# DESIGN OF A CONTENT UNIT BASED ON ICC TO PROMOTE STUDENTS' CULTURAL IDENTITY AT A CLEI

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### **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this paper is to describe how students' cultural identity may be promoted by displaying a model of the content unit, which was created adopting the attitudes of Intercultural Communicative Competence. The project was directed to a CLEI 3 population, equivalent to 6° and 7° grades. To accomplish the objective of the research, a projective methodology was carried out. As part of the data collection methods, a semi-structured interview with a CLEI teacher was carried out to address the actual status of a CLEI scenario. In addition, a document analysis of Derechos Básicos de Aprendizaje and Currículo Sugerido was used to approach the established parameters for English teaching at public education; which all together set the foundations for the design of the content unit for teaching English in an EFL classroom. Results outlined the necessity of the existence of a content unit focused on the guidelines and parameters that take part in the context, revealing the importance of including cultural and contextual elements that are close to students' realities. Furthermore, these components contribute to the promotion of students' cultural identity from the acknowledgment and interaction with their own cultures and others'. In other words, the promotion of the cultural identity that is cultivated among individuals through social practices. Hence, materials framed on ICC suggest the interplay and inclusion of different cultures as a means to have effective and meaningful experiences for students and teachers in any educational setting, specifically, EFL classrooms.

KEYWORDS: Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), cultural identity, English as Foreign Language (EFL), Ciclo Lectivo Especial Integrado (CLEI).

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

This section aims to illustrate from a national and local overview of some studies which are related to the objective of this project; as this research project intends to promote students' cultural identity through the creation of a model of content unit based on Intercultural Communicative Competence for a CLEI 3 population.

Considering one of the focuses of this study as it is the integration of cultural content and Intercultural Communicative Competence, Olaya and Gomez (2013) carried out a study which intention was to explore pre-service teachers' perceptions when facing the complexity of the relationship between culture and language. As part of data collection methods, questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and documentary analysis were used. From this view, it emerges the necessity of including local culture in English language teaching. Hereafter, results showed that it is essential to strengthen and enrich pre-service teachers' critical perceptions on cultural content and the understanding of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC).

Similarly, and following the intention of this study, Gómez (2012) developed an action research study based on the use of authentic literary texts at an EFL classroom, at a language program at a university in Bogotá, from the scope of a constructive approach to foster ICC. Regarding data collection methods, direct observations, in-depth interviewing, and journals were implemented to obtain data. Remarking that reading materials result from the levels of cultural expression; it unveils that they constitute the foundations constructing knowledge in a more meaningful and conscious way from the cultural sphere. Furthermore, Cuartas (2020) presents a collaborative case study involving three in-service EFL teachers in Medellin, to elaborate on a course whose goal was to master ICC in a group study. By means of face-to-face interviews,

recordings, and reflective logs, the findings displayed that teachers' involvement implied a deeper understanding of cross-cultural knowledge and ICC, along with methodological strategies to build up this competence in the classroom.

Stemming from the impact of the inclusion of culture materials in English teaching, there are some studies that are closely related to our project. Castañeda (2012) conducted a qualitative and interpretative study with a population of fifty-five students at a high school in Bogotá. The objective of the research was to explore how adolescents perceived culture-based material implementations in English classes as a means to foreign culture descriptions. The chosen material was adopted and implemented in accordance with the lesson plans of the class. Designed tasks were used from a variety of resources and a culture awareness-based textbook adapted for the class purpose. For data collection procedures, surveys, field notes, audio, and video recordings, and students' artifacts were implemented to depict students' context. As part of the findings, it arises as an embracement, appraisal, and transformation of learning environments intertwined with authentic cultural elements. It indicated that home and foreign culture set at the core of the experiences, as students were able to build up their own constructs based on the identification and recognition of their realities and the ones lived by others. Following the line of culture materials, a qualitative study carried out by Cárdenas (2018) was selected. This action research study intended to shed light on the development of students' Intercultural Communicative Competence through the implementation of materials integrating culture in the teaching practice of English; which entailed articulating communicative competence, and what is more, a cultural component at it. The study sample was 11th graders from a Bilingual School in Cundinamarca. In regard to data collection methods, students' artifacts, surveys, and teachers' journals were used to track the whole process. Rising from the mentioned implications and the

nature of the study, results showed that materials used in the classroom represented innovation. Concurrently, the variety of activities allowed students to develop autonomous and group work abilities; while reflecting on their own cultural setting, particularly, their own cultural identity.

In the case of our closest context, Arias, García, Español, & Ciro (2019) implemented a qualitative research project following a Collaborative Action Research methodology, engaging in strengthening students' cultural identity through the inclusion and implementation of cultural manifestation in an EFL classroom. During this project, it was used a sample of 36 fourth grade students at *Institución Educativa Rural Chaparral* in San Vicente, Antioquia. Document analysis, observations, interviews, "patchwork quilt" and journals were applied to collect data. As part of the findings, the use of this type of contextualized activities and materials impacted positively students' performance when communicating in daily life scenarios and EFL class settings. Foremost, the inclusion of cultural manifestations in EFL classes enabled students to recognize their own realities and context while enriching their cultural identity, which conjointly gives purpose and value to their community through the use of English as a foreign language.

Our literature review has displayed that several studies have been carried out before about ICC development in English Language Teaching. Some studies present students' and pre-service teachers' perceptions in regard to culture-based materials, differing from others that introduce strategies and methodologies as a means to foster ICC. Nevertheless, the present study is constituted as a milestone, due to the fact that this study is focused on a CLEI, concerning their particular characteristics and the effects of integrating ICC for teaching English.

# STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Throughout history, English has been conceived as a universal language due to globalization. Nowadays, English is immersed in a world where intercultural communication and internationalization processes ground the necessity of a common language proffering access to the entire world (Ministerio de Educación Nacional [MEN], 2006). Likewise, Seidlhofer (2011) exposes that the English language has been established as the predominant international language as a consequence of its spreading all over the world; being the main reason to be included in language curricula at schools.

Consequently, it has been intended as the main objective for the population to communicate effectively in the language, emerging programs such as *Plan Nacional de Bilingüismo*, preparing citizens to represent the country in universal communicative processes, global economies, and cultural opening framed on international standards (MEN, 2006). Hence, current language policy proffers the identification and value of our own culture in their linguistic and cultural richness, while constructing global citizenship through foreign languages (MEN, 2018).

Hereafter, Cuartas (2020) proposes "that students might not have the necessary level of proficiency for cultural analysis" (p. 84). In this sense, there is an assumption that students from CLEI, apart from struggling with English specific content, this is not related to their context; it is, the culture that surrounds them is not considered at the time of teaching English. Consequently, culture is not part of their development as individuals and learners of the English language. In the same vein, there is evidence of missing material when undertaking the classes, as mentioned by a

CLEI teacher that researchers approached and that may not be also tracked on the internet. As a consequence, strategies to include cultural aspects, both, others' and learners' culture are not part of their learning process and performance. Although the importance of including cultural elements in the English classes is indicated in DBA and Currículo Sugerido, there is no proof that they are conceived at the time of teaching. To this extent, the inclusion of students' culture emerges as an opportunity to present and adapt the material in order to become meaningful for them.

In view of the aforementioned, teachers must establish strategies in order that students recognize cultural aspects from an intercultural and critical approach, understanding such complexity (Cuartas, 2020). In fact, including cultural aspects to students turn into a challenge and opportunity for teachers to meet their realities and make the language knowledge useful for them. Likewise, acknowledging students' own cultural backgrounds represents a shift in the way they perceive the language. Therefore, most teachers consider that a class in which students get to know aspects that they maybe did not know about their culture can represent the greater significance and enhance their learning processes (Byram 1995, in Oliveras, 2000).

Thus, "the use of specific cultural related markers is usually assumed as the cultural identity of an individual or group. Cultural identity is one of the many identities that a person develops throughout his or her lifetime" (Rummens cited in Pretelt, 2016, p. 16). In view of this, cultural identity is settled as a bond for CLEI students to recognize and interact with the elements that surround them while empowering them to meet their own identity and their position among others. As a consequence of the missing material and the importance of culture and identity, it emerges the necessity of creating a proposal, aiming the acknowledgment of different cultures, providing a different perspective of the language from the cultural approach. Moreover,

recognizing that Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) plays a role when interacting with their own culture and others, enables students to engage in multiple identities, contrary to a single identity immersed in stereotypes (Byram, Gribkova and Starkey, 2002).

To this extent, this research project, specifically, the design of a content unit is directed to a CLEI 3 population, equivalent to 6th and 7th grades in regular educational processes.

Considering their particular characteristics and their reality, it positions us as pioneers with this community, giving visibility through the inclusion of students' cultural identity. Stemming from this need, the following research question emerges: How does the creation of a model of content unit based on Intercultural Communicative Competence promote students' cultural identity at a Ciclo Lectivo Especial Integrado (CLEI)?

#### **JUSTIFICATION**

In this section, the relevance of this research project will be portrayed from three different fields: context impact, ELT, and research field. Culture in human interaction symbolizes who we are with regard to the society that composes it. To this extent, Nieto (2010) expresses that culture is immersed within a dynamic society and constant change. In this manner, the inclusion of cultural elements enables the understanding and appraisal of our position in society and other individuals. Proposing this research project, specifically, a content unit, intends to lead to the promotion of CLEI students' own cultural identity, seen for them as an opportunity to bring English knowledge to establish links between cultural backgrounds. Consequently, this project represents an approach to a generalized students' reality, by identifying themselves in regard to others and valuing the differences among them. Positioned from the field of education and foreign languages field, this project primarily sets up around the integration of cultural elements, informed by the guidelines that rule English teaching in Colombia; recognizing and broadening language learning.

What is more, this research project is beheld as an opportunity to break into perceptions that have been built up by students in reference to English. By empowering students through the awareness of their cultural identity, we aim at settling the English language and their own cultural elements as a bridge for meaningful experiences. Particularly, a content unit proposal is selected as the means to accomplish the project objective. As a result, some other effects may emerge as it is the case of developing their critical thinking, along with raising awareness and autonomy in CLEI students.

Taking into consideration not solely our role as teachers, but as researchers; this CLEI community settles as a scope of opportunities to unveil what has been left behind, in respect to their current position in the Colombian context. Not counting that, this project also serves as a means to contribute to CLEI teachers' professional development, specifically in critical and reflective dimensions; as well as the design of adaptable material based on ICC to be used for this community or any other beginner-level program. Hence, this research project rises from the unawareness that this population has been part of, being neglected in academic publications within the education field. Altogether permits the enrichment of the academic community, stemming from students' specific characteristics and the inclusion of their own culture.

# General objective

To promote students' cultural identity through the inclusion of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) at a CLEI.

# Specific objectives

To explore the guidelines and parameters for the creation of a content unit for a CLEI population.

To design a content-unit based on the promotion of students' cultural identity through ICC.

To reflect on the content unit in the light of future implementation.

#### CONCEPTUAL REFERENCES.

In this section and considering the nature of this research project, some concepts are explored with the intention of providing a better understanding of the theoretical framework that supports this project. On the grounds of the above said, some concepts will be addressed, as follows: culture, identity, cultural identity, Intercultural Communicative Competence, EFL, and CLEI.

# Culture and Identity

The term culture has been tackled by several perspectives and authors. Particularly, Richardson (2001) defines that "culture is the totality of all that characterizes us. It includes the tools and objects we create, the structures and institutions we fashion, the concepts and ideas we develop, and the way these take shape as customs and beliefs" (p. 2). In this way, culture is perceived as a complex set of elements that a particular community embraces, defining its nature. Thus, the development of culture is facilitated through social interaction and communication, involving behaviors, beliefs, and ideologies within a social group (Sihui and Prieto cited in Olaya and Gómez, 2013). Considering all these elements, it is assumed that culture is intrinsically related to the development of a person's identity, framed on a set of values and specific context. In that sense, "everyone has a culture because all people participate in the world through social and political relationships informed by history as well as by race, ethnicity, language, social class, sexual orientation, gender, and other circumstances related to identity and experience" (Nieto, 2010, p. 9).

In view of the aforementioned, "culture plays an important role when defining oneself within a social group" (Cárdenas, 2018 p. 21), leading to the construction and recognition of

one's identity, differentiating from the rest. Therefore, according to Norton (as cited in Zwisler, 2017), identity is seen "as the way a person understands their relationship to the world, the way that relationship is constructed across space and time, and how the person can understand possibilities for the future" (p. 258). Likewise, this concept reflects the individual position, recognizing oneself in relation to others. Due to this recognition, the constitution of identity allows oneself perception characterized by cultural aspects which are seen as a tool to differentiate people's ideas from others, demonstrating cultural differences (Cárdenas, 2018).

# Cultural Identity

Considering these relevant concepts, cultural identity stands as a key term to understand the purpose of our project. As mentioned by Chen (2014), "cultural identity refers to identification with, or sense of belonging to, a particular group based on various cultural categories". Differing from culture, cultural identity focuses on the understanding of students' particular characteristics grounded on their own backgrounds, configuring their relation to their surroundings. Taking into consideration this definition, cultural identity is the manifestation of our research objective, interpreted through the Intercultural Communicative Competence.

# Intercultural Communicative Competence ICC

Acknowledging the importance of cultural identity, Byram, Gribkova, and Starkey (2002) present the term Intercultural Communicative Competence, described as "an ability to ensure a shared understanding by people of different social identities, and their ability to interact with people as complex human beings with multiple identities and their own individuality" (p.10). In actual fact, ICC has different components that pertain to a specific social group and one's

individuality, which are intercultural attitudes (savoir être), knowledge (savoirs), skills of interpreting and relating (savoir comprendre), skills of discovery and interaction (savoir apprendre/faire), which altogether have as common objective the understanding, appraisal, and analysis of others' culture and the own (Byram et al., 2002). Once considered mentioned above, "individuals with intercultural communicative competence may act as mediators between cultures and languages" (Bickley, Rossiter, & Abbott, 2014, p. 138).

# English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

Considering the context of our research project and the extent to which the language is used, English is seen as a foreign language. That is, "it is taught in schools, often widely, but it does not play an essential role in national or social life" (Broughton, Brumfit, Flavell, Hill, & Pincas, 1980, p. 6). Similarly, Peng (2019) states that a foreign language references the spoken language outside the country, used for tourism, communication with native speakers, and some other activities, within a non-native context.

# **CLEI**

As this research project represents an impact on a specific population, CLEI definition is necessary to be addressed. In Colombia, the General Education law has established CLEI (Ciclo Lectivo Especial Integrado), as a means to facilitate people to study, complete, and certificate their primary and secondary school, on account of the non-achievement at regular ages and formal education cycles (MEN, 2016). Furthermore, education in this sense is characterized by a number of conditions and characteristics that vary from the regular education programs, such as

cognitive development, socio-cultural context, age, educational level, and experiences; apart from the knowledge given at specific subject areas (MEN, 2016). To these criteria, this educational model is funded with the purpose of achieving primary and secondary school requirements, while fulfilling specific adult population conditions.

To the last extent, the aforementioned concepts contribute to the deepening and relevance given to our research project. Particularly, shedding light on the cultural dimension of students, despite being stated in CLEI and MEN guidelines, emerges as the opportunity to be addressed within this specific community.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

This section will address how this research project was carried out in terms of the methodological procedures, target population criterion, and ethical considerations. Taking into account that the intention of this research project is to promote students' cultural identity, through the inclusion of Intercultural Communicative Competence, a qualitative approach was adopted. Thus, the focus of qualitative research is providing an interpretation of an event or theme. In this sense, the description and assessment emerge from individuals' personal perspectives (Creswell, 2012).

Hence, following this approach aimed at depicting local culture and language learning interpretations while proposing a future intervention for a particular setting, by teachers and researchers interested in using adapted material for CLEI students. In this line, a content unit proposal was framed on the promotion of the cultural identity built from the ICC perspective; and that was suggested for eventual effects on students by the inclusion of such cultural elements.

In regard to the project design and its purpose of it, Projective Research is set up as the methodology to be followed considering its nature. The intention of this methodology is to proffer a solution to a determined issue by designing a proposal or a model to accomplish such a goal. This process is executed in some stages as follows, exploring, describing, explaining, and proposing change alternatives; which may or not be implemented (Hurtado, 2015). Taking into account the aforementioned and the project objective, a content unit was proposed to be developed for the improvement of English teaching practices at CLEI 3 scenarios, through the inclusion of the cultural component. This unit was justified by some established parameters for English teaching in Colombia, as the case of Derechos Básicos de Aprendizaje (DBA) and

Currículo Sugerido. In light of this, the design of such a product is intended to present an alternative to English teaching for this target population. Not to mention that this model was grounded on the level of missing material that is evidenced at CLEI communities, or material that is not adapted to their necessities and particular characteristics. Connected to this assumption, Hurtado (2000) states that projective research transcends from how things are towards how things should and could be, in terms of necessities, preferences, and decision-making by certain social groups.

#### **Data Collection Methods**

Considering the aforementioned elements and informed by the nature of this project; a semi-structured interview and a content analysis instrument were chosen as the most suitable data collection methods to know the status of English teaching at CLEI.

#### Semi-structured Interview

In an early stage of the research project, a semi-structured interview was used as a determinant instrument to gather some perceptions from a CLEI teacher's perspective. Likewise, this type of interview is characterized by being flexible and allowing more questions to emerge from the provided answers by the interviewee (Burns, 2010). Based on the above, it allowed these researchers to explore and build some foundations for the purpose of this project, as a characterization of this community, by having an approach with CLEI teachers.

# Content Analysis

In the following stage of the project, a content analysis instrument was implemented as the tool to gather the required information for this study. In this sense, this technique seeks to approach documents containing various guidelines supporting English teaching in Colombia.

Particularly, it is used to analyze documents by providing valid inferences that may be applied to understand a phenomenon while increasing researchers' knowledge (Krippendorff, 2004).

Following this idea, this technique was suitable for accomplishing the project objective, given that it yielded the foundations for the creation of a content unit for a CLEI in concordance to DBA and Currículo Sugerido.

Criteria to select participants and ethical considerations.

This proposal was about a content unit for a CLEI 3 population, which represents students from 6th and 7th grade. According to the previous parameters, these students may be in the process of reaching an A1-A2 level. By carrying out this procedure, the promotion of the cultural realm in students' learning processes was highlighted as a means to respond to the specific necessities that the context has. What is more, and responding to the semi-structured interview instrument, a CLEI 3 teacher was selected as a participant under purposeful sample criteria. In view of the aforementioned, this sample allows researchers to select intentionally participants and understand the gist of a phenomenon in a specific community (Creswell, 2012). In this sense, the selection of the teacher was conducted by considering the teacher's target population, as well as the availability in terms of schedule.

Regarding ethical considerations, the information use was for academic purposes. On one hand, all information was gathered and managed carefully to respond to the nature and objective of this research project. On the other hand, a consent form was implemented with the aim of keeping participants' confidentiality and anonymity (see appendix A, B, C). To this extent, participants were informed about the type of information, the intention, purpose, and effects of

involving themselves in the project (Kumar, 2011). What is more, presenting accurate and unbiased findings ensured ethical procedures in the research, by avoiding benefits in terms of researchers' personal interests.

Considering the documents, images, and any other downloaded files from a digital source, they were considered following Copyright and licensing restrictions. To this extent, Copyright informs about the elements that can be taken from their original source, without any type of restriction. That is the use of paraphrased items or direct citations, stating where they are retrieved from (Bell, 2010). Hence, such a license was contemplated by the researchers for the analysis of information and the design of a content unit, as well. If necessary, credit was given to authors in the case of using restricted materials or content.

#### DATA ANALYSIS

Data in this research project was collected through an interview and the analysis of some documents through content analysis, as follows. Firstly, it was implemented a semi-structured interview with a CLEI 3 teacher at a public institution in Rionegro, Antioquia, was carried out through a virtual encounter. There were proposed a number of questions in regard to the current state of English teaching to these communities. Secondly, content analysis was used to address DBA and Currículo Sugerido documents focused on the objectives to be reached by students in the 6th and 7th grades of a regular educational cycle.

After collecting the information, codification was the following step to be executed. To codify, as defined by Saldana (2013), is the process of organizing things in a systematic way, in order to make them part of classification or system, in other words, to categorize. Particularly, codification is present when codes are "applied and reapplied" to qualitative information. To this extent, "coding is only the step toward an even more rigorous evocative analysis and interpretation for a report. Coding is not just labeling, it is linking" (Saldana 2013, p.8). Following this line, this process of organizing and reorganizing information in this project, allows these researchers to identify and group elements in common.

As a last stage of the process, a number of categories and subcategories were identified and determined, responding to the objective of this research project, as it is the case of the cultural realm and students' identity. After establishing the different categories that emerged from the two data collection methods, there were displayed some commonalities from the various sources of information. Besides, it was conducted the analysis of the categories, which enabled

researchers to have an overview of the current state of teaching English which will be reported below.

#### Semi-structured Interview

As the first part of this categorization and considering the first data instrument, a number of categories emerged, resulting from the information provided by the teacher and responding to the interests of the researchers in carrying out this project. The found categories were: (1) culture, (2) lack of material, (3) context, (4) identity, and (5) motivation. These categories were represented graphically with different colors on a word cloud, as follows, (1) blue, (2) green, (3) brown, (4) pink, and (5) orange. Additionally, the most repetitive words during the interview were highlighted using a bigger size; which enabled the researchers to identify the key elements of each category, as well as the most representative insights.

The first category was (1) culture, which was composed of two words, lifestyle, and context; which gave the name to this category, considering the variety of students' backgrounds present in a CLEI classroom, evidencing culture. During the interview, the teacher remarked on the importance of including culture, in terms of students' realities, for the development of the classes, as she expressed "tengo que saber qué es lo que voy a tratar en esa clase que no me vaya a distorsionar la clase" (Interview, September 3rd, 2020), which might influence students' performance and behavior in the classroom. What is more, this phenomenon might have incidence in the development and pace of classes, as well as on the levels of harmony that are necessary in the learning environment among peers and the teacher, that determine the success of the encounters.

The second category was (2) lack of adapted material, represented in the key words creation, support, and modification; which gave insights about the existing gap in terms of adapted material for this community. To exemplify this, the teacher mentioned the necessity of not solely adopting material, but adapting it, arguing that "nosotros debemos de hacer modificaciones a esas guías de trabajo y empezar desde cero" (Interview, September 3rd). From this scenario, it is perceived the limitations in specific materials created for them, as the existing material for teaching English at regular grades within public institutions do not respond to the specific necessities of students, leading teachers to create and adjust the provided ones. Following this idea, it emerges the importance of teachers' commitment and competence when preparing engaging classes, evidenced in the material that is presented for them. What is more, this also shows the gap in reference to what is expected to be learned according to the national standards in the regular grades (6th and 7th grades) that are equivalent for CLEI 3 what is actually learned by students from their abilities and competences, using topics as personal information, to overcome this breach.

The third category was (3) context, constituted by the words daily life activities, life plan, and different language; named in this way because of these contextual elements that influence students' learning processes. That is, being aware of the level of significance that the language has for them, as a means to engage them in the classes.

The fourth category was (4) identity, which contained the words recognize, interests, personal information, and myself; these keywords symbolize the components that are part of students' individualities. To support this, the teacher spoke about the proposal of activities that took into account content based on students' personal experiences and information, "podría

utilizar una presentación personal y hablar de sus familias" (Interview, September 3rd); which simultaneously displays students' role in regard to their peers and the teacher by means of these strategies. The last category was (5) motivation, which included the words *superarse* (which was kept in Spanish to preserve its meaning, referring to the idea of improving oneself), desire, and opportunities, both concerning to a better life quality through access to education and jobs; emerging from the determinant elements that motivate students to be part of a CLEI process. In other words, this has to be considered at the time of engaging students in the classes.



Figure 1. Word Cloud showing categories found in a semi-structured interview.

### **DBA**

As part of the document analysis instrument that was implemented to analyze DBA, some distinctive elements were found for teaching English at the 6th and 7th grades according to these guidelines. The resulting categories from this analysis were: culture (1), identity (2), and context (3); the keywords from each were represented this way, (1) blue, (2) pink, and (3) brown. As from the previous source, common words are shown in a bigger size. The first category was (1) culture, composed of the words people and context; which received this name since it includes the features that build up culture in a society. In this line, it is established the recognition by students towards other people apart from themselves, as well as the events that happen around them. The second category was (2) identity, which is constructed by the words family, experiences, interests, and personal information; as these elements are present at the moment of human beings' identification processes. Hence, students recognize their personal background by identifying the relationships that they have with their surroundings. The third category was (3) context, where daily life activities and environment were the keywords; as part of the events that are related to their daily life dynamics, proffering the acknowledgment of their closest contexts.



Figure 2. Word Cloud showing categories found in DBA.

# Curriculo Sugerido

Following the document analysis instrument, Currículo Sugerido was analyzed in the light of some resulting categories, which were (1) culture, (2) identity, and (3) context; which were represented in a word cloud with the same color and size patterns from the previous sources. The first category was (1) culture, composed of the words people, context, *Colombianidad*, and customs. These words display the characteristics that set up a culture, whether the national or a foreign culture, recognizing themselves as citizens of the world, with a diversity of values and manifestations. The second category was (2) identity, established by the keywords: interests, personal information, and feelings; altogether characterize what students are as individuals. From this view, students differentiate from their classmates, by finding commonalities. The third

category was (3) context, emerging from the keywords daily life activities and familiar events, as these words recall what is part of students' daily life, as a means to build knowledge in the language.



Figure 3. Word Cloud showing categories found in Currículo Sugerido.

#### **ANALYSIS**

After collecting the information from a semi-structured interview and content analysis from DBA and Currículo Sugerido documents, some elements in common were determined to be categorized. The emerging categories gave some insights in regard to this project objective, as it is the promotion of students' cultural identity through the inclusion of ICC. These main categories were (C) culture, (I) identity, and (K) context, which were present in the three sources of information. The gathered information was interpreted in the light of researchers' insights, informed by the foundations provided in the research project. Additionally, the keywords in

common were represented graphically in their respective source and labeled with the corresponding letter.

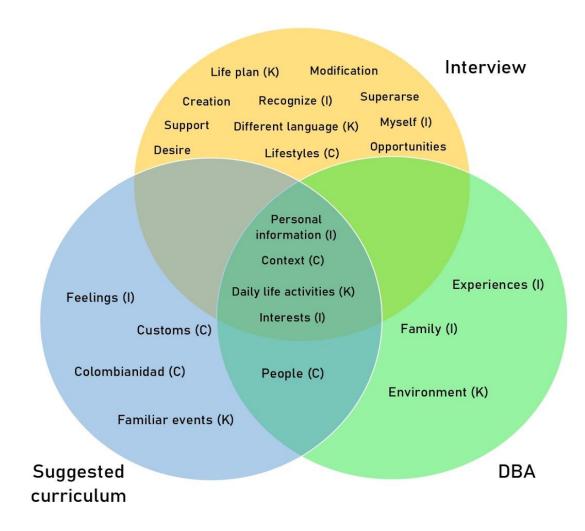


Figure 4. Venn diagram, triangulation findings

The first main category was (C) culture that is related to the inclusion of the cultural component for the development of English classes. From the semi-structured interview, culture is seen as the opportunity for the teacher to address students' backgrounds, from their diversity and variety. In this sense, culture is understood as the social relationships people have and how they interact with each other, informed by the realities that students are part of. What is more, the

awareness and recognition of students' identity by means of their different cultural backgrounds, set up the interrelated link between these two elements, yielding relevance to this research project. From DBA, the cultural component has the intention of creating scenarios where students can identify other people and things apart from them. Therefore, the existence of processes of identification between who students are and the relationships they establish with others set the foundations to give a globalized perspective of the language, by means of contextualized elements that are transmitted through cultures. From the Currículo Sugerido, it is proposed in terms of the distinctive characteristics that the culture has, exposed in events, life experiences, and people. In this sense, students have the possibility to meet the individuals of a culture, enriching their own culture from others. Hence, culture grounds the possibility to identify themselves in regard to the others, not just in their closest context but with some all around the world, evidencing an intrinsic relationship between cultural appraisal and students' identity promotion, which arises from the basis of what is intended to be reached in this research project by means of the creation of the model of the content unit.

The second main category was (I) identity, framed from the perspective of recognizing themselves in relation to others. In the semi-structured interview, identity is conceived from students' desires and interests which directly recalls their individualities for the development of classes at CLEI 3. To this extent, the teacher gives the opportunity for students to recognize themselves and the people that surround them, expanding the perspective of the language through identification processes that diversify the activities in the classroom. In DBA, it is understood from descriptions that are made about themselves and others. Following this idea and considering cognitive development, students in this stage are intended to take part in socialization practices with their peers, enhancing communicative and social skills. Similarly, in Currículo Sugerido

being in this stage, where the guidelines are proposed, is assumed as the opportunity to reach certain communicative and social competencies in the language, that may be merely developed through the interaction with others. Not to mention that it creates a sense of identity and belonging, aiming at engaging students from the elements that compose their identities.

The third main category was (K) context, which was present in all sources by recalling elements that represent students' realities. From the interview, context is configured in relation to the adaptation that has to be made responding to the students' context. Therefore, it is recognized the importance of presenting materials that are based on students' necessities and interests, in other words, the contextual elements that enrich English classes. From DBA, context intends that students approach their different communities (family, school environment, etc). In this way, the recognition of what takes place around the students center on the inclusion of such elements where students have the chance of living meaningful experiences when learning the language and be useful for their lives. From Currículo Sugerido, context is defined from the activities and events that are part of students' daily lives. Based on this, students' context manifests the realities that are present in a classroom.

Taking into account the aforementioned, the previous categories take relevance when it comes to responding to the CLEI context necessities as well as reaching the established guidelines, which altogether were exposed with the development of a model of a content unit based on ICC for fostering students' cultural identity.

#### **DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this study was the promotion of students' cultural identity through the creation of a model of a content unit, which was based on Intercultural Communicative Competence. Hence, the design of the content unit entailed CLEI students' own cultural elements and others', as well as students' identities as individuals. What is more, this was carried out with a CLEI 3 population, which is equivalent to 6° and 7° grades. To do this, gathered information from data analysis indicated the necessity of including contextual elements related to students' realities and their identities, which were materialized in their culture and their surroundings. Specifically, the categories culture, context, and identity emerged from commonalities in DBA, Currículo Sugerido, and a semi-structured interview. To this extent, the previous categories were used as the foundations to create the content that was part of the unit. Therefore, the justification of the model of the content unit will be described below, as well as the whole process of performing the project.

# The design of material with ICC

From the researchers' perspective, students' cultural identity is settled down as the gist of this model of the content unit. Particularly, each section of it responded to the previously mentioned, by proposing three different moments: contextualization, presentation of the topic, and "practice and action" part; which were tackled from different abilities and skills of the language. What is more, all information and visual aids were selected intentionally to have a function in the unit, as it was recalling students' close contexts and cultural identities. Likewise, each activity was proposed beyond assessing students but allowing them to foster their cultural identity. In this line, Byram et al. (2002) emphasize the necessity that learners acquire the

knowledge from analyzing texts, rather than receiving factual information. Simultaneously, they also consider the importance of presenting different perspectives, as a way to challenge students in the target language. Hence, the design of this content unit was focused on the presentation of grammatical elements of the language in an implicit way, centered on the content that was developed through the unit (see appendix D).

The first section named "Who I am" intended that students firstly identified themselves in order to be recognized by others. It is imperative to mention that this was chosen as the initial stage of the unit, considering the purpose of it, the standards from DBA and Currículo Sugerido, and the CLEI teacher's insights about students' characterization at these levels, which suggested this as a suitable topic to work on. From the gathered information of the interview, the gap between what students should achieve with the language and what they actually do, can be overtaken by incorporating students' identity into the classes, as she referred to some activities "podría utilizar una presentación personal y hablar de sus familias" (Interview, September 3rd, 2020). Therefore, this was carried out through activities and materials that were based on the components of personal presentation, as well as on the tools to interact with others. Such objective was reached by means of the use of images that were close to students' contexts, as it was the case of a researchers' photo at the introductory part, and that made them familiar with the content that was about to be presented. Apart from it, the presentation of content was mediated by the information that recalled different backgrounds and cultural diversity. Connected to this, the mentioned topic was articulated with countries and nationalities, as a means to reinforce interculturality through individuals' identification.

Following the line of students' environments, the second section "Knowing my family" was focused on students' closest contexts, their families. In this vein, this was seen as an

extension of the personal presentation, involving the people that influence their identification processes. The family contributes in the development of individuals' own identity (Lila & Marchetti, 1995). Namely, this section was framed on the presentation of vocabulary related to family members and supported by material about diverse types of families around the country, providing different characteristics about them, based on their culture and their social relationships. This also sets apart the traditional family models that have been established throughout history. The practice and action part was not solely designed in this section in order to assess students' knowledge, but to identify their own family unit, enriching their cultural identity by the people that surround them.

The next part was "Let's celebrate", which was focused on the intercultural perspective, seen from what people usually do in their daily lives. Particularly, the appraisal of students' own national values and customs, along with other cultures around the world. Stemming from what ICC implies, as it is the capacity to interact and communicate accurately with people coming from other cultures (Choudhury, 2013); this was conceived as an opportunity to understand students' local culture from the diversity that exists in a classroom, when taking into account students' different backgrounds, being fostered in the model of the content unit. During the design process, a variety of elements were taken into account to refer to a number of cultures and countries, from their things in common and differences. To support this, comparisons between their own culture and others' cultures, promoting awareness in regard to cultural differences and similarities (As cited in Bickley, Rossiter, Abbott, 2014). As it was the case of the text "Indian Celebrations", which had as the main purpose to make visible the commonalities of India with Colombian traditions, remarking that these two countries are the ones with the most number of celebrations in the world. Furthermore, India has been chosen as the focus for teaching English

and the cultural approach, since it displays in a clearer way the need for learners to be taught about cultures (Byram & Grundy, 2003). Apart from this, the intention of this section was to provide the space for students to bring the celebrations and traditions that represent them, giving value to their cultural identity as part of a community; which was highly perceived in the activities where students had to talk or speak about the components that are part of their culture. It is important to mention that the presented activities were supported by components of the language that allowed students to create descriptions about those events, such as descriptive adjectives and action verbs.

Finally, the last stage which was called "My community: what we are", approached the recognition of the different customs and traditions of a culture, considering the context category that emerged from data analysis and that integrated cultural elements; giving value to students' cultural identity through such dynamic. In conjunction with this, cultural identity is built on the "collective knowledge", expressed in customs, traditions, ways of living, and heritage (Chen, 2014). This part included daily life activities, food vocabulary, and all related items that are familiar to students' surroundings; which altogether intended to tackle their realities and contexts, by giving relevance to such elements. Additionally, as the concluding stage of the unit, a final project was proposed with the aim of integrating the previous section with the creation of a product. In this task, students were asked to talk about one of the Colombian regions, including the previous topics, which required the coordination between the formal elements of the language and the cultural identity that derived from the intercultural feature that is implied. Moreover, this task was a result of the categories that were previously presented in the data analysis, the teacher's insights, and the necessities of the context itself.

#### The voices from the context

The design of this model of content unit pretended to respond to the necessities of the context, taking into account all the elements that compose a culture, as well as individuals' cultural identity. Likewise, it pretended to support the limitations in terms of adaptable material that this community has, facilitating learning and teaching processes in CLEI scenarios. As expressed by the teacher from CLEI 3 context, "nosotros no contamos con con apoyo de pues de libros ni nada de esas cosas" (Interview, September 3rd, 2020), supporting the idea that there is an existing gap in regard to the material that is offered to this population, in comparison to the material that is provided to the regular public education. Not to mention that this also displayed the adaptability that CLEI teachers must have in the conditions that they work, "ahí es donde nosotros debemos de hacer modificaciones a esas guías de trabajo y y empezar desde cero" (Interview, September 3rd, 2020). From this scenario, the design of adapted material as the model of a content unit met the needs of teachers and students, by considering the English Language as an opening tool to the interaction with people from other cultures, rather than a subject at school.

Specifically, this was reached using two components that were closely related to their lives, their culture, and identities. Besides, the structure of the unit was intentionally designed according to the competences and abilities that are expected to be achieved by students in DBA and Currículo Sugerido at 6° and 7° grades, as familiar events and personal presentation; which also interrelates with socialization processes at students' stages of development. Viewing the unit from the teachers' position can serve as a support to make English teaching a meaningful experience for students, by bringing elements that are familiar to them. In other words, to contextualize the knowledge that is built in the classroom among students and the teacher.

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

The model of a content unit included ICC, the integration of different cultures, to give students the opportunity to interpret culture from others' perspectives, enhancing awareness about them; which followed the line of the research question and the objectives that were posed. That is to say, from this research project it is suggested that the use of materials that contain elements from students' own culture and others' may promote their cultural identity, supported by the interaction that is cultivated among individuals, which is framed on ICC. In this vein, cultural material should help students to reflect on their own culture by establishing a sense of interculturality. Such dynamic gives value to their own cultural backgrounds while identifying what is similar and different from others. Moreover, students' necessities, aspirations, and capabilities of this specific context were considered at the time of designing the unit, as each activity and content turned around the idea of how they would like to be taught and to learn.

Moving to the researchers' role as teachers, the whole process of research provided a great number of insights in English language teaching, framed on the cultural and contextual elements of students. In other words, teaching the language with the purpose of inserting students in a diverse world. To this extent, teaching practices are enhanced by means of the sense of awareness that is raised in terms of the importance of including the culture in the classes, which also makes students feel an active part of them. The teacher's role must be dedicated to bringing to the class "forms of knowledge" that are built around students' needs, desires, and conditions (Kumaradivelu, 2003). From the researcher's perspective and experiences in the field, this process overpassed the gap that seems to exist about the non-existence of adapted material and how this community has been left behind, by providing the tools that responded to the specific characteristics that this population has. Considering the aforementioned, this experience is

labeled as a meaningful and fruitful one, as it gave significant contributions to the context resulting from the level of awareness that was created, building the path for further projects that analyze the unit or intend to implement it, as well as further research with this type of population.

Regarding further recommendations and having in mind this type of research, the researchers suggest that the content unit can be used for future implementations. Nevertheless, such implementation must be outlined to the particular characteristics of a determined context, considering the environment dynamics, learning styles, and the diversity that is present. In reference to time periods, this content unit may take twenty hours to be carried out, which will depend on students' proficiency in the language. Additionally, the nature of the content unit entails the active role of students by empowering themselves in learning the language through ICC, while the teacher must act as a guide or mediator of what is being constructed.

Considering the non-implementation and time constraints of the project itself, it is worth mentioning the necessity of including deeper elements of culture, that encourage students to share their thoughts and experiences around their own culture and others'; which can be done through the expansion or inclusion of topics. From another perspective, this study may be carried out in a real classroom context, as it was the initial idea of the researchers. Taking this into account, it would be evidenced the achievement of the research objective, through the experiences of participants and researchers with an actual implementation of the material. Finally, this research project, specifically, the model of a content unit serves as an opportunity for researchers and teachers interested in this population by their particular characteristics, using cultural and contextual elements as the bridge to have fruitful experiences in the language and promote their cultural identity.

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#### **APPENDIXES**



## Appendix A

1/2

#### CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO UTILIZACIÓN DE IMAGEN

Using Intercultural Communicative Competence to promote Students' Cultural Identity at a CLEI (Ciclo Lectivo Especial Integrado)

El uso de la competencia intercultural comunicativa para la promoción de la identidad cultural de los estudiantes en un CLEI

Yo, Agra Michell de de de ciudadanía 119556 144 por medio del presente documento declaro y autorizo a los investigadores de este proyecto a usar y difundir mis imágenes con fines enteramente educativos, en los medios y formas que ellos dispongan sin derecho a compensación alguna, y por tanto

#### **DEJO CONSTANCIA QUE**

- 1. Otorgo autorización exclusiva a los investigadores para que utilicen, muestren, divulguen y exhiban mi imagen en todos los escenarios y medios que ellos consideren apropiados y necesarios para el cumplimiento del objetivo del proyecto, siempre y cuando dicho uso sea conforme a la moral y a los acuerdos establecidos en este documento.
- 2. Las secciones donde se emplee mi imagen serán realizadas bajo mi total consentimiento y entiendo que el uso de esta será en virtud de la creación de un modelo de unidad educativa y con el fin de que los investigadores puedan realizar su modelo propuesto.
- 3. Conozco el alcance de la divulgación que podrá tener mi imagen a través de nuevos modelos de unidades educativas, guías, medios audiovisuales, digitales o de cualquier otra forma o por cualquier medio, en virtud de la implementación que se pueda hacer con la unidad propuesta.

# EN VIRTUD DE LO ANTERIOR, MANIFIESTO QUE

- A. Entiendo y acepto que el material educativo que se creará con mi imagen será público y por lo tanto los investigadores no serán responsables de las indebidas utilizaciones que terceros o personas no relacionadas con el proyecto hagan de la misma.
- B. Entiendo y acepto que por esta autorización no recibiré pago alguno en ningún momento y por ningún concepto por el uso de mi imagen en la creación del modelo de material educativo.

Entiendo que mi participación es completamente voluntaria y sin ningún tipo de consecuencias.

Nombre del otorgante que acuerda:	
Anny Michelly Palacias Borga	
Firma del otorgante que acuerda:	
Michelly Palacias Bojja	
Nombre del investigador que recibe el acuerdo:	
Laura Cristina Bedaya	
<del> </del>	-

La presente autorización de uso de imagen se firma en señal de acuerdo y aceptación, en un original y dos copias del mismo tenor, en la ciudad de Chigolodo a los 27 días del mes de 2020.

Designed by Bedoya, L. Marín, I. Pérez, D. and Puerta, L. 2020

## Appendix B



1/1

#### CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO UTILIZACIÓN DE IMAGEN

Using Intercultural Communicative Competence to promote Students' Cultural Identity at a CLEI (Ciclo Lectivo Especial Integrado)

El uso de la competencia intercultural comunicativa para la promoción de la identidad cultural de los estudiantes en un CLEI

Yo, Norto Zaparo ( identificado(a) con cédula de ciudadanía 43.415.939 por medio del presente documento declaro y autorizo a los investigadores de este proyecto a usar y difundir mis imágenes con fines enteramente educativos, en los medios y formas que ellos dispongan sin derecho a compensación alguna, y por tanto

#### **DEJO CONSTANCIA QUE**

- 1. Otorgo autorización exclusiva a los investigadores para que utilicen, muestren, divulguen y exhiban mi imagen en todos los escenarios y medios que ellos consideren apropiados y necesarios para el cumplimiento del objetivo del proyecto, siempre y cuando dicho uso sea conforme a la moral y a los acuerdos establecidos en este documento.
- 2. Las secciones donde se emmple mi imagen serán realizadas bajo mi total consentimiento y entiendo que el uso de esta será en virtud de la creación de un modelo de unidad educativa y con el fin de que los investigadores puedan realizar su modelo propuesto.
- 3. Conozco el alcance de la divulgación que podrá tener mi imagen a través de nuevos modelos de unidades educativas, guías, medios audiovisuales, digitales o de cualquier otra forma o por cualquier medio, en virtud de la implementación que se pueda hacer con la unidad propuesta.

## EN VIRTUD DE LO ANTERIOR, MANIFIESTO QUE

- A. Entiendo y acepto que el material educativo que se creará con mi imagen será público y por lo tanto los investigadores no serán responsables de las indebidas utilizaciones que terceros o personas no relacionadas con el proyecto hagan de la misma.
- B. Entiendo y acepto que por esta autorización no recibiré pago alguno en ningún momento y por ningún concepto por el uso de mi imagen en la creación del modelo de material educativo.

Entiendo que mi participación es completamente voluntaria y sin ningún tipo de consecuencias.

Nombre del ot	torgante que acuerda:	
MONO	Zapara O	
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Nombre del in	vestigador que recibe el acuerdo:	
Laura	Bedoya Castrillón	
	J	

La presente autorización de uso de imagen se firma en señal de acuerdo y aceptación, en un original y dos copias del mismo tenor, en la ciudad de Chigorodo a los 27 días del mes de OCTO DOC de 2020.

Designed by Bedoya, L. Marín, I. Pérez, D. and Puerta, L. 2020

## Appendix C



1/2

#### CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO

Using Intercultural Communicative Competence to promote Students' Cultural Identity at a CLEI (Ciclo Lectivo Especial Integrado)

El uso de la competencia intercultural comunicativa para la promoción de la identidad cultural de los estudiantes en un CLEI

Usted ha sido escogido como participante en un proceso de investigación, el cual busca promover la identidad cultural de los estudiantes con la creación de una unidad basada en la competencia intercultural comunicativa en un CLEI. Para esta selección se ha tenido en cuenta sólo docentes de inglés del CLEI 3.

Su participación en este estudio es necesaria y consistirá en dar información que permita conocer las experiencias en la enseñanza del inglés en esta comunidad a través de una entrevista semi-estructurada.

#### RIESGOS Y BENEFICIOS

Su participación no representa riesgo alguno a su integridad personal ni a su buen nombre. No obstante, será necesario destinar un tiempo prudencial para la realización de las acciones anteriormente mencionadas.

#### **ANONIMATO**

La información siempre permanecerá en el anonimato y solo será suministrada en caso de ser requerida para validar la información. Al momento de describir el estudio, tanto escrito como verbalmente, se usará un seudónimo que le será asignado a fin de proteger su nombre y sus datos personales.

#### RESULTADOS

Seudónimo con el que desea participar:

La información suministrada será utilizada con fines académicos, y los resultados arrojados y el material diseñado podrán ser compartidos con la institución educativa si así lo desea.

Entiendo que mi participación es completamente voluntaria y sin ningún tipo de consecuencias.

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# Appendix D

The designed material will be available in the following link:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ODQZ8mVUCJ6nJKeafxAwdeIu1WG\_-tq1?usp=sharing



## Appendix E

## ENTREVISTA SEMI ESTRUCTURADA

- 1. ¿Cómo ha sido su experiencia enseñando en el CLEI?
- 2. ¿Cuánto tiempo lleva presentando el área de inglés?
- 3. ¿Qué lineamientos usa para preparar sus clases de inglés?
- 4. ¿Qué materiales son proporcionados por alguna entidad del estado para la enseñanza del inglés?
- 5. ¿Qué recursos o adaptaciones utiliza para la creación de sus clases?
- 6. ¿Cuál considera que es la mejor estrategia para reflejar un aprendizaje significativo en sus estudiantes?
- 7. ¿Qué estrategias usa para dictar sus clases de inglés?
- 8. ¿Incorpora usted algún elemento cultural durante sus clases?
- 9. ¿Incluye usted algún elemento relacionado con la identidad de sus estudiantes?
- 10. ¿Qué material esperaría encontrar para la enseñanza del inglés en este contexto específico?