

Intercultural education in the ELT classroom in Colombia: some perspectives regarding policies and legislation

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze documentation related to English language teaching and intercultural education in Colombian primary and secondary schools. It is a documentary study based on qualitative methodology. The information comes from acts, educational policies, and teaching materials or proposals developed by the government and the Ministry of National Education. The results show that English language teaching in Colombia has mainly relied on foreign approaches. However, new, more accurate proposals have emerged, though there is still room for improvement in terms of fostering a critical intercultural approach to English language teaching (ELT).

Key words: English language teaching, intercultural education, public educative policies, critical intercultural education.

Resumen

Este estudio tiene como objetivo analizar la documentación relacionada con la enseñanza del inglés y la educación intercultural en las escuelas primarias y secundarias colombianas. Se trata de un estudio documental basado en una metodología cualitativa. La información procede de leyes, políticas educativas y materiales o propuestas didácticas elaboradas por el Gobierno y el Ministerio de Educación Nacional. Los resultados muestran que la enseñanza del inglés en Colombia se ha basado principalmente en enfoques extranjeros. Sin embargo, han surgido nuevas propuestas más pertinentes, aunque todavía hay margen de mejora en lo que se refiere a fomentar un enfoque intercultural crítico de la enseñanza del inglés (ELT).

Palabras clave: enseñanza del inglés, educación intercultural, políticas educativas públicas, educación intercultural crítica.

CHAPTER I

CONTEXTUALIZATION

This state of art was developed in Colombia's legislative context, including legal documents such as decrees, laws, educative policies, and educative standards and proposals. Having said that, The 1991 political constitution and 115 educative acts in Colombia point out that education is an essential right to be promoted individually and socially seeking Colombian development. Thus, education must be guaranteed by the government which monitors that students can be able to join and endure their educational processes. The Ministry of Education (MEN) also explains that such system is comprised of subsystems which are: preschool, elementary, middle and high school, as well as higher education.

Montes, Lago de Vergara and Lago de Fernandez (2018) outline that formal schooling in Colombia is divided into three levels: Preschool which includes a pre-level called "Transición", - which must be completed in advance – and three grades after. The second level is Basic education which comprises elementary and middle education; the former is composed of five grades, and the latter involves four for a total of nine grades. The last is the High school level which has just two grades, ten and eleven. The educative process is also divided into subjects being English an important one for Colombia's social and economic development. Having this in mind, the analysis and reflection made in this dissertation is focused on an aspect of the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Teaching process in the Primary and Secondary educative levels and, more explicitly, in the Colombian legislative context concerning to the policies and educative standards that support interculturality on EFL teaching in Colombia.

In 1994, the *General Act of education* (in Spanish Ley General de Educación) approached bilingual education to the Colombian education system. It established that students from Primary

education (till 5th grade) should acquire basis from conversation and reading in a foreign language and Secondary students (6th to 11th grade) should be able to understand and communicate in a foreign language as well. Later, the MEN implemented the *National Program of Bilingualism* (in Spanish Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo or PNB) in 1997 which was intended to expand knowledge of English by students in the official sector of the country (Cárdenas, 2018).

In the same way, in 1996 the National ministry of Education posited the *Curriculum guidelines in foreign languages* (in Spanish Lineamientos Curriculares en Idiomas Extranjeros). Cárdenas (2018) explains that such documents are a pedagogical guideline for the teachers to approach and handle the necessities of curricular design into the *Institutional Educational Project* (in Spanish Proyecto Educativo Institucional or PEI) of every educative institution in the country. This document was also designed based on the general act of education from a curricular perspective.

Further on, the *Decennial Education Plan 2006-2016* (in Spanish Plan Decenal de Educación) proposed that communicative competences should be developed in both the mother tongue and a foreign language through the curriculum. The legislation was the starting point to outline and posit the PNB 2004-2019. According to Cárdenas (2018) it focused on “improving the communicative skills in English as a foreign language in all educative sectors” (p.130).

The same author also states that the goal of the PNB should be developed into three stages: Primary and Secondary education in which it is intended to achieve a B1 level (intermediate) of proficiency and then, in Higher education students should obtain a B2 level (intermediate). Furthermore, according to the PNB, future English teachers should acquire a B2+ or C1 level (advanced) in their postgraduate studies. Thus, to start reaching this goal, the

government formulated *the Basic Standards of Competences in Foreign Languages* (in Spanish Estándares Básicos de Competencias or EBC) in Primary and Secondary Education levels.

These standards emerged to provide clear criteria about the basic level of quality to which children from all Colombian regions are entitled (Montoya, 2020). Consistently with the EBC the *Basic Learning Rights* (in Spanish Derechos Básicos de Aprendizaje or DBA) were implemented as a tool to ensure the equal and equative education for students, “these rights describe knowledge and skills that students should learn and develop in the area of English” (Montoya, 2020, p.18). They also contemplated oral and writing comprehension skills because these are the core aspects to be developed in the language learning process.

In the same line, policies on English as a Foreign Language Teaching in Colombia approach on important dimension from various perspectives: Interculturality. Firstly, the Basic Standards of Competences in Foreign Languages propose sociolinguistic competence, which considers the social and cultural conditions of language. Besides, the Curriculum Guidelines in Foreign Language examine intercultural development from a cognitive and emotional perspective; it also explores the Interculturality as a concept. Besides, the suggested English curriculum for Educational Institutions and Departments of Education relates the intercultural competence to cultural and ethnic diversity, as recognized in the 1991 political constitution.

Additionally, as the MEN establishes the policies that govern the education system, in its primary policy -Act 115- which agreements for diverse populations, including ethnic groups, are established. However, this policy focuses on preserving the languages of local communities without connecting it with the MEN’s English Language Teaching (ELT) policies; thus, the intercultural education vision the MEN has for our local context, is not clearly connected with what is expected of the same item in terms of ELT in Colombia. In fact, the closest policy to

intercultural education is Ethnoeducation, which, under Act 115, is meant to be implemented in Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities. This concept is understood as a tool for providing ethnic groups with a national origin and their own language, traditions and cultural particularities with proper education, but it is not connected towards any policy or pedagogical proposal regarding ELT in Colombia's education system. Moreover, the MEN (1994) explains that “education for ethnic groups is understood as education offered to groups or communities that are part of the nationality and that have their own culture, language, traditions, and indigenous customs” (p.7). Besides, article 56 from 115 acts highlights that Ethnoeducation must be linked to the environment, the production process, the social and cultural process, with respect to their beliefs and traditions. Hence, its principles target integration, interculturality, linguistic diversity, participation, flexibility, and progressivity in the educational context (MEN, 1994).

Therefore, interculturality, flexibility, and progressivity principles are the most important in terms of intercultural education in 115 act. Hence, the MEN describes Interculturality as the ability to recognize one's own culture and the cultures of others, and to understand how they interact and enrich each other. Such enrichment is mutual and fosters coexistence in equal conditions and mutual understanding. Meanwhile, flexibility is “a permanent construction of ethno-educational processes, in accordance with the cultural values, needs, and particularities of ethnic groups” (MEN, 1994, p.8). Progressivity is the ability of ethno-educational processes to evolve generated by research, which consolidates and contributes to the development of knowledge.

In terms of teacher education, *Ethnoeducation* act stipulates how “ethnoeducators” may receive specific training. According to article 7, chapter III in the 115 acts, high education institutions are allowed to propose educational programs intended to train people from ethnic

groups to serve in their respective communities. Also, future teachers, that belong to an ethnic community, must receive both the training demanded for all teachers and some modules on Ethnoeducation. These teachers are designated as 'ethnoeducators', and according to Article 104 of Act 115, they guide the teaching and learning process in ethnoeducative schools in accordance with the social, cultural, ethical and moral expectations of the community.

Hence, the MEN is highly interested in providing comprehensive education for ethnic communities. It aims to strengthen the processes of identity, knowledge, socialization, protection of systems and organizational practices, use of vernacular languages, and teacher training and research in all areas. Nonetheless, *Ethnoeducation* is the only act promoting equity and integration in the educative system, but it does not offer theoretical perspectives that support intercultural content to teach English in elementary and secondary education levels.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

English language teaching in Colombia is based on foreign language teaching perspectives. Firstly, the Basic Standards of Competences in Foreign Language Teaching are the model used for language instruction, but they rely on imported standards that may not be relevant to the Colombian context. Zárate and Álvarez (2004) explain that Colombian standards are barely structured and that attention has been given to foreign models. These standards were developed elsewhere under different circumstances and contexts, so while they are valid and reliable for foreign academic communities, they do not fit the particularities of Colombian institutions and language learners.

Moreover, it seems to be necessary to analyze different perspectives regarding policies and their impact on intercultural education in the English classroom. Ramos (2005) states that it is necessary to transform the school into multiple versions of intercultural schools to respond to

both the ethnic contributions, and to all those cultural, social, and diverse characteristics in which the learning process is developed. Thus, language teaching legislation does not provide accurate guidelines to approach cultural and intercultural particularities in the EFL classroom in Colombia.

Ramos (2005) also highlights that intercultural education is an opportunity to break the molds to deconstruct the manner English teaching has been conceptualized. Intercultural topics might be approached in the EFL classroom whether the students consider themselves a member of the Afro descendant or indigenous community. For Ramos (2005), this proposal recognizes that there is not only one type of knowledge, since there are different cultural forms of knowledge production. Thus, intercultural education permits to transform the English classroom into a transformative and decolonial environment.

Scholars are also concerned about the impact of foreign cultures on local cultures in English classes. They have discovered that English programs emphasize on a “tendency towards the adoption of an instrumental perspective, with a corresponding emphasis on the material and economic benefits of being bilingual in two internationally prestigious languages” (Mejía, 2006, p.156). Negatively affecting English teaching in Colombia because foreign cultures are viewed as the most relevant ones and the local complexities are taught in a superficial level.

In the same line, educational environments are also forced to adopt a foreign cultural perspective on bilingual education. Mejía (2006) points out that knowledge of culture is sometimes developed only at a superficial level, focusing on aspects such as cultural celebrations involving different types of food, music and dress. This does not lead to deeper reflection on the significance of these differences or their implications. Clavijo (2016) also asserts that students need to use English in order to participate as critical citizens. However, Colombian national

standards for foreign language learning focus on teaching grammar, and these standards do not connect language teaching with learners' lives and realities. Consequently, English teaching models that do not consider intercultural perspectives based on the Colombian context have been implemented in schools.

As consequence, Colombian language teaching programs have not guaranteed that the population receive intercultural education on language teaching. The education provided is homogenizing based on international parameters and cultural diversity such as customs of the territory, its traditions and its language are not considered. Mosquera (2024) posits that act 70 of 1993 “lays the foundation for intercultural education, supported by cultural identity, the interests of ethnic groups and the interests of the population” (p.10). Therefore, the legal framework has not been completely achieved, as Colombia has not guaranteed legislative conditions to ensure that English teaching approaches, somehow, this view of intercultural education.

Furthermore, Colombian education acts establish that students' cultural dimension must be considered through the Ethnoeducation act. However, Mosquera (2024) explains that there is not enough theoretical background concerning education for ethnic groups and their relation to intercultural education. To offer an example the “*Ethnoeducation*” educative policy was developed to promote intercultural education: its goal is fostering ethnic communities' knowledge's cultural recognition as part of Colombian culture and identity (Mosquera, 2024). Nonetheless, neither public nor private schools are implementing intercultural content on their curriculums as “there is little interest on the part of some educational institutions in including content related to education for ethnic groups and intercultural education in their curriculums” (Mosquera, p. 4, 2024). Moreover, Ethnoeducation may not be properly developed in the Primary and Secondary levels of Colombia's system of education.

Another relevant implication concerning intercultural education in ELT is the lack of teachers' guidelines to link up intercultural topics in their classes. To this assert Mejía (2006) states that there is a lack of clear institutional policies about cultural aspects which caused confusion and improvisation among the teachers as to how to manage cultural matters in their daily classroom practice. Teachers who did not receive adequate training and material struggle to illustrate students regarding cultural complexities and intercultural topics in English teaching especially when students are biased against certain communities.

Additionally, Colombia's legislation promotes educative proposals that are focused on foreign cultures which deprive student to reflect on Colombian ones. English teaching is approached through foreign educative perspectives and policies that do not align with Colombian culture complexities. Such is the case of Basic Learning Rights, Teaching Guidelines, and Basic Standards for Foreign Language Instruction as they rely on imported materials.

In conclusion, as Ethnoeducation is the closest legislation concerning intercultural education, it has been adopted as such. However, it may not be seen as appropriate to be implemented in all educational contexts, especially in English teaching environments. This means that legal policies about intercultural education remain improperly implemented in the EFL context. Furthermore, teachers may find it difficult to incorporate intercultural content into English classes due to a lack of adequate training and guidance. Therefore, it is important to review some language education proposals in relation to intercultural content in the EFL classroom from other perspectives.

RATIONALE

This research encourages both teachers and students to reflect on pedagogical strategies to achieve the goals set by legislation and policies regarding Intercultural Education. This

concept is becoming a “must implement” in the classroom, especially when teaching languages. International organizations such as UNESCO have supported intercultural projects around the world in recent years. Even the 115 acts, developed by the MEN, aims to strengthen the inclusive education or Ethnoeducation in the Colombian educative system. Likewise, Colombian context scholars from Indigenous and Afro descendant communities have argued that educative environments do not approach satisfactorily intercultural education. Ramos (2005) explains that scholars from ethnic communities have expressed, insistently, a distance between State policies and intercultural education; they even have resisted using the term Ethnoeducation to refer to their own educational projects. Thus, it is necessary to look for other theoretical approaches that contribute to the implementation of intercultural education that can include all the populations in Colombia.

The Basic Standards of Competence in Foreign Language Teaching and the Curricular Guidelines for the Foreign Language Area are the standards for English teaching in Colombia. However, neither consider the sociolinguistics aspects or pedagogical processes that learning a language in the Colombian context implies. Zárata and Álvarez (2005) highlight that the Curricular Guidelines for the Foreign Language Area are generic and not designed to teach a specific language because although there are similarities in the processes of teaching-learning of a foreign language, it is necessary to consider that socio-cultural dimensions vary with different languages. Likewise, Díaz and Vergara (2016) encountered that the Basic Standards of Competence in Foreign Language provide certain elements about culture, but, somehow, it is assumed that all contexts are the same. In this sense, The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) also relies on foreign models of English teaching that do not adjust to Colombia’s educative circumstances and contexts. Le Gal (2019) asserts that foreign influence

can be identified in the adoption of the Common European Framework as the guiding to the National Bilingual Program reform; he says that it has been most specifically designed for the European context, so the important differences between Colombia and Europe make the CEFR implementation a complex task.

Having the previous in mind, this research aims to highlight the different perspectives on interculturality and English language teaching that are presented alongside Colombian policies. It also attempts to align the Ministry of Education's language teaching perspectives with intercultural education in EFL classrooms. According to Mosquera (2024), the government has promoted initiatives such as the Afro-Colombian Studies program (in Spanish *Cátedra de Estudios Afrocolombianos*). This methodological proposal intends to incorporate ethnic communities' knowledge into the educational system. However, the same author explains that insufficient political will to do so has resulted in racism remaining a problem in schools.

Analyzing the perspectives of intercultural education in Colombia educative policies is crucial because it may also help to prevent racism and epistemic injustice. Proposals such as the Afro-Colombian Studies Chair promote education that fosters participation, inclusion, and democracy (Mosquera, 2024). These aspects become important for the EFL classroom because students should not only be taught from hegemonic perspectives. Therefore, intercultural education is relevant not only for ethnic students but also for non-ethnic students, as it helps them become interculturally competent language users.

On the other hand, training provided to English teachers has been also mainly focused on traditional approaches such as grammar and linguistics. These teaching approaches do not prepare educators to deal with the cultural and social challenges that teaching in the Colombian context implies. Clavijo (2016) states “a lack of innovative and creative practices that articulate

content from the disciplines in the curriculum, future teachers remain unprepared for teaching in classrooms full of children with diverse cultural and socioeconomic needs and literacies”

(p.7). The analysis and reflection that this paper posits is also intended to reflect on teachers’ methodological perspectives regarding English teaching from an intercultural perspective.

Finally, English teaching and learning policies and standards must be reviewed because they are the core documents that guide language teaching in Colombia. These reforms dictate the content taught in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting, but they do not adequately address cultural content. This has limited the intercultural perspective in the EFL classroom as Díaz and Rúa (2016) explain:

“The definition of standards given by the Ministry of Education allows us to see how, when they are proposed, a great effort is made to make visible and concrete aspects of learning; some subjects allow this possibility of concreteness without problems, but there are other human issues, such as culture, which, due to their complexity, cannot be limited in terms of standards, much less allow any kind of strict reductions or precisions. To do so could lead to distorting the very nature of something that does not allow itself to be limited, such as culture” (p.298).

Standards and policies do not consider the cultural and social characteristics of each population and context. According to the Ministry of National Education (1999), they are intended for implementation in urban and rural public and private schools across the country in order to provide the same quality of education. Therefore, it is important to consider how general standards and policies for language education are and how little they incorporate contextualized intercultural content for the whole population in the Colombian educative context.

RESEARCH QUESTION

How has intercultural education been approached in English teaching standards and policies in Colombia?

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To describe the way intercultural education has been approached in English teaching standards and policies in Colombia

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

To analyze the theoretical perspectives that have conceptualized intercultural education in the English language teaching policies in Colombia.

To determine theoretical perspectives that shape intercultural education in English language teaching.

To categorize educative strategies and theoretical perspectives to connect English language teaching and intercultural education.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents the conceptualization and explanation of the theoretical constructs surrounding this research: culture, interculturality, intercultural approach for language teaching, intercultural education, Ethnoeducation in Colombia, and educative policies.

CULTURE

Culture refers to the shared beliefs, behaviors, objects, and other characteristics of a society. According to Altamirano and Payne (2002), Culture is understood as a concept that encompasses all social practices such as language, customs, values, norms, rules, identities,

collective memories, products, organizations, and institutions. As Altamirano and Payne (2002) point out, discussing cultures involves exploring their diversity and historical contexts because different groups within a culture have different practices. Culture develops and transforms due to technological advances, economic changes, and social movements that occur over time.

Ngūgī Wa Thiong’o posits that culture is transmitted through language in the communication. Thiong’o (2015) explains that there are three dimensions of language that are connected to culture; language in the real life, speak as a relationship builder, and the written word as encoder of speeches. Then communication shapes culture as cultural experiences are transmitted among generations through language “Language is a culture's collective memory of its experiences throughout history” (Thiong’o, p.46, 2015).

Thiong’o explains that such experiences gathered creating a system of ethical, moral, and aesthetic values which represent the communities’ identity. Moreover, culture as language involves three aspects; culture portrays social, economic and political tensions through communication, culture shapes images that represent our conception about others and ourselves, and culture transmits those images by means of spoken and written words. Hence, Thiong’o summarizes that culture and language have a close relationship as communication creates culture and the culture is the society’s means of communication which is transmitted by language.

INTERCULTURALITY

As culture is a complex whole that involves important aspects of society such as ethnicity, gender, family, nationality, language, etc., Interculturality refers to the interrelations that build up a society in terms of culture, ethnicity, language, religious domination, and/ or nationality (Dietz, 2018). Hence, Interculturality emerges as a necessity to face discrimination and inequality against certain groups that have been historically marginalized and abused.

Moreover, the term is also related to interculturalism, a transformative program, whose interest is to create more symmetrical and inclusive relationships by empowering “ethnic minorities” to promote equal processes of identification between groups historically excluded and groups that have been historically privileged.

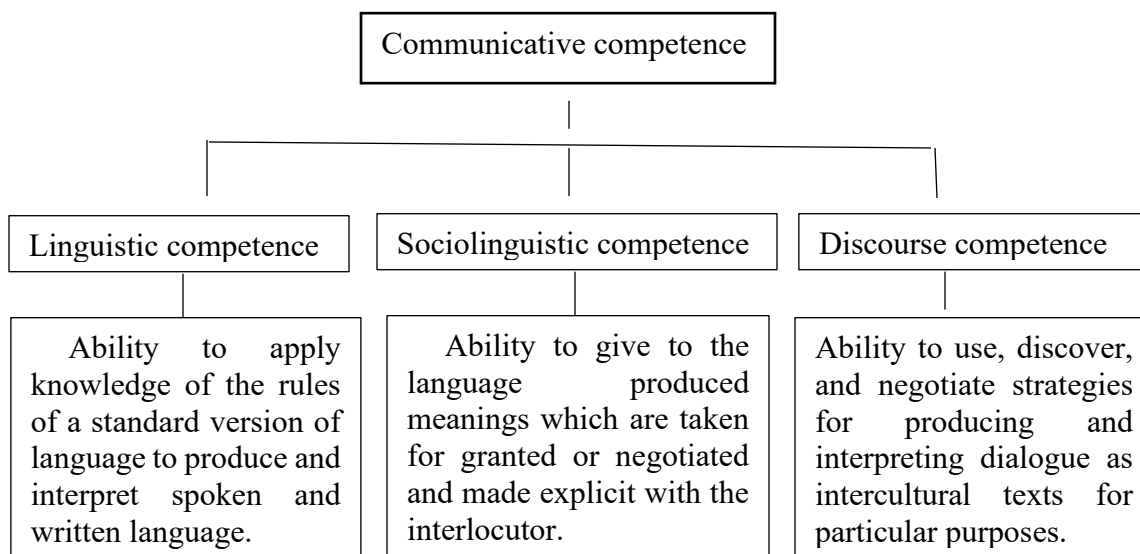
Furthermore, Interculturality has been also assumed as a programmatic, political-educational strategy to transform historically rooted inequalities in society. Having this in mind, the term critical interculturality has recently emerged and it is defined by Dietz (2018) as the understanding of the cultural and structural nature of inequalities that affect the cultural diversity and identities in society with intention to develop new manners of participation to foster the recognition of otherness from a postcolonial perspective. It is important to mention that for the purposes of this research, the term interculturality will be approached from an educative, local, and critical perspective.

INTERCULTURAL APPROACH FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING

The intercultural Communicative Competence emerged as a necessity for establishing interaction and exchange across national, ethnic, and cultural boundaries. Byram (1997) explains that Hymes (1970) was the first scholar to propose a sociolinguistic approach to language learning. He suggested that language acquisition should go beyond grammatical forms and focus on using language appropriately, which became the foundation of communicative language teaching. Later, Byram (1997) questioned Hyme’s perspectives about the sociolinguistic aspect of language learning and proposed his Intercultural Communicative Competence model which is composed of two closely related areas, Communicative competence and Intercultural competence. The first consists of linguistic competence, sociolinguistic

competence, and discourse competence while the second consists of three components: knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Figure 1. Communicative competence's dimensions



Source: Own elaboration (2025).

Byram (1997) explains that there are four factors enclosing intercultural communication: attitude, knowledge, skills, and skills of interpretation and relating. Regarding attitudes, Byram (1997) states that this is the willingness to accept, understand, and realize not only our own cultural views and experiences but others as well. In the same line, Byram (2002) explains that knowledge of social groups, their products, and their practices in one's own country and in the country of one's interlocutor is also important for intercultural competence. Finally, skills of skills—interpreting, relating, discovering, and interacting transform learners into proficient language users, regardless of culture.

Figure 2, Factors in intercultural communication



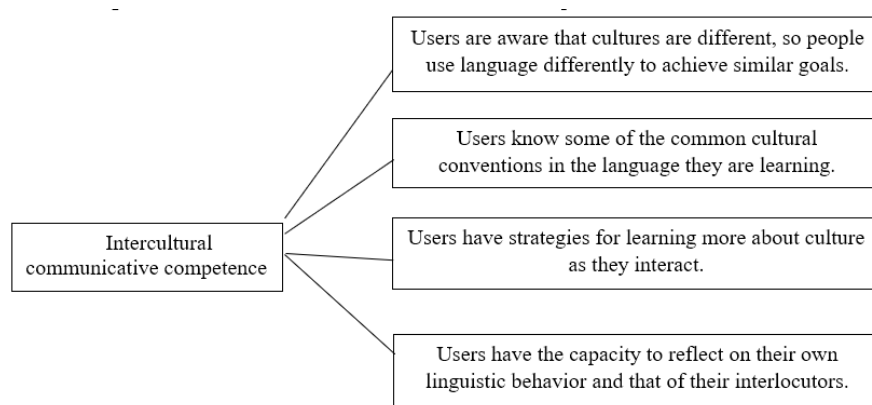
Source: Byram, M., & Zarate, G. (1997). Defining and assessing intercultural competence: Some principles and proposals for the European context.

Similarly, Liddicoat (2004) considers that interculturality is important in language teaching because its goal is to be able to communicate in another culture and context. He explains that communication is not just an issue of grammar and vocabulary, it is also a question of culture. Every message is communicated in a cultural context, so a learner that has been taught just grammar and vocabulary is not well prepared to deal with intercultural encounters. Liddicoat (2004) notes that, historically, language teaching has typically sought to make learners resemble native speakers as closely as possible. The native speaker represents the norm, meaning that English teaching is sometimes approached from their perspective.

Likewise, Liddicoat (2004) offers an interesting perspective regarding the role of culture in language teaching. He states that culture is often assumed as an independent skill that is learned after the four basic skills (listening, reading, writing, and speaking) are developed, but culture is implicitly found on the topics that are taught in the classroom. The same author posits that formal grammar is not complex, but without an understanding of the culture in which the grammar is used it may not be possible to use them correctly, so culture is often closely

integrated with language. Hence, language learning addresses both formal language and cultural knowledge to be fully undertaken. In the same line, this author defines communicative competence as what needs to be acquired in order to be a proficient language user. He explains that the goal is not communicative competence itself, but rather the acquisition of the skills necessary to become a proficient language user. However, he does not describe what communicative competence is, although he does outline some elements:

Figure 3. Liddicoat's elements in communicative competence



Source: Own elaboration (2025)

That said, language learners do not notice some cultural differences, so the teacher's role is crucial to develop awareness of the ways in which varying cultures work. Liddicoat (2004) outlines five pedagogical principles of intercultural teaching and learning for successfully achieving communicative competence. He begins by explaining that the main aspect to foster is active construction. Next establishing connections and social interactions principles are necessary because they both allow learners to engage in dialogue with others. Finally, reflection and responsibility principles support a more humane approach to intercultural language learning.

In conclusion, Byram (1997) presents an intercultural educative model that addresses the lack of theoretical concepts related to using language appropriately in context. Byram emphasizes the importance of factors such as attitude, knowledge, and skills for successful

intercultural communication. Conversely, Liddicoat (2004) offers a critical perspective on teaching language through the development of communicative skills, independent of cultural considerations, and presents five principles to help students become competent communicators. Both authors offer relevant insights into the importance of intercultural communicative competence in language teaching.

INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

School is an institution that plays a fundamental role in developing an intercultural society. According to Mosquera (2024), schools are relevant environments for social transformation. He argues that schools perpetuate the dominant culture while also being crucial to generating social change and innovation. Thus, Intercultural education involves transitioning towards a society based on equity and respect that recognizes and values cultural, linguistic, and identity diversity. It aims to promote enrichment and coexistence among different groups and cultures.

However, interculturality encompasses more than the coexistence of cultures within a single territory. Intercultural education fosters an environment of dialogue. According to Mosquera (2024), this dialogue occurs between cultures to create a collective cultural identity that incorporates the diversity of the educational community. Intercultural education must also be incorporated into the curriculum, including the selected content and pedagogical strategies. This fosters critical discourse, mutual understanding, and appreciation for culture as a valuable source of enrichment.

In the educational setting, interculturality can be also a pedagogical and methodological strategy incorporated into curricula to promote knowledge of indigenous and Afro-descendant cultures. This may allow for the development of a curriculum oriented towards students and the

local area instead of one based on foreign perspectives, as has commonly been done.

Intercultural education implies respect for the human rights of these ethnic groups and the preservation of their cultural heritage, worldview, cosmology, and territory. Hence, Intercultural education contributes to the construction of a participatory democracy (Mosquera, p. 14, 2024).

In other words, intercultural education promotes a common understanding.

That said, intercultural education must be an integral part of a project that promotes intercultural dialogue and strengthens an intercultural society. This implies creating a society in which diverse social groups can coexist. It is essential that these groups have access to appropriate health services, education, employment, and so on. Intercultural education provides students with the tools to recognize their own cultural values and beliefs, as well as the cultural differences between people, thus helping students better understand and interact respectfully with people from other cultures.

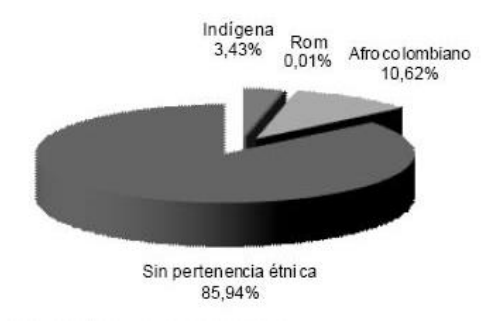
ETHNOEDUCATION IN COLOMBIA

The concept of interculturality emerged in the Latin American educational context in the 1990s due to the need for bilingual and intercultural education in indigenous communities.

Catherine Walsh (2009) explains that, from political and social standpoints, interculturality was adopted in the educational field, leading to a contradictory situation. Indigenous communities struggle to confront exclusion and promote education that is linguistically "proper" and culturally appropriate. Many Latin American ministries of culture and education have adopted theoretical contributions to enhance individuals' participation, regardless of their social and cultural background.

Colombia is well known for being one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world, as it hosts a variety of ethnic groups, including indigenous, Afro-descendant, mestizo, mulatto, Rrom, and gipsy communities. According to DANE (2005), 85.94% of Colombia's population does not identify with any ethnicity, while the remaining population identifies as Afro-Colombian (Negros, Mulatos, or Palenqueros), Raizal from the San Andrés Islands, Rrom, or Indigenous. Therefore, Colombia is diverse not only in terms of ethnic groups but also in terms of culture, as its population has been influenced by diverse ethnic groups with different traditions and knowledge.

Graphic 1. Percentage distribution of the Colombian population by ethnicity.



Source: DANE, general census 2005.

Moreover, the 1991 Political Constitution of Colombia established policies to protect ethnic groups from discrimination and social injustice. Zapata and Elvira (2023) emphasize that the constitution finally acknowledged Colombia's cultural diversity. The constitution aimed to establish a democratic and inclusive society that could maintain traditions while recognizing the rights of political expression and autonomy. According to these authors, Colombian policies rely on interculturality as a strategy to overcome discrimination, racism, and exclusion resulting from a lack of respect for and appreciation of cultural diversity. These policies address discrimination and exclusion while promoting intercultural exchanges.

Additionally, the Colombian MEN establishes policies governing the educational system. The most significant policy is Act 115, which regulates education in Colombia. Regarding interculturality, this 115 establishes care agreements for populations that include ethnic groups which have a shared national origin, culture, language, traditions, and particularities. MEN (1994) states that education for these groups must be linked to their environment, production processes, and social and cultural processes, with respect for their beliefs and traditions. For this reason, the Ethnoeducation Act was established in Act 115 as a tool to provide ethnic groups with proper education. Mosquera (2024) outlines its principles: comprehensiveness, linguistic diversity, autonomy, community participation, interculturalism, flexibility, progressiveness, and solidarity. For this research dissertation, however, linguistic diversity, interculturality, and flexibility are the most relevant.

According to Mosquera (2024), “linguistic diversity is how ethnic groups understand and construct reality, as expressed through languages in a national linguistic landscape” (p.11). Interculturality implies recognizing one's own culture and the cultures with which it interacts and is enriched. This leads to coexistence and mutual understanding on equal terms (Mosquera, 2024). Flexibility involves developing ethnoeducative processes that align with the cultural values, needs, and characteristics of ethnic groups. Hence, Ethnoeducation is a policy that supports intercultural education and aims to foster the growth and development of indigenous and Afro-descendant communities.

Regarding other specific educational norms for ethnic communities, there are many acts that recognize ethnic groups' right to a proper education. For example, sections 7, 8, 13, 67, and 68 of the Colombian Constitution recognize ethnic and cultural diversity. Section 13 states that all individuals are born free and equal and shall receive equal protection and treatment from the

authorities. They shall also enjoy the same rights, freedoms, and opportunities without discrimination based on sex, race, national or family origin, language, religion, political or philosophical opinion (Mosquera, 2024). Similarly, Section 68 establishes that "members of ethnic groups have the right to an education that respects and develops their cultural identity" (Mosquera, p. 10, 2024). The Colombian political constitution recognizes the importance of ethnic groups in Colombian territory and their right to an education that recognizes their identity.

Therefore, the MEN aims to provide communities with comprehensive education. The Ministry aims to strengthen processes related to identity, knowledge, socialization, the protection of community systems and organizational practices, the use of vernacular languages, teacher training, and research in all areas of culture. Likewise, Ethnoeducation is essential to the educational system in terms of intercultural education because it promotes equity and integration. However, it seems that it is the only policy that addresses this issue in our Colombian context.

EDUCATIVE PUBLIC POLICIES

According to Salazar (2012), a policy refers to the actions that the government proposes to address a problematic situation. Public policies are specific, concrete solutions aimed at managing public issues classified as "socially problematic situations" (Salazar, 2012). Public policies are tools used to solve such situations, which affect society and require government action. Therefore, public policies are the initiatives, decisions, and actions of the political regime that the government uses to implement strategies that aim to solve social problems.

Similarly, educational policies are introduced to address particular educational issues. According to Pita (2020), these policies comprise acts, decrees, provisions, regulations and resolutions that together form a country's pedagogical doctrine. This doctrine sets out the country's objectives and the procedures necessary to achieve them. Therefore, the state or

government is responsible for establishing the most appropriate guidelines for its education system. After all, education must address challenges, difficulties, needs and problems as a tool for transformation. Thus, educational policies are government initiatives that address educational concerns.

In line with the above, public policies and educational management are interdependent and work together to provide an equitable and quality education. To this end, Pita (2020) explains that the state must ensure that public management complies with educational policies through constant monitoring and evaluation. The primary goal of educational management is to promote social awareness of education among citizens and the government. Hence, public educational management promotes and coordinates public policies that establish strategies for involving citizens in solving their own educational problems.

Along these lines, Betancourt (2002, cited in Pita 2020) stated that educational management transcends state and school institutions being held responsible for the educational process by delegating responsibilities to society as well. It is conceived as a process involving shared, ongoing commitments aimed at constantly improving the education provided by the state through its various public and private institutions. This education must respond to socioeconomic, political, legal, historical, cultural, and environmental requirements and be organized according to the parameters established by the educational system.

Regarding English language teaching policies in Colombia, they are based on Act 115 of Education and the National Bilingualism Plan. First, according to Mendoza (2014) Article 21 of Act 115 establishes acquiring conversational and reading skills in at least one foreign language as an educational objective. This article was recently amended by Act 1651 of 2013 regarding bilingualism, which regulates English instruction in primary and secondary education.

Additionally, in 1997, the MEN launched the National Bilingualism Program. Mendoza (2014) points out that, the program's main objective was to enable the population to communicate in English according to comparable international standards to facilitate access to employment and educational opportunities. To this end, the MEN issued documents related to implementing policies in the Colombian education system to follow up on this program, such as curriculum guidelines and Basic Standards for Competence in Foreign Languages. English. Likewise, the "Colombia Bilingüe" program was created as part of the PNB, and the Basic Learning Rights and Suggested Curriculum were presented through this initiative.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

This chapter will display the methodological design of this research. It will explain the research paradigm and research methodology. Then the data collection method and the type of data collected.

RESEARCH PARADIGM

This research is framed in the qualitative research approach as this study focuses on analyzing interculturality in English teaching. Thus, in this research, educative social realities are emphasized in order to review theories concerning interculturality to improve English learning processes as Creswell (2007) states “qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p.52). Hence, as this educational research focuses on language learning through reflecting on interculturality in

English classes the qualitative paradigm allows us to explore both language learning and interculturality.

In the same line, considering that this research encourages decolonization in English teaching, the qualitative paradigm fits properly as it empowers transformative perspectives in EFL environments as Creswell (2007) explains “we conduct qualitative research when we want to empower individuals to share their stories, hear their voices, and minimize the power relationships that often exist between a researcher and the participants in a study” (p.55). Therefore, the qualitative paradigm is relevant for this study since it provides us with data collection instruments that are useful to analyze educational complexities on culture in language teaching.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is framed in the documentary research methodology as it focuses on “analyzing various types of documents including books, newspaper articles, academic journal articles, and institutional reports” (Morgan, p.64, 2022). Documentary research is the work of identifying, collecting, and processing informative data on a subject through the study of official or academic sources. Thus, the analysis of existing information about an issue is the focus of qualitative research document analysis, which involves the review of different data. Morgan (2022) explains that there are two types of data that can be analyzed: the pre-existing and the created data. However, in both cases the researcher plays an active role in discovering, collecting, and making decisions about the material that will be analyzed. This research uses the pre-existing data to reflect on the intercultural education in English teaching in Colombia based on official documents such as educative standards, curriculums, and policies.

Similarly, the documentary research methodology is based on a method of structure by stages. According to Alphonse (2023) the documentary research revolves into stages that are divided into three tasks. Definition of the subject, identifying the subject, and formulating the subject. The first consists of choosing the research topic based on the knowledge about the subject, personal interest, its relevance according to the teaching followed, and the documentation available on the subject. The second is a key step for establishing a search strategy by specifying the characteristics of the subject (theme, actors, period of time, geographical area, importance, and approaches). The last one is defined as a short sentence or statement that summarizes the subject of research. After that, the researcher should look for sources of information to conduct the literature search. Morgan (2022) explains that once the sample of text has been selected by the researcher, the analysis of those texts can start in the next stage.

DATA COLLECTION METHOD

The secondary data collection methodology is the approach that was implemented to obtain relevant information about interculturality in English teaching in Colombia. Secondary data is defined as data gathered from published sources (Tharedoost, 2022). Likewise, Patil (2023) explains that it refers to information that has undergone statistical analysis by others. On the other hand, Kabir (2016) also states that secondary data is useful because it enables researchers to quickly gather information on a topic, particularly when insufficient primary data exists. Therefore, this research relies on the secondary data collection methodology to explore how intercultural education has been assumed in English teaching policies in Colombia.

Secondary data is obtained from various sources because there are no particular data collection methods. However, Patil (2023) highlights government archives, libraries, and the internet as some of the most common methods of collecting secondary data.

Government archives: They offer official, verifiable archives, which are a benefit, but they are not always available for a variety of reasons.

Libraries: Researchers gather pertinent and reliable information in libraries that is often provided by scholars.

Internet: The internet is known as one of the most widely used secondary data collection methods. It offers both free and paid resources, but researchers should look for reliable websites.

Similarly, Tharedoost (2022) categorizes secondary data collection methods according to their reliability. Moreover, secondary data are the theoretical bases that lead this research, for that they are extremely helpful to analyze and reflect on interculturality in English teaching in Colombia. The secondary data chosen were:

Books: theoretical background concerning intercultural education and English language teaching in both Colombian and foreign perspectives. These resources shall be obtained on a database in systems and libraries.

Published electronic resources: background and studies related to English language teaching in Colombia from different perspectives. These resources will be checked on data-based systems.

Government records: documents to analyze English language teaching in Colombia and intercultural education as well. These documents will be gathered on the government's data-based systems.

CHAPTER IV

STATE OF THE ART

This chapter provides an overview of the documents selected for this state-of-the-art analysis. Ten official documents demonstrate how intercultural education has been approached in official policies concerning EFL in Colombia, providing insight into the integration of this pedagogical approach in the Colombian educational landscape. Each policy or standard is described, offering a perspective and proposal. The policies are categorized by document type. First, educational acts are explained. Second, second language teaching policies are described. Finally, methodological proposals regarding English teaching and intercultural education are presented.

Table 1. Documents

<i>Author</i>	<i>Document</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Year</i>
<i>Colombian Political Constitution</i>	115 Act of Education	Colombia	1994
<i>National Ministry of Education</i>	Decree 804 from 1995/ Ethnoeducation Act	Colombia	1995
<i>National Ministry of Education</i>	Act 1651 from 2013/bilingualism Act	Colombia	2013
<i>National Ministry of Education</i>	Curriculum Guidelines for Foreign Languages in Primary and Secondary Education	Colombia	1998
<i>National Ministry of Education</i>	Basic Standards for Foreign Language Proficiency: English	Colombia	2006
<i>Colombia Bilingue</i>	Basic rights of English learners	Colombia	2014-2019
<i>National Ministry of Education</i>	National Program of Bilingualism	Colombia	2018-2022

<i>National Ministry of Education</i>	Suggested English curriculum for educational institutions	Colombia	2018-2022
<i>National Ministry of Education</i>	English curriculum guidelines and pedagogical principles	Colombia	2018-2022
<i>Ministry of Education</i>	The Chair of Afro-Colombian Studies	Colombia	2014
<i>National Ministry of Education</i>	Textbook “Way to Go”	Colombia	2021

To start, Colombian political constitution presented *the 115 Act of Education* in 1994 to set out the general rules governing the public education service, which fulfills a social function according to the needs and interests of individuals, families, and society. This act establishes the organization and approach of formal education at preschool, primary, and secondary levels, as well as non-formal and informal education. The targeted populations are school-age children, young people, adults, rural residents, ethnic groups, and individuals with physical, sensory, and mental disabilities. Colombia's General Education Act guides all teaching and learning processes in different settings.

