinking: Question their own beliefs and prejudices about other cultures.

6. Through their language programmes, bilingual institutions should encourage critical reflection and intercultural thinking to achieve intercultural learning:

- Deconstructing stereotypes: Creates spaces for students to question their own beliefs and prejudices about other cultures.
- Intercultural comparison: Offers activities that enable students to compare and contrast their own culture with others, identifying similarities and differences.
- Intercultural dialogue: Instils the habit of dialogue and interaction between students from different cultural backgrounds.

7. ICC should not be limited to language classes, but should be integrated into all areas of the curriculum, such as social sciences, arts and humanities. As in interdisciplinary projects, encouraging them by allowing students to apply their knowledge of language and culture in real situations. Another is the use of authentic resources using authentic materials such as films, music, literature, and news to expose students to different cultural perspectives.

8. Researchers propose that the pedagogical plan for improving teaching practices of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) be organized into a booklet. This will enable both participation schools and other educational institutions to access and implement the plan, facilitating the transformation of their curricula and classroom practices. By making the plan widely available, the researchers aim to promote the adaptation of ICC focused teaching methods and contribute to the development of more inclusive and culturally responsive learning environments.

9. The pedagogical orientations discussed in this study for the teaching of intercultural communicative competence in English as a foreign language classes can serve as a basis for further research such as:

Case studies:

- **Individual case analysis:** Delving into how specific students develop their intercultural competence over time.
- **Case comparison:** Analyzing differences in the development of intercultural competence between students from different sociocultural backgrounds or with different levels of English proficiency.

Quantitative research:

- **Impact evaluation:** Measuring the impact of the intervention on variables such as academic performance, attitude toward other cultures, and motivation to learn English.
- **Data analysis:** Using statistical tools to identify patterns and correlations between the variables studied.

Qualitative studies:

- **Discourse analysis:** Analyzing how students and teachers talk about culture and interculturality in the classroom.
- **Ethnographic studies:** Observing classroom interactions to understand how cultural knowledge is constructed.

Mixed research:

- **Combining methods:** Using both quantitative and qualitative methods to gain a more complete view of the phenomenon studied.

Specific research topics:

- **Teacher professional development:** To analyse how teaching practice is transformed through the implementation of intercultural competence.

- **Teaching materials:** To evaluate the effectiveness of different teaching materials in developing intercultural competence.
- **Evaluation:** To develop valid and reliable evaluation instruments to measure intercultural competence.
- **Educational policies:** To analyse the impact of educational policies on the promotion of intercultural competence.

Relevant knowledge areas:

- **Applied Linguistics:** Studying how language is used to construct cultural identities and negotiate meanings in intercultural contexts.
- **Psychology:** Exploring the cognitive and affective processes involved in intercultural learning.
- **Sociology:** To analyse the relationships between culture, identity and power in educational contexts.
- **Anthropology:** To study cultural practices and how these are transmitted through education.

In summary, the implementation of these recommendations can make a significant contribution to improving the teaching of intercultural communication skills in the English language classroom by promoting an inclusive and enriching learning environment that prepares students to be competent global citizens who respect cultural diversity.

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## APPENDIXES

**Appendix A:** Institutional endorsement form. [CARTAS AVALES](#)

**Appendix B:** Information consent format. [FORMATO CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO](#)

**Appendix C:** Data collection instrument 1 Field-note format. Information was collected through field notes.

[Bilingual school in Bogotá - FIELD NOTES FORMAT](#) [Bilingual school in Cartagena - FIELD NOTES FORMAT .docx](#)

**Appendix D:** Comparative matrix [Comparative Matrix.xlsx](#)

**Appendix E:** Data collection instrument 2 Data analysis matrix [Documental Analysis matrix.xlsx](#)

**Appendix F:** Data collection instrument 3 Analytical survey School stakeholders <https://forms.gle/8RhdNrkt4vjZAr8K8>

**Appendix G:** Data collection instrument 3 Analytical survey Students and family <https://forms.gle/qDpgdZcNtBWs5oix5>

**Appendix H:** Framework for understanding the principles of intercultural communicative competence  
[https://www.canva.com/design/DAGUzoQOn18/6rPca5yVop5HsTVb1g5Nug/view?utm\\_content=DAGUzoQOn18&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link&utm\\_source=editor](https://www.canva.com/design/DAGUzoQOn18/6rPca5yVop5HsTVb1g5Nug/view?utm_content=DAGUzoQOn18&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=editor)

**Appendix I:** Data encoding matrix [Matriz de Codificación - Arias, Piñeros, Rico .xlsx](#)

**Appendix J:** Analysis of the instruments  
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1s9jVXxKe0MNECi63n3\\_MpJfJxGu1E2B/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=104578758535365413816&rtpof=true&sd=true](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1s9jVXxKe0MNECi63n3_MpJfJxGu1E2B/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=104578758535365413816&rtpof=true&sd=true)

**Appendix K:** Pedagogical plan proposal for improving teaching practices of ICC for two Colombian bilingual schools.

[https://www.canva.com/design/DAGXVrQfcLU/kEArJK4jH3TBddl0G\\_AtnA/edit?utm\\_content=DAGXVrQfcLU&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link2&utm\\_source=sharebutton](https://www.canva.com/design/DAGXVrQfcLU/kEArJK4jH3TBddl0G_AtnA/edit?utm_content=DAGXVrQfcLU&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton)