Interculturality in the english teaching and learning processes

Interculturalidad en los procesos de enseñanza y aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera

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Abstract

Introduction: Educational institutions are complex spaces in which individual subjectivities converge and where language plays a fundamental role. In this sense, English teachers must be mediators between the multiple cultures in a classroom. The ability to use the language in a socially and culturally appropriate way, plus the awareness that teachers and students must have in the classroom with respect to diversity and complexity, is the basis for building a democratic society. **Objective**: This literature review article aims to establish the relationship between teachers' perceptions of interculturality and the teaching and learning processes of English through the student's awareness and comparison of their own culture with respect to others. and through critical analysis of relationships between people across cultural differences. **Methodology**: Qualitative techniques are used for the selection and compilation of information through the reading and criticism of documents and bibliographic materials. Using various databases and after applying selection techniques to the identified primary sources, a sample of fifty scientific articles is formed. **Results and discussion**: After the thematic analysis, the results are presented in three categories: strategies used by teachers in the classroom to enhance intercultural competence, challenges they face, and the role teachers play as cultural agents. **Conclusions**: The study concludes that there are challenges and limitations when promoting intercultural competence in the classroom. Teachers are perceived as role models for students, which becomes a primary effort for them; but at the same time, a worthy job considering that schools are laboratories to begin the construction of a more democratic and diverse society.

Keywords: Interculturality; teaching and learning process; intercultural competence; strategies; role of the teacher

Resumen

Introducción: Las instituciones educativas son espacios complejos en los cuales confluyen subjetividades propias de cada individuo y donde el lenguaje tiene un papel fundamental. En este sentido, los profesores de inglés deben ser mediadores entre las múltiples culturas en un aula de clases. La capacidad de utilizar el idioma de manera social y culturalmente apropiada, más la conciencia que deben tener los docentes y los estudiantes en el aula con respecto a la diversidad y complejidad es la base para la construcción de una sociedad democrática. **Objetivo**: Este artículo de revisión de la literatura pretende establecer la relación entre las percepciones de los docentes sobre la interculturalidad y los procesos de enseñanza y aprendizaje del inglés a través la concientización y contrastación que hace el estudiante de su propia cultura con respecto a otras, y mediante el análisis crítico de las relaciones entre las personas a través de las diferencias culturales. **Metodología**: Se utilizan técnicas cualitativas para la selección y recopilación de información por medio de la lectura y crítica de documentos y materiales bibliográficos. Usando diversas bases de datos y después de aplicar técnicas de selección en las fuentes primarias identificadas se conforma una muestra de cincuenta artículos científicos. **Resultados y discusión**: Luego del análisis temático, los resultados se presentan en tres categorías: estrategias utilizadas por los docentes en el aula para potenciar la competencia intercultural, desafíos que enfrentan y el papel que juegan los docentes como agentes culturales. **Conclusiones**: El estudio concluye que existen desafíos y limitaciones cuando se promueve la competencia intercultural en el aula. Los profesores son percibidos como modelos para los estudiantes, lo que se convierte en un esfuerzo primordial para ellos; pero al mismo tiempo, una labor digna considerando que las escuelas son laboratorios para iniciar la construcción de una sociedad más democrática y diversa.

Keywords: Interculturalidad; proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del inglés; competencia intercultural; estrategias; rol del profesor

INTRODUCTION

The ability to use the language in socially appropriate ways, was perhaps one of the great achievements of the communicative approach for English teaching programs in recent decades (Galvis, 2011). More recently, with the intercultural perspectives in the field of foreign languages, the pragmatic and sociolinguistic awareness, which are essential components in communicative approach, are not enough aspects to be considered if teaching and learning a foreign language aims at contributing to the construction of more profound human relationships. Nonetheless, with the premise that English competence opens doors to individuals and that it is essential for economic growth and poverty reduction, Colombia government has promoted the teaching of English under a technical or instrumental perspective. This elusive pervasiveness of English (Montoya et al., 2020; Peláez et al., 2020; Peláez, 2021), nurtured on the knowledge-based economy ideology, has become the main focus of language policies in our country.

In addition, with the adoption of international models as a framework for English Language Teaching-ELT, the educational system has promoted the communicative competence model as the dominated approach in language learning and teaching field. This model highlights four aspects of communicative competence: grammatical, socio-linguistic, discourse, and strategic competences (Byram & Wagner, 2018). However, this approach has been questioned for its reliance on native speakers' norms and the unrealistic use of English as a *lingua franca*. English has become the lingua franca of the 21st century. It has changed its status from a national language spoken in an English-speaking country (e.g. in the UK or the USA) to an international language enhancing communication on a global scale (Julcovschi, 2021). More recently, the Intercultural Communicative Competence-ICC, which considers English as an international language and focuses on both native and non-native speakers' norms in local and international contexts, has been introduced for use especially in ELT (Alptekin, 2002).

The concept of intercultural competence has often attracted many scholars so that several models addressing to intercultural competence have emerged. Intercultural competence is generally defined as the ability to build effective communication with people from different groups by negotiating appropriate behaviour to respect cultural differences (Barletta, 2009; Byram & Wagner, 2005) emphasized that cultural teaching should be integrated in language teaching as well as linguistic competence by comprising intercultural competence into attitudes, knowledge, skills and critical cultural awareness. This definition seems closer to Walsh (2000) approach to interculturality in bilingual education where the author underlined the need to establish national multilingualism and multiethnicity policies aimed at the officialization of indigenous languages and the need to promote correct and non-discriminatory views of the social group. The author argues that in its application, it was not assumed as a duty of the whole society, but as a reflection of the condition of linguistic and cultural marginalization. In some Latin American countries, it was part of an identity and vindication demand by indigenous people. In others, it appears more linked to special projects of external and internal organizations that institutionalized its use.

Interculturality, in the current practice of language teaching and learning, has not translated into intermediate spaces of negotiation and encounter, but in a learning-teaching polarity of the own and of the national versus the foreign. In this sense, it is clear that a bicultural rather than an intercultural perspective still dominates within language learning and teaching. Interculturality competence view as mediation in the language learning field evokes the construction of new meaning. Thus, mediation relates to interculturality in the sense of new understanding, deeper human relations. Piccardo et al. (2019) claims that "in contrast to production and interaction, language is not just a means of expression; it is primarily a vehicle to access the 'other,' the new, the unknown —or to help other people to do so" (p. 21).

In this sense, the analysis of interculturality in the language teaching field goes beyond the mere implementation of a variety of material or the use of universal realia. It is clear that in the recent past have emerged many terms that underline the interrelationship between language practices of bilinguals. One of those concepts that has become widely accepted and that is very close to interculturality is translanguaging, which was initially posited by the Welsh educator, Williams (1996) and developed by García (2009). According to both scholars, translanguaging does not view the languages of bilinguals as separate linguistic systems. "It stresses the flexible and meaningful actions through which bilinguals select features in their linguistic repertoire in order to communicate appropriately" (García, 2009, p. 48). From this perspective, and correlated to intercultural competence, "the language practices being learned by emergent bilinguals are in functional interrelationship with other language practices and form an integrated system" (García, 2009, p. 25).

This situation requires analytical standpoints that move beyond the purely linguistic and technical views that characterize the field of education, encouraging us to move into critical views that examine the sociocultural, economic, and political implications of schooling and, more specifically, foreign language teaching, learning, and certification in Colombia (Peláez & Usma, 2020).

This calls for open spaces where alternative views can be openly discussed, and where different school actors can express their concerns, conceptualizations, and proposals in continuous connection with national and international conversations. The road to peace-building demands an education that contributes to forming citizens able to resolve conflicts peacefully, strengthening reflection and dialogue, as well as stimulating respectful coexistence. Thereby, the way teachers perceive the objective of foreign language teaching will influence their teaching practice and pupils' achievement, in teaching English as foreign language for instance.

With this purpose in mind, the Universidad Católica Luis Amigó in Medellin-Colombia has implemented postgraduate programs underlining research as an important asset in teacher's formation. This university has sought to explore the cultural, economic, political, socio linguistic, and pedagogical implications of the reforms while also promoting discussion and interaction among students and advisors. In order to contribute to the field and drawing on socio-critical perspectives, this literature review research intends to examine how teachers' perceptions about interculturality relates to the English teaching and learning. First, the methodology section will provide an

overview of the sources that have been examined in researching the topic and explain the criteria that have been used to analyze the selected literature. Then, in the next section, the findings will be unveiled in three categories: strategies used by teachers in the classroom to enhance intercultural competence, challenges they face, and the role of teachers as cultural brokers. In the last section, some final points will be made by way of conclusion.

METHODOLOGY

The searching method about research studies and theoretical articles consisted in initial research in data bases as Scielo, Redalyc, Dialnet, Eric, Google Scholar, and EBSCO with the following keywords: interculturality, learning processes, teaching processes, "*interculturalidad*", "*procesos de enseñanza*", "*procesos de aprendizaje*". As a result of this first search, 25 theoretical papers and research studies were found. Five of these articles were discarded because they did not have the information sought. A second search was carried out due to some of the articles were not available to the whole public and in order to complement de initial research in order to reach 50 primary sources. The result of this research was 45 articles. From these 45 documents 15 were dismissed since they did not contribute pertinent data to our study. Afterwards, the articles were read and the relevant information was recorded in a 3 + 1 analysis matrix, ending with the analysis and categorization of the information found, as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1.
Search of studies related to interculturality.

Category	Results
Interculturality in teaching processes	17
Interculturality in learning processes	12
Intercultural pedagogical practices	33
Teachers' interculturality perception	18
Total	70

Source: Authors.

In the following section describes the conclusions of the literature review paper divided in three important topics. They are the result of the trends found in the papers reviewed and the analysis of them. The findings are: strategies used in the classroom to enhance intercultural competence; challenges faced when implementing intercultural strategies; and role teachers played as intercultural model.

RESULTS

Strategies used in the classroom to enhance intercultural competence

Based on Byram (1997), who defines Intercultural Competence not only as the ability of knowledge of self but also the knowledge of others to interpret and relate with

the world; in addition, the ability to find out and valuing other´s beliefs, values, and actions. the first result found is related to the implementation of strategies to enhance the intercultural competence. Along with other authors, Bryam and Wagner (2018) states that literature is a great strategy to develop ICC in students since the exposure to this have the possibility to know about the world in regards its geography, cultures, believes, and even realize about the asymmetry between cultures (Carter & McRae, 1997; Zafeiriadou, 2001; Burwitz-Melzer, 2001; McKay, 2001, Amer, 2003; Coppola, 2003; Gómez, 2015a; González, 2019; Miftakh, 2018). Sharma et al. (2022) argues that seeing life through the eyes of someone else may also be beneficial. Literature use a concise language that communicates a wide range of emotions. It provides the reader's joy. It helps students improve their speaking abilities. It is a tool that may be used depending on the students' attitude. It encourages people to express their opinions and views regarding difficult societal topics. Literature, therefore, is a strategy useful to raise awareness both the importance of diversity and that cultures are neither superior or inferior but different.

The reading material must be implemented in combination with other strategies and methodologies. Gómez (2011), Aguilar (2011) and Cecchini et al. (2021) agreed on the positive results of dialogical approach, collaborative and cooperative work. On one hand, Gómez (2011) mentions the transactional approach which consists in making connections with students´own culture and sharing those thoughts to construct meaning among them critically. On the other hand, Aguilar (2011) emphasizes in the collaborative work since it diminishes anxiety and stress in students at the time to participate and also it promotes the construction of knowledge. It is important to highlight the wide possibilities of these strategies because teachers might question students in regards to the different problems people live every day and how different or similar they are in their own context.

In addition, other authors such Gómez (2015b) and Julcovschi (2021) propose the use of deep culture in the classroom which consisted on discussing different topics about unfairness, domination among others to promote intercultural awareness and develop intercultural communicative competence; those themes were: social prejudice and social injustice, cultural domination and cultural loss, and female and male roles based on cultural constructs of femininity and masculinity. Those topics were covered through reading tasks. It can be see how cultural asymmetry is questioned using English for having a voice and problematizing situations but also, giving value to students own culture by criticizing how one of the characters of the reading they did, quit to his heritage by imitating white people. Also, a benefit of promoting interculturality with a deep focus is that students can problematize social differences as the ones of minorities who we know that are there but we do not often discuss in the classroom.