Colombia's General Education Act (Act 115 of 1994) promotes interculturality by establishing education for ethnic groups and including appreciation and respect for the nation's cultural complexities in comprehensive education. While the term "interculturality" is not explicitly mentioned, its principles are reflected in the state's duty to educate teachers in the languages and cultures of these groups and to include appreciation of cultural heritage in educational curricula.

On the other hand, Article 23 of Act 115 of 1994 establishes the objective regarding foreign languages for primary and secondary education levels as the acquisition of conversation, reading comprehension, and expression. This act aims to help students develop basic

communication skills in a foreign language. It stipulates that educational institutions must include foreign language instruction in their curricula and Institutional Educational Projects (PEIs) at the preschool, primary, and secondary levels, in both public and private schools. However, each educational institution has the autonomy to define how it implements English instruction through its PEI.

General Education Act includes the term *Ethnoeducation* through Decree 804 of 1995. Ethnoeducation aims to recognize and regulate the education of ethnic groups such as indigenous peoples, Afro-Colombians, and Raizales, among others. According to 115 Act education for ethnic groups is part of the public education service and is based on a commitment to collective development where different members of the community exchange knowledge and experiences with a view to keeping, recreating, and developing a comprehensive life project in accordance with their culture, language, traditions, and their own rights.

The Ethnoeducation outlines the principles on which the proposal is based and describes the scenarios and individuals involved in its implementation:

Table 2. Principles of the Ethnoeducation Act.

Principle	Definition
Integrity	The vision that each person possesses and that enables a harmonious and reciprocal relationship between human beings, their social reality, and nature.
Linguistic diversity	The ways in which ethnic groups see, conceive, and construct the world, expressed through the languages that are part of the national identity on equal terms.
Autonomy	The right of ethnic groups to develop their own ethnoeducational processes.
Community participation	The capacity of ethnic groups to guide, develop, and evaluate their ethnoeducational processes, exercising their autonomy.

Interculturality	The ability to know one's own culture and other cultures that interact and enrich each other in a dynamic and reciprocal manner to build a social reality based on coexistence and mutual respect.
Flexibility	The ongoing construction of ethnoeducational processes in accordance with the cultural values, needs, and particularities of ethnic groups
Progressiveness	The dynamics of ethnoeducational processes generated by research that contribute to the development of knowledge
Solidarity	The cohesion of the group around its experiences, which allows it to strengthen itself and maintain its existence in relation to other social groups.

Source: Own elaboration (2025).

Therefore, the ethno-education curriculum is based on territoriality, autonomy, language, and each group's conception of life, history, and identity, as defined by their customs and traditions. The curriculum's design is pretended to be the result of research involving the general community, the educational community, its authorities, and traditional organizations.

Ethnoeducation is an attempt to approach intercultural education in Colombia's educative legislation. Nonetheless, in this specific act, Ethnoeducation has not been approached as an aspect to be taught or approached in English language teaching. While intercultural education in EFL has been conceptualized, ethnoeducative perspectives have not been applied to curriculums.

In addition, Act 1651 of 2013, also known as the Bilingualism Act, is a reform of certain articles of the General Education Act. The act aims to strengthen the teaching of foreign languages, particularly English, at all levels of education, from preschool to secondary school, as well as in the workplace. The act establishes bilingualism as a priority objective within the

education system. Act 1651 amends key articles of the General Education Act, emphasizing language instruction and making English a compulsory foreign language to be learnt.

Act 1651 revised Article 20 of the Education Act regarding language teaching in Colombia. To begin with, article 20 establishes that one objective of basic education is to develop communication skills in reading, writing, listening, speaking, and expressing oneself correctly and Act 1651 adds that these abilities must also be developed in a foreign language. Besides, Article 21 was partially modified as, initially, it stated that education must foster the development of conversation and reading skills in at least one foreign language, and the 1651 Act added the writing skill.

Another section modified by 1651 is Article 22; expanding the original clause to include that abilities such as conversation, reading, and writing in a foreign language must be fostered because in 115 Act Article 22 concerned about developing comprehension and the capacity to express oneself in a foreign language. Finally, Act 1651 reiterates that the other sections of Articles 20, 22, and 30 remain in force. It also designates the state and its institutions as the entities responsible for enforcing these provisions.

On the other hand, the Ministry of Education developed policies to approach bilingualism to primary and secondary education. To start, the *Curriculum Guidelines for Foreign Languages in Primary and Secondary Education* made in 1998 were proposed by a team of scholars from basic, secondary, and high education institutions in different regions of Colombia. The document aims to provide foreign language teachers with guidelines for developing educational projects in educational institutions. The document also presents hypotheses on foreign language learning suggesting approaches for selecting fundamental concepts and guidelines in order to develop the learning of foreign languages. In developing this proposal, the authors considered national and

international reflections, approaches, and experiences related to curriculum development, language teaching, sociolinguistics, cognitive psychology, and general educational psychology.

The document also describes interculturality as a concept. It says that interculturality in language teaching allows students to become global citizens as it permits them to interact with people from different backgrounds. It also highlights that intercultural processes involve the understanding of language, culture, and expectations of other cultures and languages in the learning of a foreign language. It approaches interculturality as a concept. It says that interculturality in language teaching allows students to become global citizens as it permits them to interact with people from different backgrounds. Finally, experiences from secondary education were referenced.

Additionally, this document is organized into four chapters: Contextualization, Elements and Approaches of the Foreign Language Curriculum, Continuing Education for Foreign Language Teachers, and New Technologies in the Foreign Language Curriculum. The first chapter explains the Colombian and global sociocultural contexts from which the proposal emerges. It emphasizes the importance of promoting foreign language learning to address the needs of multiculturalism, overcome language barriers, and achieve successful communication. The second chapter presents the field's conceptual elements as well as methodological and evaluation principles. It also includes curriculum models for language learning. The third chapter discusses support for continuing teacher training. It explores the relationship between theory and practice within the context of educational experiences. The fourth chapter discusses the role of new information and communication technologies in language learning and teaching.

The Basic Standards for Foreign Language Proficiency: English, were developed by the Ministry of Education in 2006 as a part of the National Bilingualism Program. They aim to help

citizens communicate in English according to internationally comparable standards. In this policy, intercultural communication is seen as a necessity that allows international society to access this new globalized world through a common language. *The Basic Standards for Foreign Language Proficiency* establish clear and public criteria to define basic quality levels to which children in all regions of Colombia are entitled.

The standards define what children should learn and be able to do at the end of each level so they can function effectively in academic and professional settings. A specific level of performance has been defined as aligns with the Ministry of Education's objectives and the levels of the Common European Framework (CEFR). In elementary and secondary education, the focus is on bringing students to Level B1. The English standards provide fundamental guidance on the communication skills children at the basic and intermediate levels are expected to develop.

The Common European Framework establishes six reference levels for learning, teaching, and assessing foreign languages, but they are adapted to Colombian context. So, *The Basic Standards for Foreign Language Proficiency: English* are grouped into the following grade sets: First to Third, Fourth to Fifth, Sixth to Seventh, Eighth to Ninth, and Tenth to Eleventh. The document is divided into nine sections: First, the key concepts and standards of the national bilingualism program are discussed. Next, the importance of teaching English in Colombia is explained from social, economic, cultural, pedagogical, and other perspectives. Then, the structure of the standards is explained. The standards are then presented according to this division. Lastly, recommendations for implementation are provided and everyday life issues are discussed. Additionally, a supporting bibliography, about the theoretical basis that supports the document, is included.

The document does not explicitly refer to the term "interculturality," but it mentions related aspects that should be developed. First, it notes that the Ministry of Education proposed the study and critical understanding of the national culture and ethnic and cultural diversity as the foundation of national unity and identity in Colombian teaching processes. The document also states that the standards support students in practicing social interaction and negotiating meanings, improving their ability to establish relationships with others and function in new situations. Thus, it encourages students to be open-minded, accept and understand new cultures, and promote exchange between different societies.

Finally, the document defines sociolinguistic competence as knowledge of the social and cultural conditions implicit in language use. These include rules of courtesy and other rules governing relationships between generations, genders, classes, and social groups. This competence is also used when expressions of popular wisdom are encountered or there are differences in register, dialect, and accent.

The Basic Rights of English Learners were developed as part of the 2014-2018 National Development Plan with the support of national and international experts and 94 teacher evaluators from various regions of the country to ensure its quality and relevance to the Colombian educational context. These rights establish the fundamental elements necessary for creating learning objectives in each school year to help students achieve their goals. This is set forth in the Basic Competency Standards and the National Government's National Development Plan (2014–2018). The concept of interculturality is not mentioned in the document. There are no intercultural pedagogical insights presented on the document.

This policy supports the development of curriculum proposals integrated into Institutional Educational Projects in every educational institution in the country, which are outlined in area

and class plans. The Basic Learning Rights in Colombia are divided into three main components: Reading comprehension, speaking, and writing. These components are also divided into two stages: transition and primary, and secondary. These plans serve as benchmarks that allow us to determine if students are meeting the expected learning outcomes and define actions for continuous improvement.

Likewise, the 2018-2022 National Development Plan proposed the *National Bilingualism Program (PNB)* to address a second language teaching plan that approaches the country's needs while complying with current regulations. The plan aims to strengthen the Ministry of Education's institutional capacity, promote teacher training and certification, and implement innovative learning content and environments. Through the *National Bilingualism Program (PNB)*, the Ministry promotes a functional, multilingual approach to education that recognizes and celebrates the country's cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity. It addresses interculturality which is considered a tool for communication, social interaction, and curricular flexibility. This approach emphasizes developing communicative and intercultural skills in foreign languages. It also fosters learning related to global citizenship, knowledge of the world, and 21st-century skills. Finally, the Ministry promoted language policy as the central focus and guiding principle of the National Bilingualism Program throughout all teacher training and curriculum management processes.

The Suggested English curriculum for educational institutions and departments of education was also proposed as a part of the 2018-2022 National Development Plan. This curriculum was designed to consolidate English language skills at the A1 level prior to entering high school. Its objective is to develop high-quality, inclusive, and flexible curricula that support teachers nationwide, regardless of their social, economic, or geographical circumstances. These

curricula must be adaptable to each context's particular conditions, so it addresses intercultural competence in English teaching as it should be associated with education for ethnic and cultural diversity, a concept that is recognized by Colombian laws. The proposal adopted two approaches: an action-oriented curriculum and an ecological, contextual curriculum. The first approach focuses on developing the skills necessary to function effectively in communication environments other than one's own. This approach is based on two principles: learning occurs through social interaction and action. The second approach posits that actors and the environment interact with each other to construct, complement, and transform knowledge. Its general principle is: learning occurs through interaction with others in a context-based manner.

The document is divided into six sections, each of which addresses a specific question about the content of the proposal. The first section discusses the landscape of English language teaching and learning in Colombia. This section covers bilingual policies, relevant pedagogical tools, the legal framework, the population, the challenges faced by educators, and the factors to be considered. Next, it covers the fundamentals of the curriculum proposal, including its objectives, approach, core themes, and characteristics. It also discusses the stakeholders involved in its implementation: students, teachers, educational institutions, and parents. Lastly, it discusses the suitable profiles of transition and primary school teachers and suggests how schools and education departments can support the implementation of the proposed English curriculum.

Similarly, as part of the 2018-2022 National Program of Development, the Ministry of Education proposed the *English curriculum guidelines and pedagogical principles* for grades six through eleven. The curriculum establishes a common foundation for achieving the Colombian Bilingual program's goals and serves as a guide for teaching and learning English. The proposal also aims to guide the development of English communication skills in Colombian educational

institutions. The proposal aims to guide the development of basic, common curriculum content oriented towards context. Additionally, the document aims to encourage creativity among teachers and hold school administrators accountable for making specific curriculum decisions tailored to their educational setting. Concerning intercultural education, the document posits the cross-cutting themes of diversity and equity involve how we position ourselves in relation to other human beings.

This document consists of eight essential components that constitute the proposal's pedagogical, curricular, methodological, and assessment guidelines and principles. They are organized from general to specific. First, a brief overview of the panorama of English teaching and learning is provided. Then, the analysis of the needs that gave rise to this proposal. Next, it describes the theoretical foundations on which decisions related to the curricular approach are based, along with the underlying methodological and assessment approaches. Lastly, the intended audience is described as well as guidelines for selecting educational materials.

On the other hand, *the Chair of Afro-Colombian Studies* (in Spanish *Cátedra de Estudios Afrocolombianos CEA*), was established in 2014 with the support of the Ministry of Education. It is a pedagogical and curricular strategy that recognizes Afro-Colombian history and cultures and seeks to eliminate racism and racial discrimination in schools. The goal is to reduce segregation and discrimination by implementing an educational policy that guarantees the right to a quality education and takes a differentiated approach with respect to the Afro-Colombian, Palanquero, Raizal, indigenous, and Rrom ethnic groups. Intercultural education is approached from a critical perspective because it addresses multiculturalism, hegemony, and cultural diversity in schools. It is important to mention that the Chair of Afro-Colombian Studies was applied in by the District Education Secretariat in five schools located in Bogotá D.C.

First, the document presents the concepts and approaches that underpin the implementation of the Chair of Afro-Colombian Studies (CEA) within the framework of district education policy. It contextualizes the CEA within the historical process and legacy of the Afro-Colombian population. Next, it establishes the role of the District Education Department (in Spanish *Secretaría de Educación del Distrito* or SED) on the debate surrounding multiculturalism and cultural diversity in schools are presented. Lastly, the CEA is presented as a proposal for critical intercultural education within the framework of the policy defined by the SED, along with its trajectory, challenges, and difficulties within the district education system.

The systematization's methodological design was based on recognizing the CEA's pedagogical experiences, which were developed or strengthened with support from the SED's CEA support team. This support was provided to 38 educational institutions through awareness-raising, training, and educational workshops with teachers, school administrators, and students. The analysis of these experiences was based on qualitative assessments made by professionals on the SED's CEA support team. These assessments guided the identification and selection of significant experiences. The areas of reflection relate to the following: a. CEA and the institutional educational project, b. The pedagogical and curricular development of CEA, c. CEA and the construction of an educational community, d. Racism and discrimination in schools. This assessment's conclusions show that advances in the institutionalization of CEA in Bogotá are still "emerging" pedagogical practices that have not been consolidated or refined through structured, ongoing processes.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Education has implemented an educational resource concerning English teaching: the 2021 textbook *Way to Go*. Presented through the national bilingualism program, this book aligns with the Ministry of National Education's quality

standards and aims to support students' English learning process in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. The proposal incorporates intercultural education from various perspectives as material approaches innovative topics related to the Colombian culture and that in other countries by means of varied tasks and projects, so it prepares students for a globalized world.

The textbooks are composed of four modules that discuss various topics, such as culture, health, democracy and peace, the environment, and global citizenship, among others. These topics were selected with the next generation of Colombians living in peace and connecting with each other in English in mind. The material is multimedia, including five types of educational resources: The Student's Book, a Workbook, audio tracks, interactive games, and an interactive/digital version of the materials. These textbooks are designed to improve English education in Colombia.

In this sense, the selected documents represent policies and standards related to English language teaching and intercultural education in Colombia. These documents are relevant due to their impact on English language teaching in Colombia. However, analyzing them is necessary to identify how intercultural education has been addressed in these educational proposals which support bilingualism in Colombia.

CHAPTER V

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The following chapter presents the analysis method used to review the documents gathered through the research process. It exhibits the categories of analysis that emerged from the document review outlined in the state-of-the-art section.

PROCEDURES FOR DATA ANALYSIS

From the beginning, the research aimed to collect data on legal documents that approach ELT and intercultural education in Colombia through policies and legal documents. In order to select the documents, the researcher established the following criteria: they must be policies launched by the government or the Ministry of Education. Additionally, the documents must be national standards and projects supported by the Ministry of Education. Therefore, the dates of the documents were not relevant for collecting the data. Thus, the documents were examined to obtain information about the main topic. They met the researcher's expectations, triggering a wide range of dissertations in the investigation. Afterward, the data analysis and interpretation were conducted.

Hence, the method used to analyze and prioritize the categories was the grounded approach. Thus, the information gathered from the official documentation analyzed provided assured credibility and avoided biasing to develop a theoretical dissertation about a social concern. Therefore, it served to describe and problematize findings derived from the data collected from the documents reviewed. Likewise, according to Corbin and Strauss (1990) concepts that encloses the same phenomenon may be grouped to form categories and disclose related concepts.

Consequently, to propose the categories, this study followed the three-stage process of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding, as proposed by Corbin and Strauss (1990). First, the documents were read to categorize them based on type and purpose (e.g., policy, pedagogical proposal, standard). In the second stage, axial coding was used to label the information gathered about English Language Teaching (ELT) and intercultural education, grouping it into categories. The final step, selective coding, allowed to identify subcategories based on the core standpoints discussed in the study.

CATEGORIES OF ANALYSIS

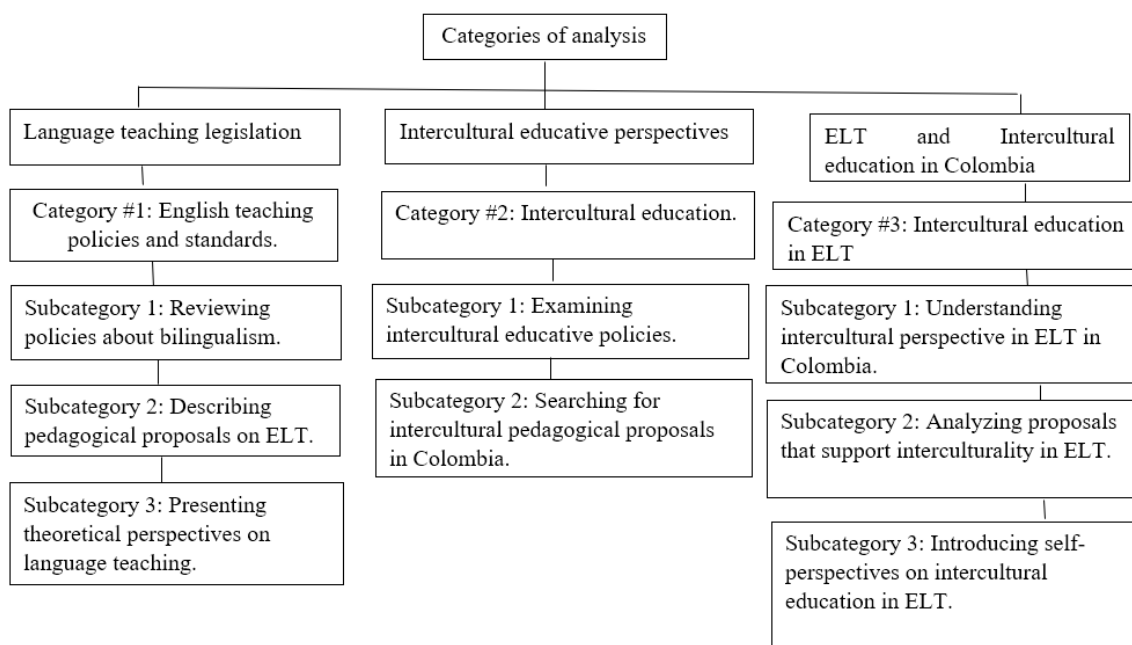
The categories for the analysis were established based on the information collected from the selected documents. Therefore, the categories aligned with the study's core and specific objectives. Hence, the following categories were established to address these aims and answer the research question posed at the beginning of the paper.

The first category, "*English Teaching Policies and Standards*," was proposed to outline the core proposal on English language teaching (ELT) in Colombian primary and secondary education levels. The second category, "*Intercultural Education*," intended to introduce proposals on the concept of interculturality that contributed to the last category. The third category, "*ELT and Intercultural Education in Colombia*," expected to problematize the implementation of intercultural education in English language teaching. Thus, these three categories and their subsequent subcategories address the general and specific objectives in a dialogical manner.

That said, the following figure offers a better understanding of how the categories were established and organized alongside the different subcategories:

Figure 4

Detailed information of the categories of the emerging from the analysis.



CATEGORY #1: ENGLISH TEACHING POLICIES AND STANDARDS.

This category outlines policies and standards that support English teaching and learning in Colombia. To start, the English curriculum guidelines, pedagogical principles and educational policies have formed the basis for conceptualizing English teaching and learning in Colombia. The General Education Act (1994) establishes the following specifications for primary basic education: 'The acquisition of elements of conversation and reading in at least one foreign language,' (1994, as cited in the English Curriculum Guidelines and Pedagogical Principles) and in relation to the specific objectives of secondary basic education: "The comprehension and ability to express oneself in a foreign language" (1994, as cited in the English Curriculum Guidelines and Pedagogical Principles).

Moreover, the General Education Law was modified to support bilingualism in the educational system. For example, Law 1651 of 2013 proposes substantial changes to the General

Education Law to strengthen the process of establishing the country as a bilingual nation. The law encourages the creation of standards, guidelines, and curricula to fulfill its legislative requirements in terms of communicative skills. Thus, it fostered policies, perspectives, pedagogical approaches, methodologies, and proposals that have guided bilingual education in Colombia's primary and secondary schools.

Similarly, the National Program of Bilingualism, promoted by the Ministry of National Education, enhances language teaching guidelines, including ELT. The Ministry of National Education (2006) “through the National Bilingualism Program, promotes educational policies that encourage the development of the mother tongue, various indigenous languages, and Creole, as well as the learning of foreign languages, such as English” (p. 5). Thus, this subcategory concerns about English language teaching policies, documents, and proposals in the primary and secondary education in Colombia. For, three subcategories emerged from this category: *1) reviewing policies about bilingualism, 2) describing pedagogical proposals on ELT, and 3) presenting theoretical perspectives on language teaching.*

Reviewing policies about bilingualism. The first subcategory of analysis refers to the legislative policies that encourage bilingualism in Colombia’s education as established in the National Bilingual Plan (2023) “the purpose of this law is to create a national public policy on bilingualism by establishing the institutional framework necessary for its implementation and amending existing regulations on education” (p.1). Hence, the data analyzed provides core information on the policies that have been developed to enhance bilingualism in Colombia’s primary and secondary education as the following excerpts illustrate.

The acquisition of conversational and reading skills in at least one foreign language.

[General Education Act: Art 21. Item (m)]

Understanding and ability to express oneself in a foreign language

[General Education Act. Art 22. Item (l)]

Educational institutions will organize the curriculum in such a way that students can intensify... foreign languages, according to their vocation and interests, as guidance for the career they will choose in higher education

[General Education Act: Art 31. Paragraph]

However, such articles did not provide enough detail on which skills must be improved in primary and secondary education because they addressed communication in a foreign language from a general perspective. Similarly, Zarate and Alvarez (2005) noted that educational policies are too general because they are intended to apply equally to all citizens, so the General Education Act was not sufficiently developed. Thus, the Ministry of Education released Act 1651, which modified certain articles from Act 115, to ensure that foreign language instruction would align with the objectives of Colombia's bilingual education program, as outlined in the articles of Act 1651.

“Article 2. Add the following paragraph to Article 20 of Act 115 of 1994: **g)** Develop communication skills to read, understand, write, listen, speak, and express oneself correctly in a foreign language” (1651 Act, p.1, 2013).

[Act 1651 from 2013: 20]

“Article 3. Amend paragraph m) of Article 21 of Act 115, which shall read as follows: **m)** The development of conversation, reading, and writing skills in at least one foreign language”. (1651 Act, p.1, 2013).

[Act 1651 from 2013: 21]

“Article 4. Amend paragraph l) of Article 22 of Act 115 of 1994, which would read as follows: **l)** The development of conversation, reading, and writing skills in at least one foreign language”. (1651 Act, p.1, 2013).

[Act 1651 from 2013. 22]

In this way, Colombia's approach to bilingualism should provide a comprehensive language-teaching method that addresses all four communication skills: listening, reading,

writing, and speaking. However, these policies do not consider other factors in educational contexts. In fact, they don't mention which foreign language should be taught, and they seem disconnected from English Language Teaching (ELT) legislation. As Zárata and Álvarez (2005) assert: "they do not describe the state of education in foreign languages in our country. They are not a curricular guide, nor do they describe the specific contents of a program or a unique perspective" (p. 12). Conversely, they only argue that students should be able to communicate effectively in a foreign language to meet the requirements of the Ministry of Education.

Accordingly, the National Bilingual Plan was created to determine how English should be taught in schools.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is the international standard that defines language proficiency levels, allowing students' progress to be assessed at each stage of learning and throughout their lives.

[National Bilingualism Program. Lines 24-26]

The national government, led by the Ministry of Education, will create an executive directorate to implement the public policy on bilingualism (Política Pública de Bilingüismo PPNB). Its main function will be to design, formulate, and create implementation strategies, monitor progress, make relevant recommendations, and suggest necessary changes to the PPNB.

[National Bilingualism Program. Lines 152-158]

The learning of English or other foreign languages in preschool, elementary, and middle school starts from communication and is directed toward it. Therefore, it is expected that learning methodologies and pathways will be primarily oriented toward the development of students' communicative competence, as established by the Basic Standards for Competence in Foreign Languages: English and the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).

[National Bilingualism Program. Lines 27-31]

“Official and unofficial institutions of basic, primary, and secondary education shall adopt within their institutional educational projects the methods, indices, indicators, goals, achievements, and objectives of the process of teaching in a second language as an integral part thereof, always in accordance with the provisions adopted by the executive directorate and the PPNB.”

[National Bilingualism Program. Lines 277-283]

In this context, the aforementioned policies outline the legislation that established bilingualism in Colombia's education system, particularly in primary and secondary education.

The policies aim to promote foreign language instruction in schools by developing English communication skills through the National Bilingual Program. The policies also establish standards to guide English instruction. Nevertheless, the PPNB defines a bilingual speaker as someone who speaks English and Spanish. However, Gómez (2006) claims that this definition disregards the indigenous languages, Palenquero, Creole, and other foreign languages spoken in the country. In addition, Gómez (2006) also argues that the PPNB adopted the European Framework; however, it would be inaccurate to adopt a foreign model and standardise teaching practices, given that the context and realities in Colombia are drastically different. Hence, these policies pretend to guide ELT in Colombia, but more research is needed to determine the content Colombian students require to learn English under local conditions.

Describing pedagogical proposal on ELT. This subcategory presents findings regarding the standards and pedagogical methodologies on which English teaching has been based in primary and secondary education in Colombia. Pinzón and Vélez (2021) explain that the Colombian government, through the National Bilingual Plan (PNB), has promoted pedagogical documents for English instruction. Two of the most widely promoted initiatives within the PNB are the Suggested English Curriculum and the Basic Learning Rights, both of which were issued in 2016. These documents were presented to guide teachers in constructing a contextualized local curriculum. Therefore, such documents in Colombia mention the objectives that guide English language teaching as found in these excerpts.

The aim of a foreign language curriculum is therefore to promote this ability to communicate in other languages...The fundamental purpose is to enable them to acquire and develop their competence in that code in such a way that they use the foreign language to relate knowledge, to understand and interpret the surrounding reality, and to share ideas, feelings, and opinions in communication situations governed by linguistic and social behavior patterns typical of the cultures where the foreign language is spoken.

[Curriculum Guidelines. Elements and Approaches of the Foreign Language Curriculum. Lines 18 -23]

The goal is to develop high-quality, inclusive, and flexible curricula that can truly support and accompany the work of teachers throughout the country, regardless of their social, economic, or geographic circumstances, and that can be adapted to the particular conditions of each context.

[English curriculum guidelines and pedagogical principles. Curriculum fundamentals. Lines 14 - 20]

It helps educational institutions coordinate their subject area and classroom planning by grade and level so that the expected learning outcomes are achieved.

[Basic Learning Rights. Public objectives. Lines 5-6]

It provides teachers and school administrators with a reference point and starting point for carrying out their curriculum design, subject area, and classroom practices.

[Basic Learning Rights. Public objectives. Lines 7-8]

Hence, it can be observed, that the pedagogical proposal in ELT aims to provide a curriculum that standardize and lead the English instruction in Colombia's educative institutions. However, these standards have not been developed with consideration for the current state of foreign language teaching in our country. Although the standards claim to be based on the needs of the population, the proposed standards are too specific, outlining certain skills or abilities that must be developed. However, they may be difficult to adapt, particularly because they are intended for implementation in English classes in Colombia where there is a demand for English teaching in diverse contexts in primary and secondary schools. In addition, the documents propose certain pedagogical approaches that need to be adopted at different levels, as can be seen in the following excerpts.

The methodological principles described here have the ultimate goal of learning a foreign language for communicative purposes; that is, each of them promotes the use of English in a specific context and always considers the functions that will allow children to communicate with others. Thus, it has been determined that for transition, the methodology will revolve around learning experiences, task-based learning will be the fundamental basis for grades one, two, and three, while for grades four and five, project-based learning has been considered.

[English curriculum guidelines and pedagogical principles. Methodological Principles. Lines 21-33]

This curriculum proposal favors methodological approaches that foster students' ability to self-direct their learning process. These approaches are centered on the development of tasks at the initial levels and the gradual insertion of projects and problem solving in the middle and upper grades. These are options that are adaptable to the learning needs of children and young people and have the potential to help promote their development at increasing levels of complexity and autonomy.

[Guidelines and principles pedagogical suggested curriculum for English. Methodological Principles. Lines 1-6]

The proposal is to integrate them gradually and sequentially, beginning with a greater emphasis on the task-based approach in the early grades (6th and 7th), moving to a combination of tasks and projects in the middle grades (8th and 9th), and favoring project- and problem-based approaches in the later grades (10th and 11th).

[Guidelines and principles pedagogical suggested curriculum for English. Methodological Principles. Lines 98-103]

The documents address teaching perspectives for each educational level and promote approaches that support students' English learning through educational processes. The documents also outline the necessary learning outcomes to achieve these processes. These outcomes are divided by grade level and connected to the aforementioned teaching perspectives. Furthermore, English teachers are responsible for incorporating these theories into their classes. However, Zarate and Alvarez (2005) and Gomez (2006) have found that teachers' perspectives are not considered when these documents are proposed. In fact, apprentices have difficulty connecting their personal and academic interests to the standards imposed by the government and institutions. Nevertheless, these outcomes must be applied in the classroom and measured using indicators, as demonstrated by the following examples.

<p>1 Al finalizar este grado, el/la estudiante.</p> <p>1 Comprende y responde a instrucciones sobre tareas escolares básicas, de manera verbal y no verbal. Por ejemplo:</p> <p>2 Comprende y realiza declaraciones sencillas, usando expresiones ensayadas, sobre su entorno inmediato (casa y escuela), como se muestra en el siguiente ejemplo:</p>	<p>Escritura</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copio y transcribo palabras que comprendo y que uso con frecuencia en el salón de clase. 1 • Escribo el nombre de lugares y elementos que reconozco en una ilustración. 1 • Respondo brevemente a las preguntas "qué, quién, cuándo y dónde", si se refieren a mi familia, mis amigos o mi colegio. 1 • Escribo información personal en formatos sencillos. 1, 2 • Escribo mensajes de invitación y felicitación usando formatos sencillos. 1, 2 • Demuestro conocimiento de las estructuras básicas del inglés. 1
<p>[Basic Learning Rights, primary. DBA]</p>	<p>[Basic Standards for Foreign Language Proficiency: English. Skills and competences]</p>

GRADOS

1 a 3

Básica Primaria

Principiante (A1)

En este nivel

Comprendo historias cortas narradas en un lenguaje sencillo.

Desarrollo estrategias que me ayudan a entender algunas palabras, expresiones y oraciones que leo.

Comprendo el lenguaje básico sobre mi familia, amigos, juegos y lugares conocidos, si me hablan despacio y con pronunciación clara.

[Basic Standards for Foreign Language Proficiency: English. Standards grades 1 to 3]

Grado 7^o

1

Participa en conversaciones cortas en las que brinda información sobre sí mismo, sobre personas, lugares y eventos que le son familiares. Para ello, usa frases y oraciones sencillas previamente memorizadas. Por ejemplo:

Anita: Hi, Luisa. Tomorrow we have our math test.
Luisa: That is true. I'm very nervous. I need to pass.
Anita: Why don't we study together?
Luisa: That is a great idea. When we finish, we can play some videogames to relax.
Anita: OK. Come to my house after school.
Luisa: OK. See you there.

2

Describe, de manera oral, personas, actividades, eventos y experiencias personales. Estructura estas descripciones con frases y oraciones sencillas previamente ensayadas con sus compañeros y su docente. Por ejemplo, hace una presentación breve y coherente sobre cómo convivir armoniosamente en el salón de clases.

Good morning. Harmony in the classroom is very important; I will share some ideas to help us do this. Respect the teachers, the classroom, other students and yourself! To show respect we can listen to others and take turns when we speak. It is also important to understand that people have different points of view. These ideas can help to live in harmony in our classroom.

[Basic Learning Rights: high school. DBA]

Thus, it can be determined that the methodological proposals, intended to guide English instruction in primary and secondary education, are standardized based on foreign perspectives.

Additionally, pedagogical approaches address the needs of each level of education differently. Even so, these approaches are too generic to offer proper proposals for each particular context. Similarly, relevant learning criteria and indicators have been established for each grade through competency standards and basic learning rights. These were developed in dialogue with the analyzed pedagogical guidelines and orientations. Yet, as Liddicoat (2004) states, these foreign perspectives generally focus only on communicative skills and grammatical knowledge, ignoring any cultural dimension.

Presenting theoretical perspectives on language teaching. This subcategory explains the findings regarding theoretical perspectives on language teaching in Colombia's educational context. English teaching relies on official documents from the Ministry of Education that propose certain language teaching approaches. However, Damien (2019) realized that Colombia adopted certain external methodologies, such as the Communicative Approach, and Task-Based Language Learning and Teaching, as can be seen in these fragments.

This approach is based on developing meaningful tasks that allow learners to use language for specific communicative purposes. In this sense, tasks are at the center of the educational experience because they result from the interaction of communicative meanings rather than language forms or structures.

[English curriculum guidelines and pedagogical principles. Methodological Principles. Lines 39-46]

Focuses on student learning in a fun, holistic, democratic, and motivating way. In this type of approach, students actively work on planning, evaluating, and developing a project that is related to the real world and in which language is used as a tool to carry it out.

[Guidelines and principles pedagogical suggested curriculum for English. Methodological Principles. Lines 29-35]

Communicative competence cannot be worked on in isolation, as it involves flexible knowledge/skills that are updated in meaningful contexts and require the ability to use knowledge about the language in various situations, both inside and outside of school life. For this reason, the proposal also covers the development of skills and knowledge related to the ethical, aesthetic, social, and cultural dimensions of the language being learned.

[Basic Standards for Foreign Language Proficiency: English. Section 4. Lines 100-110]

From this perspective, it is concerning that these approaches are still relevant to English language teaching. Cárdenas (2018) explains that historically, foreign perspectives on language teaching are based on isolated experiences with language instruction in schools. Consequently, there is not thorough debate in terms of critical approaches to be applied in teaching contexts during these challenging times that are faced nowadays, neither ground-breaking and creative practices that might link up content from the disciplines chosen in the curriculum. Even language teaching instruction focuses on acquiring grammatical and linguistic knowledge to enable students to communicate in a foreign environment. However, this approach does not consider the student's context; rather, it seeks to make students resemble native speakers, as evidenced in these excerpts.

Formally, most foreign language teaching programs emphasize how (grammar) to say what (vocabulary). These components of language still govern curriculum development in the field.

[Curriculum Guidelines for Foreign Languages in Primary and Secondary Education. Section 2 – 2.6. Lines 24-25]

Grammatical competence includes control of vocabulary, morphology, syntax, and phonemic and graphemic elements.

[Curriculum Guidelines for Foreign Languages in Primary and Secondary Education. Section 2 – 2.2. Lines 44-45]

Interlingual development refers to the process that anyone learning a foreign language must go through in order to be able to speak it as well or almost as well as a native speaker.

[Curriculum Guidelines for Foreign Languages in Primary and Secondary Education. Section 2 – 2.1. Lines 60-61]

Definitely, ELT in Colombia has been conceptualized from foreign and traditional perspectives which could be relevant for offering guidance on how to teach a foreign language

though. However, English language teaching should educate students in both linguistic knowledge and critical citizenship. As Byram (1997) argues, sociolinguistic skills should be considered alongside linguistic skills because they help speakers understand language's meaning. Similarly, discursive skills enable speakers to interpret and produce dialogues in different contexts using strategies for communication. Therefore, the current emphasis on learning the language poorly connects with the lives and realities of learners who need English to fully participate as critical citizens.

In conclusion, English teaching in Colombia is highly structured according to policies, standards, and pedagogical documents. However, these documents are based on foreign perspectives that may be inflexible depending on the context. Consequently, it is evident that such approaches are difficult to implement in a real educational context in Colombia. Teachers even struggle because they are not considered when the proposals are created. Thus, although the standards should guide ELT in primary and secondary education levels, they also should be approached from a more national perspective.

CATEGORY #2: INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION.

This category presents Colombia's legislation concerning intercultural education in the primary and secondary educative context. Thus, the policies selected for this state of art provide relevant information about Ethoeducation and how it has been understood and conceptualized in relation to intercultural education in Colombia's education system. Similarly, this category gathers the pedagogical proposals that somehow endorse intercultural educative perspectives in Colombia.

Significantly, intercultural educational policies aim to guide the legislative requirements by promoting intercultural education in schools. As Vélez affirms (2002) “these guidelines also seek to respond to the constitutional call to strengthen unity through recognition of the nation's cultural diversity, offer tools that promote multicultural education in our schools, and encourage the pursuit of peace based on principles of equality and respect for cultural and ethnic difference” (p.6). In this view, intercultural education offers transformational perspectives at school that have been fostered by the Ministry of Education and may be relevant to concern as teachers. Having said that, two emerged from this category: *Examining intercultural educative policies*, *Searching for intercultural pedagogical proposals in Colombia*.

Examining intercultural educative policies. This category sets out the policies and legislation that have been implemented to discuss interculturality in education. Buildes (2023) explains that Colombia has progressed in promoting interculturality through public policies that seek to recognize and value the country's cultural diversity. This means that in Colombia's educative contexts these policies have also been developed through laws that demand to promote education for ethnic communities in primary and secondary educative environments as seen in the following extracts.

Article 1.- Education for ethnic groups is part of the public education service and is based on a commitment to collective development, where different members of the community at large exchange knowledge and experiences with a view to maintaining, recreating, and developing a comprehensive life project in accordance with their culture, language, traditions, and their own indigenous rights.

[Ethnoeducation Act. Chapter I. Lines 1-5]

“Article 39 of Act 70 of 1993 was regulated in Decree 1122 of 1998, which establishes the obligation to teach Afro-Colombian Studies at all levels of the national education system.” (p.17)

[The Chair of Afro-Colombian Studies. Section 1. 1-1. Lines -108-111]

Moreover, it is evident that intercultural education in Colombia is closely related to the "Ethnoeducation" act, as it emphasizes providing ethnic communities with an accurate education based on their social and cultural contexts. Ethnoeducation has been adopted as intercultural education in schools; however, it primarily focuses on ethnic communities (Afro-Colombian and Indigenous) and does not consider urban populations, such as those in Bogotá. In these cities, most students do not identify with any ethnic community. Consequently, Afro-Colombian and Indigenous knowledge remains a requirement only for these communities in the curricula, as evidenced by the following excerpts.

Article 15.- The formulation of ethno-education curricula shall be based on the provisions of Act 115 of 1994 and on the conceptualizations of education developed by ethnic groups, taking into account their customs and traditions, native languages, and the implicit logic in their thinking.

[Ethnoeducation Act. Chapter II. Lines 1-6]

Article 14.- The ethno-education curriculum, in addition to the provisions of Act 115 of 1994 and Decree 1860 ... is based on territoriality, autonomy, language, each people's conception of life, their history, and identity according to their customs and traditions. Its design or construction shall be the product of research involving the community in general, the educational community in particular, its authorities, and traditional organizations.

[Ethnoeducation Act. Chapter II. Lines 8-12]

The Chair of Afro-Colombian Studies (CEA), adopted in Article 39 of Act 70 of 1993 and regulated by Decree 1122 of 1998, constitutes an educational and curricular strategy aimed at recognizing Afro-Colombian history and cultures, as well as eliminating racism and racial discrimination in schools.

[The Chair of Afro-Colombian Studies. Lines -1-4]

That said, ethnoeducation and interculturality are often mistakenly considered different approaches. Ethnoeducation addresses the educational needs of ethnic communities in Colombia, while interculturality concerns knowledge of foreign languages, cultures, and countries. However, these two concepts should not be viewed in this manner. They involve the same process. Walsh (2009) posits that, "in an educational context, interculturality must be understood

as a design and proposal for society; it is a political, social, epistemic, and ethical project aimed at the collective transformation of society” (p. 5). Therefore, ethnoeducation and interculturality focus on teaching processes involving dialogue between different perspectives, ways of life, and experiences to challenge implicit population hierarchies. Nevertheless, reviewing the documents showed that intercultural education is not understood from an ethnic perspective, despite the assumption that ethnoeducation fulfils that function.

Searching for intercultural pedagogical proposals in Colombia. This subcategory relies on the The Chair of Afro-Colombian Studies to illustrates how intercultural proposals has been address in Colombia’s educative context. This proposal has been a starting point to transform educative contexts in Bogotá as explained in the guidelines for the Chair of Afro-Colombian Studies; the program aims to provide educators in the Capital District with the conceptual and methodological tools necessary to strengthen the identity of these peoples based on their own definition of being Afro-Colombian. This main goal of this program is to motivate people involved in educational contexts to start thinking about decolonizing narratives and speeches by means of getting more involved in the historical past and value of several Afro-descendant communities. Therefore, this proposal contributes intercultural pedagogical elements from a national perspective, as evidenced by its objectives and thematic axis.