Other scholars convey on the use of cooperative groups and the debate which might come out in the group work (Finkbeiner & Koplin, 2002; Lee, 2012; Velandia y Fajardo, 2014; Roman et al., 2015; Mitchel et al., 2015; García, 2019; Fuentes et al., 2020; Keramati & Gillies, 2022). These authors point out to the diversity which there could be in this type

of methodologies promoting the negotiation but also teaching and learning among the students. Attitudes and skills which an intercultural user of the language must have. These scholars also emphasize on the debate which might emerge between the students. In these situations, the teacher must show students that the conflict between them is something natural in human beings but what really makes the difference is how the conflict is overcome, remarking on the importance of the dialogue as a way to solve the conflicts in our society.

Besides, other authors suggest to include a variety of culture content in the language classroom in order to train students as intercultural communicators. According to Chlopek (2008) and Azorín & Fullan (2022), teachers must provide intercultural training but not only having English-speaking countries as reference. Learners need to gain knowledge about different world cultures which permit them to contrast and compare with their own in order to interpret and evaluate critically; therefore, there is the necessity to teach English as an international language in order to communicate with the world under intercultural principles (respect, equity, equality, and fairness). This same author also states that before knowing other cultures, students must be aware of their own culture and heritage at a conscious level to be aware of the diversity of the world.

Moreover, students must have spaces of reflection. Authors as Minoia (2019), Gonzáles (2019) and Flowers et al. (2019) claim that teaching through an intercultural perspective require a process of reflection about the different cultures inside the classroom, to become the classroom in a safe environment where diverse opinions are welcome and transcend the native model of the language since non-native speakers are going to communicate with other non-native speakers. In the Colombian case, where schools have students from different regions and even countries, it is important to address the learners background and promote spaces of reflection and exchange.

Besides, according to Gordon (2012), Lee (2012) Fardini (2014), Moeller & Nugent (2014), Moreno et al. (2017), García (2019) and Youssef et al. (2022), the use of TIC and authentic material is highly positive in the classroom. They state that through TIC students can connect with the world and make connections with other people, their customs, beliefs, and points of view about the world; also, the use of new technologies is motivating for students. It is important to mention that students are exposed to mass media all the time, therefore, this strategy is quite important in order to realize the conception mass media has created on students and work on that.

Finally, McArthur (2022) remark the importance of creating an authentic environment and assements According to those author "English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers can also increase students interest, motivation and curiosity for culture learning through creating an authentic environment such as decorating the classroom with cultural images of the target culture" (p. 26). The teacher should take this into account in the classroom since it is a good strategy to implement but in the same way he/she must be careful on how to decorate the classroom for not reinforcing stereotypes as can be observed in Table 2.

TABLE 2.
Strategies used in the classroom to enhance intercultural competence.

Authors	Strategies proposed	Benefits
Carter y McRae (1997), Bryam (1997), Zafeiriadou (2001), Burwitz-Melzer (2001), McKay (2001), Amer (2003), Coppola (2003), Gómez (2015a), González (2019), Miftakh (2018), Sharma et al., (2022),	Use of literature	Knowledge about geography. Knowledge about other cultures. Awareness and valuing others' beliefs. Awareness about the asymmetry between cultures.
Gómez (2011), Aguilar (2011), Cecchini et al (2021).	Dialogical Approach (making connections from material worked and student's own culture). Collaborative. Cooperative work.	Capacity to connect aspects of the own and target culture. Diminish anxiety and stress. Construction of knowledge. Possibilities to question and reflect about different issues people live in the daily life.
Gómez (2015b), Julcovschi (2021).	Working on deep culture aspects.	Promotes reflection and critical thinking.
Finkbeiner & Koplin (2002), Lee (2012), Velandia y Fajardo (2014), Roman et al. (2015), Mitchel et al. (2015), García (2019), Fuentes et.al. (2020), Keramati & Gillies (2022).	Debates. Cooperative groups.	Promotes negotiation among students. Attitudes that an intercultural user of the language must have.
Chlopek (2008), Azorín & Fullan, M (2022).	Variety of culture content. Not only culture content from English speaking countries.	Gaining knowledge about different world cultures. Contrast, compare, evaluate, and evaluate cultures critically.
Minoia (2019), González (2019), Flowers et al. (2019).	Have spaces of reflection where there is consciousness about the classroom as a safe environment to share thoughts with the other.	Transcend a native model of the language due to the interaction with non-native speakers. Awareness about the importance to respect diverse opinions.
Gordon (2012), Lee (2012), Fardini (2014), Moeller & Nugent (2014), Moreno et al. (2017), García (2019), Youssef et al. (2022).	Use of ICT and authentic material.	Connect with the world, therefore, connect with other people and their customs, beliefs, and points of view about the world. Motivating for students.
McArthur (2022).	Creating an authentic environment. For example: decorating the classroom being careful of not falling into stereotypes.	Fosters curiosity, interests, and motivation.

Source: Authors.

Challenges faced when implementing intercultural strategies

In the information gathered, some authors agree on some challenges when teaching from an intercultural perspective. The first on relates to the use of the appropriate material. Some scholars point out that using literature to promote interculturality and develop intercultural communicative competence has positive effects but the texts are complex for students at first having a negative impact on the motivation on the students (Kramsch, 2001; Hernández, 2015; Gómez, 2015a; González, 2019). Therefore, it is important to address this challenge by providing strategies to students so they understand the material used in class.

In addition, Hernández (2015), Fardini (2014) and Bergh (2018) state that the textbooks used in class to foster interculturality are aimed as an isolated culture topic and they do not have to do with the student's reality. The text books only portray a portion of the reality of English-speaking countries becoming a barrier to understanding other countries' customs since knowledge about the culture can be a bias, stereotyped, and does not permit to question the reality and the historical asymmetry among cultures.

Students´ previous experiences have also an impact on them. That becomes a challenge to teachers since they have to work on those preconceptions which might create stereotypes. Aguilar (2011) argues that interaction with people from other cultures have an influence on the way people accept or reject people from abroad. Teachers must consider students' background because they might have negative preconceptions about any culture due to the experience and being reluctant and discriminate a group of people based on their nationality becoming a problem of xenophobia.

In addition, when teaching from an intercultural perspective, teachers have to deal with stereotypes. Gómez (2015b) states that a stereotype is a generalization assigned to a group based on preconceptions and exaggerations. For instance, Canadians love hockey or British are cold. Involuntarily, teachers have spread these stereotypes of Anglo-Saxon countries trying to promote intercultural awareness. This same author argues that critical intercultural competence can be achieved by discussing controversial topics such as "social class struggle, poverty, cultural loss, prejudice, and diverse views of life related to individualism, the American dream, masculinity, and femininity, among others" (Gomez, 2011, p. 45).

Chlopek (2008) also point out stereotypes that students might have. Chlopek (2008) states that "Stereotyped views and prejudices will prevent students from developing intercultural competence" (p. 18) therefore it must be considered. Students have to be conscious of those stereotypes in order to demolish them. Also it proposes to engage students in tasks which permit them to explore those prejudices and reflect about it the teacher has an important role since he/she has to guide the reflection and create a safe environment for this to happen.

Rico (2018) points out the linguistic stereotypes as a challenge to deal with. This author says that teachers must overcome that belief of training students to speak and sound like native speakers. That gives the wrong message to students that the only valid registers are the ones from English speaking countries. That might have as consequence what Byram and Fleming (1998) state which is the identity loss by trying to imitate others

accents. According to these authors, what the teacher should do is trying to develop positive attitudes to appreciate other cultures without losing their own identity.

In addition, a barrier found in the information gathered was the teacher´s preparation. Sánchez (2014) and Rodríguez (2017) remark on the lack of preparation given to teachers since the initial formation becoming this a barrier to implement an intercultural approach because they do not acquire the methodological and didactic tools to do it. As a consequence, as Abelló-Contessesse (2013) states, teachers guide mainly from textbooks. This is a constraint since implementing strategies to foster interculturality merely as a cultural topic, does not allow students to develop intercultural awareness nor intercultural communicative competence.

Finally, it is important to highlight that teaching a language from a utilitarian perspective becomes a constraint. As Hernández (2015) states, teaching from a utilitarian perspective is far from teaching since an intercultural one. Language is not seen as a mean to construct and understand the otherness but just as a tool to be more competitive. As a consequence, language is not taught as a whole but from a linguistic perspective. According to Hernández (2015), the texts are addressed as an excuse to point out to grammar structures without taking into account the setting where the interaction is carried out. The chart below summarizes the challenges teachers face when implementing ways to enhance intercultural awareness and strategies they use to cope with them as can be observed in Table 3.

TABLE 3.
Challenges faced when implementing intercultural strategies.

Challenges	Strategies to cope them
Complexity of reading material which impact motivation on students.	Provide strategies to students to understand the reading material.
Reading material to foster interculturality is used as an isolated topic.	Have clear objectives when using culture content.
Text books only portray a portion of the reality of English-speaking countries and sometimes it is stereotyped.	Variety of material. Not only material that targets English speaking countries.
Negative previous experiences becoming in a discrimination and xenophobia issue.	Working on preconceptions and misconceptions that students might have.
Stereotypes. This becomes a barrier to develop intercultural communicative competence.	Taking into account students background knowledge and working based on possible beliefs. Raise awareness among students about own stereotypes. Tasks which permit students to explore prejudices and reflect upon it.
Teaching from a nativist perspective to students. For example, trying to sound like a native speaker. This could induce to identity loss.	Trying to develop positive attitudes to appreciate other cultures without losing their own identity.
Lack of teachers training.	Professional development.
Teaching a language from a utilitarian perspective becomes a constraint. Language is not seen as a mean to construct and understand the otherness but just as a tool to be more competitive.	Raising awareness about what languages' purposes are: utilitarian, cognitive, and humanistic. Trying to remark on the use from a humanistic and cognitive perspective since the trend in language teaching has been from a utilitarian perspective.

Source: Authors.

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Role teachers played as intercultural model

In the literature reviewed, different authors talk about the importance of the teacher. Moeller and Nugent (2014) state that the teacher is not expected to transmit information but guide students and be a facilitator. That way students can have an active role. Actually, it is claimed that for students develop intercultural competence their role must be more as a researcher whose curiosity enhance the exploration inside and outside the classroom in regards different cultural themes.

The teacher must guide students to develop intercultural competence critically. In this way, as Norton (2013) states, learners can question dominant discourses and asymmetry among cultures. That ability is quite important since dominant discourses are present in textbooks and mass media which students are exposed to all the time implicitly or explicitly, therefore, teachers should guide students and help them to acquire the skill to evaluate and question the information they receive from countless sources.

In addition, according to Byram et al. (2002), Sánchez-Torres (2014), Roman et al. (2015) and Yongying (2019), the teacher should be able to develop communicative competence and at the same time intercultural communicative competence. For this reason, they should mediate between the different cultures inside the classroom, prepare students to interact with others under interculturality principles, and foster curiosity among students. An intercultural class requires an active role of the teacher as mediator who places students in the centre of the process.

Budiarti (2018) mentions that there is a precondition for teachers to teach from an intercultural perspective and it is to be intercultural competent this is because the teacher must be a model, then, if they are going to promote intercultural principles such as: equity, equality, fairness, and respect for others cultures they have to show those qualities to students throughout the example. The teacher is the model that students are looking at all the time. The role of the teacher as a model, according to Miftakh (2018) becomes even more important when teaching children since intercultural understanding is an important aspect for students to grasp since an early stage.

According to Fardini (2014) and García (2019) the teacher becomes a designer of the learning experience and for that it is extremely important the creativity in order to expose students to learning experiences as authentic due to that authenticity cannot be accomplished through a textbook. The data collected in research by these authors, demonstrated that students showed intercultural awareness, motivation, and development of ICC when they were exposed to meaningful and authentic tasks.

Furthermore, Rodríguez (2017) states that the teacher is a fundamental actor of the intercultural teaching process since they are the guide and facilitator to raise intercultural awareness while developing the ICC. To complement this author, Aguilar (2011) claim that the teacher must have a wide knowledge about different cultures around the world having in mind the differences among them. Language is a matter of human beings with beliefs and customs. The teacher must raise awareness about it and that communication is tied to those beliefs and customs and they have to be respected.

Besides, it is stated that in addition to the knowledge teachers must have, they must be critical, reflexive, and able to tolerate and respect the other. Teachers are not only to transmit information —which gets obsolete rapidly— but to promote intercultural principles among students and be a model to them of such intercultural values. Teachers cannot educate students to respect the otherness and appreciate the difference if they do not value the difference and reject the other.

As claimed by Bryam et al. (2002), Chlopek (2008) and Gómez (2011) point out that teachers´ role is creating a safe environment where students feel safe to participate without being judged or stereotyped. These authors claim that teachers must do that in order to teach and live interculturality in the class and it can be possible working on preconceptions and raising awareness about the positive side and benefits of the difference. Actually, one of the aims of intercultural teaching is changing beliefs based on stereotypes.

Also, Charcape and Quintana (2013) propose some pedagogical considerations when teaching from an intercultural approach. They state that teachers should develop self-esteem and raise awareness about the importance of student's identity; consider background knowledge and experiences; value knowledge and students customs; have a critical position in regards cultural conflicts; foster communication and cooperation among students; search for a balance between the target culture and the own one.

As stated by Gordon (2012), Velandia & Fajardo (2014) and Budiarti (2018) reinforce what Charcape and Quintana (2013), stated and also remark that before working on other cultures it is important to know the diversity in the classroom because in that way, students learn to appreciate the difference of their classmates and also are conscious of how diverse is their country. In this point, the teacher is a mediator who creates a safe environment for this cultural interchange that happens under intercultural principles such as respect, equity, equality, and fairness.

In addition, Álvarez & Bonilla (2009), Leiva & Gutiérrez (2018) and Roiha & Sommier (2021) highlight the importance of collaboration and reflection among teachers. Alvárez and Bonilla (2009) claim that "practical experiences coming from their colleagues constitute a resource for their personal and professional growth" (p. 167) and Leiva and Gutiérrez (2018) propose the collaborative work in the teachers' staff (p. 22). In the teacher's community there is a lot of practical knowledge but sometimes teachers work as isolated islands and there is not the opportunity to exchange and reflect upon experiences which would enhance the teaching performance and have a direct influence on the learning processes. In fact, Duncan and Paran (2017) remarked the fact that in schools with less collaboration and cooperation between teachers, the diversity of activities were less compared to the ones which fostered collaboration and cooperation.

Leiva and Gutierrez (2018) even go further. They do not also propose collaboration among teachers but also include the whole community. These authors that living a culture of diversity requires different points of view. Therefore, it is necessary not only the participation and collaboration of teachers but also an active participation by students and families.

Finally, it is important to remark that there should be professional development for teachers. Granados-Beltrán (2016) and Hinojosa & López (2018) state that teachers need a constant professional development to enhance intercultural skills which permit them

to teach from this approach; the initial formation teachers is essential, therefore, the curriculum to train teachers need to be paramount of learning experiences which allow them to develop critic intercultural competences to critique "issues of colonialism and inequality affecting not only their educational contexts, but also their lives as subjects" (Granados-Beltrán, 2016, p. 184).

<div align="center">DISCUSSION</div>

Literature is an excellent source to develop intercultural competence but this must be combined with different methodologies as a dialogical approach and activities which promote critical thinking. Gómez (2015a) proposes activities of "deep culture" which permit students to realize different issues in different cultures and among them. The idea is that students question the different situations and possible asymmetries.

In addition, it is important to mention that in general students felt that literature was difficult at first. A constraint of using reading materials in class is the complexity for students. Reading is an excellent source of information of different cultures around the world and also a way to develop not only ICC but communicative competence, but if the material is too complex, students may lose the motivation and avoid the task since it is too difficult to them. Therefore, teachers should develop the strategic competence while the ICC and communicative competence in order to equip students with the necessary tools to solve different problems and not avoid the task.

Also, collaboration among students is also necessary. Interculturality is communicating with the other having as principles the respect, fairness, equity, and equality. Therefore, it would be logical to start since the classroom with the interactions inside simulating what happens outside. Teachers must raise awareness that differences among them are just natural and that language is a way to solve the differences or possible conflicts.

The authors also remark on the importance of the teachers´ role as a facilitator and mediator having in mind that students are the centre of the teaching process. They also say that teachers must be critical, reflective, and have a high intercultural competence. Therefore, it is important to work on the curriculum of the initial formation to train intercultural teachers since the initial training. In the findings, it was recurrent that teachers have the desire to teach under the principles of interculturality but not all the time, they had the knowledge to teach from this perspective.

Moreover, even when the authors give relevance to teachers, which is understood since the curriculum is realized throughout their pedagogical practices, educational centers must do their part. Interculturality should not be an effort of a teacher or some teachers who decide to teach from this perspective. In the case of the English language teacher, because the Common European Framework states that it is the fifth skill. Interculturality should be a theme which paramount the whole curriculum and that it is reflected in the whole educational community through the daily practices of all the actors and even institutional projects as Salazar (2015) suggests.

It is also important to pay attention to stereotypes that students might have. Before starting to develop the intercultural communicative competence of students, it is to realize which preconceptions students have about different cultures. Stereotypes are most of the

times prejudices created by the mass media or previous experiences that students have. Therefore, teachers should figure out what students´ background is and to start abolishing stereotypes which become a barrier to discuss more important issues or that foster xenophobia.

The use of TIC is highly positive, but teachers must have the preparation to integrate it. It is a way to connect with people around the world and construct knowledge. On the web, there is not only information but platforms which permit us to connect with other people and even places as some of the authors proposed when using tools such as Google earth in their research studies. Students are familiar with this type of technology since they are exposed to it all the time, therefore, teachers can take advantage of it, in order to guide teaching in a field which is well known by learners.

Finally, teachers and schools must take into account that teaching from an intercultural perspective is a demanding task which requires not only professional development but also the correct material. Commonly, textbooks do not represent the students' reality since they cover cultural topics of people who students feel apart. Even textbooks might reinforce stereotypes on students becoming a barrier to developing ICC in the classroom. Having this panorama, teachers and all the actors implicated have the choice to adapt the material, create their own one, or use authentic material such as movies, readings from the web, documentaries among others except the textbook which is commonly used and proposed/imposed in schools.

CONCLUSIONS

Teaching from an intercultural approach is a demanding but rewarding task. If teachers are to teach from this perspective, they need to be interculturally competent since they are the main source of information and a model for students. Someone who does not live the intercultural principles cannot teach them, or at least, expect that their students become intercultural speakers.

Therefore, there is a direct relationship between what teachers' conceptions about interculturality are and the way it is realised through their own actions, and what students acquire from teachers. First, due to the teacher is a model, in this case, an intercultural one; second, because teachers' constructions about interculturality, guides students in the learning process.

Interculturality is not a matter of teachers teaching to students to become intercultural speakers. Interculturality must paramount all the relationships at the school and it must be reinforced throughout projects which foster diversity. For instance, a cultural exchange where the different cultures of the school can be recognized and valued. It is important to know about other cultures but it is even more important to know the diversity and richness of our own culture in defence of our identity.

Teachers have the responsibility to promote interactions which aim to construct with the other. Strategies as collaborative and cooperative work in the classroom, come out as a tool to foster negotiation of ideas among students. Interculturality goes beyond the mere interaction among different people, it is also sharing different points of view in regards to a particular issue and being able to negotiate considering thinking diversity.

Finally, it is important to mention that there are challenges and constraints, but they can be faced by teachers as a community who reflect and learn from each other. Collaboration among teachers is quite important since all teachers have different strategies to face different issues. If teachers collaborate, they could share strategies and face the different challenges in a more effective way. As stated above, to teach from an intercultural perspective, teachers must have a wide cultural knowledge and be intercultural competent, therefore, to teach students to collaborate, teachers have to know to collaborate with others.

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