Knowledge and dissemination of the elements that make up Afro-Colombian identity.

[the Chair of Afro-Colombian Studies. Objective]

Recognition of Afro-Colombian contributions to national culture and history.

[the Chair of Afro-Colombian Studies. Objective]

Afro-Colombian history and societies... expressions of Afro-Colombian art and Culture.

[the Chair of Afro-Colombian Studies. Thematic axis]

Based on these elements, it is clear that the study program is an intercultural proposal that highlights the knowledge of Afro-Colombian communities from their own perspectives. I consider this approach appropriate for addressing decolonization in schools. However, these initiatives have not been widely adopted by institutions, partly because it is assumed that teachers from the community should promote them. However, this assumption contradicts the requirements of the constitution and the Ministry of Education. For this reason, this reflection invites teachers to engage with communities' knowledge as they truly support interculturality in education in Colombia. As the proposal provided by the Chair of Afro-Colombian Studies.

Subject: Humanities, Spanish language, and foreign languages.

[the Chair of Afro-Colombian Studies. Pedagogical proposal example]

Topic: Afro-Colombian oral tradition: Myths, legends, oral history, and storytelling.

[the Chair of Afro-Colombian Studies. Pedagogical proposal example]

Objective: To develop, through myths, legends, and Afro-Colombian oral history, the basic communication skills needed to read, understand, write, listen, speak, and express oneself correctly.

[the Chair of Afro-Colombian Studies. Pedagogical proposal example]

The teacher will propose an activity organized by the children to showcase the Afro-Colombian heritage that was revealed through the reading of these stories. In this way, the teacher will be able to determine whether the students understood and enjoyed the stories, myths, and legends as products of this culture, while also evaluating the development of basic communication skills for reading, comprehension, writing, listening speaking, and expressing oneself correctly.

[the Chair of Afro-Colombian Studies. Pedagogical proposal example]

In this regard, it should be noted that the Afro-Colombian Studies course offers an intercultural educational perspective that can be applied in primary and secondary schools across the country. It is also worth mentioning its ability to adapt to existing teaching standards, as the course provides content that promotes the development of receptive and productive skills based on Afro-Colombian knowledge. Therefore, the course's adaptability and applicability within the Colombian education system is noteworthy, as it transforms what is taught and promotes intercultural dialogue in education.

CATEGORY #3: ELT AND INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION IN COLOMBIA.

This category describes intercultural educative perspectives register in English language teaching to problematize its suitability in order to offer possible adjustments that could contribute to the intercultural dimension of English language teaching. Damien (2019) exposes that English teaching is based upon foreign theoretical perspectives “ELT in Colombia...has relied on foreign methodologies: Grammar-Translation Approach, Audiolingual Approach, Direct Method, Communicative Approach, Task-Based Language Learning and Teaching have all been successively adopted without any real contextualization” (p.6). Such approaches barely consider national perspectives in the ETT although are still relevant to guide English teaching.

Furthermore, English language teaching provides an opportunity to integrate international and national perspectives dialogically. To complement what has already been designed and implemented, as Damien (2019) highlights, it seems necessary to invest in locally designed innovative materials and initiatives. Thus, this category explores how intercultural education has been approached and could be promoted in English language teaching (ELT) through three

subcategories: *Understanding Intercultural Perspectives in ELT in Colombia, Analyzing Proposals that Support Interculturality in ELT, and Introducing Self-Perspectives on Intercultural Education in ELT.*

Understanding intercultural perspectives in ELT in Colombia. This subcategory sets for a review of the concept of interculturality, and related concepts found in documents supporting English language teaching in Colombia. As in Colombia, the intercultural overview has only been mentioned in the standards responsible for English instruction due to the foreign perspectives that have shaped Colombia's education system. Portillo (2023) states, "Education based on the Western model prioritizes skills, standardization, quantity, and efficiency; therefore, diversity becomes an obstacle" (p. 3). Therefore, interculturality has been mentioned as a concept on a superficial and external perspective as found in these excerpts.

Intercultural competence, therefore, in addition to being associated with education for ethnic and cultural diversity, which has been constitutionally recognized in Colombia since 1991, there is a dialogical relationship between the culture inherent in the language being learned and one's own culture, an aspect that must be considered in foreign language teaching and learning processes.

[English curriculum guidelines and pedagogical principles. Section 4 - 4.32. Lines 4-10]

The development of this competency is not approached from the perspective of viewing the other culture as superior or better. It focuses on familiarizing oneself with the new culture and approaching it in order to foster processes of respect and appreciation for diversity, in which similarities and differences with one's own culture are recognized.

[English curriculum guidelines and pedagogical principles. Section 4-4.4. Lines 104-110]

These perspectives on interculturality mention the recognition of diversity and government-implemented policies, but they only touch on the concept of approximation to otherness. It is unclear, however, how these concepts are connected to language teaching. In fact,

this concept is not reflected in the implementation of these documents. Conversely, the emphasis on comparing or evaluating national knowledge to foreign knowledge remains evident. In my opinion, this perpetuates colonialism in language teaching and fails to address intercultural commitment. Intercultural commitment should be understood as a means of deconstructing colonialist ideology, as can be seen more clearly in these extracts.

A common conception of interculturality assumes, within a political-pedagogical approach, that there are interethnic and intercultural encounters in the world that are enriching for both parties. [Curriculum Guidelines for Foreign Languages in Primary and Secondary Education. Section 2-

2.1. Lines 162-167]

Other authors define it as the set of activities and provisions aimed at overcoming the negative aspects and results of relations between peoples. It can also be understood as a contribution to the establishment of peaceful relations, mutual understanding, the right to enjoy cultures, tolerance and, ultimately, self-determination.




[Curriculum Guidelines for Foreign Languages in Primary and Secondary Education. Section 2-

2.1. Lines 168-171]

Likewise, these other descriptions of interculturality emphasize establishing dialogic relationships with people from different parts of the world, a concept which here is not considered inappropriate. However, since it has been demonstrated that English language teaching is influenced by external experiences, I believe these definitions merely fulfill a requirement rather than demonstrating a commitment to addressing interculturality. Additionally, Lozano (2023) states that curricular proposals on language teaching focus on improving communicative skills, such as reading, listening, writing, and speaking. However, an intercultural methodology that could be applied in the classroom is not mentioned. Thus, In practice, interculturality in English teaching materials does not have the desired impact, as it is a

rather ambiguous concept. This leads to it being understood as the appropriation of English culture, rather than as a space for exchange and dialogue that does not prioritize one culture over another.

Analyzing proposals that support interculturality in ELT. This subcategory presents a compilation of data on pedagogical proposals concerning interculturality in English Language Teaching (ELT). The previously analyzed documents offer accurate perspectives on intercultural content that are relevant due to their significance. Therefore, the data shows that some material designed by the Ministry of Education to teach English attends to intercultural perspectives. Ramos (2021) notes that certain intercultural perspectives on ELT are emerging in Colombia, related to artistic manifestations, relationships with others, territorial relationships, and the ecology of knowledge, as observed in the Way to Go didactic material.

<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 30%;"> <p>Unit »1 Human Actions and the Environment</p> <p><i>Language Functions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe human actions and environmental impact Present yourself to a group by describing your interests, concerns, desires and talents Describe changes <p><i>Text Types:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> feature stories narrative text teenage profiles magazine article descriptive paragraph </div> <div style="width: 30%;"> <p>Unit »2 Think Green!</p> <p><i>Language Functions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request information about human actions Make suggestions to improve practices Describe how to do something <p><i>Text Types:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> narrative paragraph questionnaire magazine article interview information leaflet website school newsletter </div> <div style="width: 30%;"> <p>Unit »3 Caring for the Environment</p> <p><i>Language Functions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Express opinions about human actions Discuss good and bad environmental practices Describe ecological values <p><i>Text Types:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> news extracts quiz magazine article narrative paragraphs narrative story survey letter </div> </div>	<p>3. Listen » Read and listen to three stories about teenagers getting involved in their communities. Complete the text with environmental concerns from exercise 1.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">    </div> <p>I'm Carlos. I live in Nóvita, Chocó. It's near the River Támara. My friends and I love living in the rainforest with all its plants and animals. We're concerned about illegal _____. This activity pollutes rivers and streams, erodes land, and affects our health.</p> <p>I'm Diego from Ciénaga. I'm the son of a fisherman and I live near the lagoon. I'm worried about fish. They are dying because the level of oxygen is low. There is too much water ^h _____.</p> <p>I'm Luisa. I live in Arcabuco, Boyacá. I enjoy walking in these beautiful mountains. I'm concerned about _____. A lot of people cut down trees for agriculture and cattle farming. It affects ecosystems and biodiversity.</p>
[Way to Go textbook. Units]	[Way to Go textbook. Listening activity]

Preparing Your Task » Learning About Colombian Cultural Groups

1. **Speak** » Work with a partner. Look at the pictures of two cultural groups who live in Colombia. Discuss what you know about them.




[Way to Go textbook. Speaking activity]

The Way to Go textbook raises awareness of environmental stewardship from a national perspective. It also promotes recognition of the country's ethnic groups. Adopting transformative intercultural teaching practices is an attempt to include historically excluded groups, as suggested by Ramos (2021): "Intercultural practices could be considered from a decolonial perspective, as they make marginalized and excluded societies visible." (p.97). Therefore, it should be noted that The Way to Go is teaching material that approaches intercultural content in English Language Teaching (ELT). However, some of the content is also found to be biased because it presents the history and realities of certain populations from one perspective without considering other viewpoints, as seen in these activities.

<p>Reading</p> <p>Read the following passage. Choose <i>True</i>, <i>False</i> or <i>Not enough information</i> according to the text. Write your answers in the box.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>Afro-Colombian is a term that applies to Colombian citizens that are direct descendants of Africans. Back in the early 16th century, Africans from countries like the Republic of Congo, Angola, Ghana and Mali were brought to Colombia to work as slaves in the gold mines, sugar cane plantations and cattle ranches. When they arrived, many Afro-Colombian slaves began to fight for their freedom. They formed towns, called Palenques, where black slaves who escaped their oppressors could live in freedom. In fact, Afro-Colombians played a very important role in the fight for independence from Spain, with more than half of Simón Bolívar's army being of African descent. Finally, in 1851, slavery was formally abolished in Colombia but, unfortunately, life didn't immediately improve for the Afro-Colombians. Many were forced to live in the jungle regions of the country to protect their cultural traditions, because the Colombian government wanted them to be more like Europeans. Today the situation has improved. However, Afro-Colombians continue to be displaced by armed groups that want to take their land for farming and mining purposes.</p> </div> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 80%;"></th> <th style="width: 10%; text-align: center;">True</th> <th style="width: 10%; text-align: center;">False</th> <th style="width: 10%; text-align: center;">Not enough information</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0. Africans were brought to Colombia at the end of the 16th century.</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>11. Afro-Colombians didn't fight for freedom for many years after arriving in Colombia.</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>12. There were towns where black people could enjoy their freedom.</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>13. Afro-Colombians held high positions in Simón Bolívar's army.</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>14. After slavery was abolished, Afro-Colombians began to lose their cultural traditions.</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>15. Today, Afro-Colombians have taken land from armed groups.</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		True	False	Not enough information	0. 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Listen and complete the interviews with a-h.</p> <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">a. I have to go to class</td> <td style="width: 50%;">e. I have to work ten hours a day</td> </tr> <tr> <td>b. I have to take care of them</td> <td>f. I have to work as a rubbish collector</td> </tr> <tr> <td>c. I have to plant rice and water seeds</td> <td>g. I have to stay at school for eight hours a day</td> </tr> <tr> <td>d. I have to cook and clean the house</td> <td>h. I have to give the money</td> </tr> </table> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>1. Adhira My name is Adhira. I live in Andhra Pradesh, in India. I had to leave school to go to work because my family has economic problems. I work in the fields. 1. ____ 2. ____ I would like to go back to school some day like my brother. He goes to school every day and he is learning many things. I'm sorry I can't do that.</p> <p>2. Masashi My name is Masashi and I live in Seto, Japan. I have to study hard. Education in Japan is very strict. 3. ____ I have two hours of homework every night, plus 4. ____ on Saturday. Exams are difficult, so I sometimes get very tired.</p> <p>3. Alala My name is Alala. I live in a small town in Ghana, Africa. I'm 13 years old, and I don't go to school. I don't know how to read and write. 5. ____ My parents have ten children. Because I'm the oldest, 6. ____ Soon, I will marry and have many children.</p> <p>4. Juan My name is Juan. I'm 14 years old. I live in Bogotá, Colombia. I go to school every day, but 7. ____ in the afternoons. 8. ____ to my parents because they are poor. I really want to finish high school soon to get a better job. I don't like this job.</p> </div>	a. I have to go to class	e. I have to work ten hours a day	b. I have to take care of them	f. I have to work as a rubbish collector	c. I have to plant rice and water seeds	g. I have to stay at school for eight hours a day	d. I have to cook and clean the house	h. 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<p>[Way to Go textbook. Reading activity]</p>	<p>[Way to Go textbook. Listening activity]</p>																																				

Indeed, the book recounts the struggles of Afro-descendant people, but the emphasis is on slavery. This barbarity is merely recounted without being questioned or problematized. It also mentions that they fought for their freedom against their oppressors, yet these struggles are not vindicated. Similarly, it acknowledges that Afro-descendant populations continue to be marginalized due to violence but does not encourage reflection on this issue, perpetuating stereotypes. The same happens in other activities that describe people from different countries. These activities describe negative aspects but do not reflect on the socio-historical and cultural conditions of the protagonists. However, it has been discovered that the Afro-Colombian studies Chair offers us a narrative proposal that responds to their demands as encountered in these activities.




3.2 Benkos Biohó


A brief story of an African leader...

Kumo kusa tá (Hello! How are you? in palenquero language) : My name is Benkos Biohó and I would like to tell a short story about my life. To start, I was born in 1621, in the Bioho region of Guinea Bissau, West Africa. After being a slave for many years, I escaped from my owners in the Magdalena River. I decided to go to the south of Cartagena; there, I organized an intelligence network in order to collect escape routes to free territories. The palenques and quilombos were groups organized by people who escaped from slavery. Everyone in the palenque used to call me Arcabuco. It was the name given to me by everyone in that century. Now you and your friends know me as Benkos Biohó. Suddenly, a leader appeared one day, he was the Cartagena's Governor. The Governor and I signed an agreement that was never fulfilled because he wanted to stop the slaves' liberation process. This was really difficult for me because I had always dreamed with freedom, but he betrayed me. Finally, one night, someone entered my house and took me into custody. I was executed in a horrific way.

24 CÁTEDRA DE ESTUDIOS AFROCOLOMBIANOS

ACTIVITY 6:
Walking the Maroons' Path

 **Thinking myself and ourselves:** In our time, one of the purposes of the Palenques in Colombia is to gather members of the community and solve issues going on in the town. In pairs, recall problems you have in your school.

 **Transforming realities:** Then set up a Palenque with your teacher and classmates and look for solutions for those problems.

[The Chair of Afro-Colombian Studies. Braiding networks of freedom textbook]

Therefore, teaching English in Colombia could provide an opportunity to retell the stories that have been imposed on us. As a matter, Chimamanda Ngozi (2021) reflects on the dangers of

a single story because narrating historical moments from the same perspective leads to the perpetuation of negative insights toward certain communities. She argues that a single story robs people of dignity and makes their recognition of their equal humanity difficult, so emphasizes how we are different rather than how we are similar.

Besides, as language teachers, it is important to recognize that colonization occurs through language because language is an instrument of ideological control. According to Thiong'o (2015), children must experience harmony in their social and personal narratives to become aware of their reality. This harmony is transmitted through oral tradition. However, when this harmony is disrupted by a deliberate colonial narrative, a rupture occurs between the child and their reality. Their thinking then becomes colonized. Therefore, interculturality in English teaching goes beyond randomly including content. It should be a space for decolonizing thought.

Introducing self-perspectives on intercultural education in ELT. This subcategory discusses possible actions that could be taken to approach intercultural education in English Language Teaching (ELT) from a different perspective. The dissertations in this section emerged from the realization that documents supporting English teaching in Colombia rarely acknowledge the value of teaching the knowledge of certain communities. Nevertheless, education is a social act that should promote decolonial perspectives "education deals with human beings and subjectivities that cannot be homogenized or standardized. Thus, curricula must be based on principles that promote humanism and the capacity to appreciate otherness" (Ramos, p. 98, 2021). Thus, intercultural education may overview otherness from ethnics' communities' viewpoints as considered in the Afro Colombian studies Chair.

Braiding networks of freedom constitutes a valuable tool for teachers and the students in the exercise of constructing citizenship and promoting coexistence in their schools and surroundings.

[The Chair of Afro-Colombian Studies. Braiding networks of freedom textbook]

Braiding networks of freedom is an educational resource that English as a Foreign Language-EFL teachers can use in order to integrate African-Colombian culture into their classes through an intercultural approach.

[The Chair of Afro-Colombian Studies. Braiding networks of freedom textbook]

Discussing African and African-descendent leaders is aimed at promoting the recognition of African culture within the Colombian culture, and highlighting the contributions they have made in order to produce the society we live in today. This exercise aims at empowering the African-Colombian community with regards to its self- recognition and self-esteem by paying homage to its ancestors and leaders.

[The Chair of Afro-Colombian Studies. Braiding networks of freedom textbook]

Therefore, an intercultural approach to language teaching requires going beyond the following indicators: Describe objects, places, people, and communities orally and in writing using simple sentences. (Basic Learning Rights, p. 21). Since, as Fanon (1952) said "every colonized people, that is, every people in whose bosom an inferiority complex has been born due to the burial of local cultural originality, positions itself in relation to the language of the civilizing nation, that is, of the metropolitan culture."(p.50). Thus, decolonial intercultural perspectives in English language teaching should promote the development of skills such as the following:

- Identify and value the different cultural expressions of Black, Afro-Colombian, and Palenquero communities in different regions of the country, as well as their contribution to Colombian culture in general (Mosquera, 2024, p.146).
- Identify cultural groups belonging to ethnic minorities in my community (Mosquera, 2024, p.111).
- Explain the concepts of racism, exclusion, and discrimination, and their negative implications for individuals and communities (Mosquera, 2024, p.111).

Moreover, it is important to start to consider incorporating these competencies into textbooks designed for teaching English. As it has been demonstrated that these textbooks focus on developing the skills necessary to train competent citizens in a global environment rather than a national one. This focus is evident in the thematic units of the Way to Go textbook.

Unit »1	Unit »2	Unit »3
Solving Problems with Others	Have You Been a Model Citizen?	Making Peace through Words and Actions
<i>Language Functions</i>	<i>Language Functions</i>	<i>Language Functions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give advice • Apologize and admit mistakes • Talk about duties and rights • Talk about cultural characteristics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about past/present experiences • Express facts and opinions • Complain and apologize 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express facts and justify opinions • Express conditions and justify points of view • Express future plans
<i>Text Types:</i>	<i>Text Types:</i>	<i>Text Types:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • online forum comments, descriptive paragraph, informative paragraph, article, poster 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • article, informative paragraph, graph, survey, descriptive paragraph, letter, interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • headlines, descriptive paragraph, web articles, informative paragraph, resolutions list, email

[Way to Go textbook. State of art. Thematic units]

Having said that, teaching languages should not be separated from teaching culture because language and culture work together to produce and reproduce meanings. Thiong'o (2015) suggests that language is both a means of communication and a vehicle for human culture. For that reason, in colonial cultures, the colonizers impose their culture on native communities through education and language in order to control them implicitly. Similarly, Fanon (1952) argues that individuals exposed to Western perspectives imitate their colonizers and subjugate their peers. From this perspective, I argue that ELT teaching proposals should not be viewed as mere guidelines to be implemented in classrooms. Rather, these documents contain ideologies that may educate students to be citizens who serve and perpetuate the colonial system rather than being "critical citizens of the world." Thus, we will not educate individuals who are critical of inequalities. Hence, it is crucial to question the suitability of these documents to intercultural education in Colombia.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

As mentioned in previous chapters, the goal of this monograph was to present and analyze documents that address intercultural education in English Language Teaching in primary and secondary education levels in the Colombian context. Accordingly, this chapter presents the study's conclusions, implications, limitations, and further research insights.

CONCLUSIONS

This qualitative state of art focused on analyzing documents that reported information concerning intercultural education in English teaching as a foreign language in Colombia, specifically in the primary and secondary educational levels. The research question that guided this study was: How intercultural education has been approached in English teaching standards and policies in Colombia? The research objectives that aimed at the research were:

1. To analyze the role of language teaching legislation on intercultural education in Colombia.
2. To determine theoretical perspectives that shape intercultural education in English language teaching.
3. To categorized educative strategies and theoretical perspectives to connect English language teaching and intercultural education.

In response to the first specific objective, the data highlighted theoretical perspectives that promote intercultural education in English Language Teaching (ELT). The documents show that ELT primarily focuses on teaching language through grammar and communication skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This is because the standards and other documents conceptualizing ELT in Colombia are heavily influenced by foreign perspectives.

Consequently, intercultural perspectives are only mentioned on a superficial level, leaving unclear how intercultural content could be incorporated into English classes.

In addition, the term "intercultural education" has been assumed as teaching about the target's language culture to compare it with the Colombian culture. Therefore, this approach may be biased and inappropriate for teaching in Colombia, as the analysis showed. Additionally, intercultural education in the eyes of the policies established for the country, has been associated with ethnic communities, so it is often confused with the Ethnoeducation policy, which focuses on providing accurate education to students from ethnic communities. Hence, it creates uncertainty about the definition of intercultural education and its implications for teaching English in primary and secondary schools.

Concerning the second specific objective, it was encountered that, unfortunately, there are no documents addressing interculturality in English language teaching. As mentioned above, interculturality is only mentioned in passing in documents such as guidelines and basic learning rights, which serve as a basis for English language teaching. These documents only provide a superficial explanation of the intercultural dimension of language teaching, so they are not very helpful. Consequently, there are no concrete theoretical perspectives on intercultural education in primary and secondary school English classes in Colombia.

Similarly, state documents such as Act 1651, also known as the Bilingualism Act, promote only a traditional approach to English language teaching that focuses on developing communication skills. Also, the National Bilingualism Plan recognizes the diversity of languages in Colombia, including indigenous languages, Creole, and Palenquero. However, when implementing this policy, bilingualism is defined in terms of proficiency in Spanish and English.

Consequently, these documents also focus on teaching English from a standardized perspective that does not consider an intercultural dimension at the national level.

In response to the third specific objective, as mentioned before, specific intercultural educative perspectives are emerging from pedagogical proposals such as the Way to Go textbook and the Chair of Afro-Colombian studies. The textbook was designed for the Ministry of Education and approaches a wide range of topics such as the environment, social issues, citizenship, among others. This pedagogical material is intended to be implemented in schools. However, as it was discussed the content presented in this book sometimes could perpetuate the same English teaching perspectives that may be not accurate to properly convey intercultural educative perspectives in the Colombian context.

On the other hand, the Chair of Afro-Colombian studies presents a didactic material called: Braiding networks of freedom, which was fostered by the Secretary of Education of Bogotá, in alliance with Afro-Colombian scholars. Therefore, this material offers relevant activities to implement in English classes from an intercultural and national perspective as this book focuses more on vindicating the narratives of Afro-Colombian communities. Similarly, the Chair of Afro-Colombian studies present a set of activities that could be implemented in language classes, and these activities aim to improve communicative skills. Thus, it was found that intercultural education in ELT does not have a solid theoretical foundation because it is just emerging through these recent pedagogical initiatives.

In conclusion, most intercultural education perspectives in English Language Teaching in Colombia are based on foreign perspectives that do not consider the national context. English teaching in Colombia is based on documents that approach teaching methodologies too rigidly, barely permitting the inclusion of content about Colombian communities and realities.

Nevertheless, the Ministry of Education has proposed newer intercultural educational material, although it was seen that it still needs improvement. Therefore, intercultural educational insights in ELT are still too generic to foster dialogical intercultural education in Colombian primary and secondary schools.

IMPLICATIONS

Nowadays, intercultural educative perspectives, based on national content, are a must implement in the Colombia's classrooms. Therefore, national knowledge needs to be included in new educative material that allow to learn English and problematize deconstruct colonial narratives in ELT environments. In addition, students from cities where people do not consider themselves from an ethnic community such as Bogotá should also benefit from that material as they will be able to learn about Colombia as a whole. That being said, the first topic of discussion will be the benefits for students when including Indigenous and Afro-Colombian knowledge in ETL. Next, the role of teachers as active participants will be mentioned. Lastly, the government and Ministry of Education's potential actions to approach intercultural education in English Language Teaching will be outlined.

Firstly, knowledge of the country's ethnic communities is part of the national identity and can be taught through relevant material. In English language teaching, for example, students could learn about the realities of the ethnic groups in their country in a more contextualized way. Additionally, students would become more aware of these communities' realities, which would help combat discrimination and racism by recognizing these communities' contributions to the country. Students would also develop a sense of identity based on pride in their country's culture. It should be noted that this new material could use language as a means to learn about these communities; therefore, English language teaching would be strengthened, not affected.

Secondly, English teachers' roles would be strengthened because they could supplement their training with knowledge of ethnic communities in our multicultural country and learn how to incorporate their narratives and cultures into the classroom. This training would allow teachers to learn new topics and methodologies for teaching English from a critical intercultural perspective, which could be interesting and engaging for students. Additionally, teachers from ethnic communities could share their knowledge with other teachers and students. Thus, teachers would continue to address interculturality in English classes.

Finally, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education keep creating materials focused on national knowledge and collect information from ethnic communities for inclusion in the materials. This way, the content would not be biased against communities' traditions, values, knowledge, etc. Additionally, reforms to laws such as Act 115 are necessary to ensure that bachelor's degree programs include a compulsory intercultural education course from a local perspective. This would provide future teachers with a foundation for incorporating interculturality into their teaching. In this regard, the government and the Ministry of Education should play an active role in supporting English teachers training programs.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In this section, I will discuss the limitations encountered while conducting the study. It is worth mentioning, however, that this project was very rewarding as it provided an opportunity to understand and reflect on many aspects of English language teaching in Colombia. Nevertheless, some limitations regarding information and time were encountered.

First, the concept of intercultural education was difficult to define in Colombia, primarily due to the lack of available information and the ambiguity of the concept. Similarly, in language teaching, interculturality is generally accepted as a concept, but there is little information. This

initially made it difficult to determine the direction of the study and identify relevant information and documents. Therefore, there was a limitation in terms of the information to had access to and its validity, as well as the type of documents that could be selected.

Additionally, as a researcher in training, I had difficulty reconciling my interests and perspectives on interculturality in English language teaching because it is often approached from an external standpoint that does not concern about Afro-Colombian knowledge and narratives. Therefore, problematizing this topic and writing a dissertation on interculturality in English language teaching required rigorous analysis and reflection on the documents that support ELT in Colombia to find core aspects to be discussed. Finally, I was under time constraints because the chosen categories of analysis required reviewing the concepts of the subcategories in all documents, which took longer than expected.

FURTER RESEARCH

This research sheds light on the various approaches to intercultural education in English language teaching. To highlight other emerging perspectives that may be more relevant, it will be necessary to delve deeper into new materials to strengthen intercultural education in English language teaching. Similarly, implementing this material is important for evaluating its relevance and appropriateness for English teaching. This will help make adjustments to continually improve English language teaching (ELT) in Colombia from a national and intercultural perspective.

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