

Interculturality towards the Recognition of Colombian Indigenous Cultures in Basic Education Students*

[English Version]

Interculturalidad hacia el reconocimiento de las culturas indígenas colombianas en estudiantes de educación básica

Interculturalidade: para o reconhecimento das culturas indígenas colombianas em alunos da educação básica

Received 15/06/2023. Accepted 05/03/2024

Larry Peñaranda **

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3493-0399>

CvLAC https://scienti.minciencias.gov.co/cvlac/visualizador/generarCurriculoCv.do?cod_rh=0000155048

Colombia

Ana María Corrales ***

<https://orcid.org/0009-0009-7256-2241>

CvLAC https://scienti.minciencias.gov.co/cvlac/visualizador/generarCurriculoCv.do?cod_rh=0002116048

Colombia

Daniel Márquez ****

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6488-2864>

México

› How to quote:

Peñaranda, L et al., (2025).

Interculturality towards the

Recognition of Colombian

Indigenous Cultures in Basic

Education Students.

Ánfora, 32(58), 147-170.

<https://doi.org/10.30854/anfv32>.

n58.2025.1097

Universidad Autónoma de

Manizales. L-ISSN 0121-6538.

E-ISSN 2248-6941.

CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

* This article is derived from the research project (in process) titled «Reconstrucción de experiencias de vida de procesos educativos de estudiantes universitarios pertenecientes a grupos étnicos de Colombia y originarios de Argentina», developed as a degree requirement for a Doctorate in Education at the University of Caldas, Colombia. This article presents the results from 2022-2023. Financing: The project was financed by the Vicerrectoría de Investigaciones y Proyección Social (VIPS) of the Universidad Central del Valle del Cauca (UCEVA), through the research group in Applied Linguistics – ILA, Code: 1300-39.1-006-F. It also has the collaboration of the Innov-acción Educativa group at the Universidad de Caldas. Declaration of interests: The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest. Data availability: All relevant data can be found in the paper.

** Master's degree in Education, Santiago de Cali University and doctoral candidate in Education, University of Caldas. Unidad Central del Valle del Cauca - UCEVA, Tuluá, Colombia. Email: lpenaranda@uceva.edu.co

*** B.A. in Foreign Languages with an emphasis in English, master's student in Bilingualism and Education. Colegio Bilingüe Hispanoamericano, Tuluá, Colombia. Email: ana.corrales01@uceva.edu.co

**** B.A. in Foreign Languages with an emphasis in English, master's student in Bilingualism and Education. Email: daniel.marquez01@uceva.edu.co

Abstract

Objective: This research article, derived from a doctoral thesis, aims to analyze the impact of interculturality on the recognition of Colombian indigenous cultures among Basic Education students. **Methodology:** The study employs an action research approach within a qualitative and descriptive framework. The population consisted of fourth-grade students at a bilingual basic education school. The methodology involved a series of interventions using class planners, field diaries, and institutional guidelines. **Results:** The diagnostic test results indicated a lack of awareness about Colombian ancestral cultures. The implementation of the classes sparked the students' interest in learning more about indigenous cultures and fostered respect for ethnic groups previously unrecognized by the students. **Conclusions:** The findings revealed that students lacked sufficient knowledge to recognize the various indigenous groups in the region. This is significant from an intercultural perspective, as understanding and recognizing indigenous cultures is crucial for identity formation.

Keywords: Amerindian cultures; intercultural education; identity; language preservation (obtained from the UNESCO thesaurus).

Resumen

Objetivo: el presente artículo se deriva de una tesis doctoral, y tiene como objetivo analizar la incidencia de la interculturalidad hacia el reconocimiento de las culturas indígenas colombianas en estudiantes de educación básica. **Metodología:** se lleva a cabo un acercamiento a la interculturalidad por medio de la investigación acción, de tipo cualitativo y de alcance descriptivo, con una población de estudiantes de grado cuarto de un colegio bilingüe de educación básica. En la investigación se relacionan una serie de intervenciones, cuyos instrumentos fueron planeadores de clase, diarios de campos y lineamientos institucionales. **Resultados:** los resultados arrojados en la prueba diagnóstica reflejan un desconocimiento sobre la existencia de culturas ancestrales colombianas. La orientación de las clases generó interés en los estudiantes por conocer más sobre la cultura indígena, así como por el respeto por aquellos grupos étnicos que los estudiantes no habían podido reconocer. **Conclusiones:** Se pudo observar que los estudiantes no contaban con conocimiento suficiente para reconocer a los diferentes grupos indígenas de la región, conocimiento que es importante y necesario desde el marco intercultural para la formación de la identidad.

Palabras clave: Cultura amerindia; educación intercultural; identidad; preservación de las lenguas (obtenidos del tesoro de la UNESCO).

Resumo

Objetivo: este artigo de pesquisa, derivado de uma tese de doutorado, tem como objetivo analisar o impacto da interculturalidade no reconhecimento das culturas indígenas colombianas entre os alunos da Educação Básica. **Metodologia:** o estudo emprega uma abordagem de pesquisa-ação dentro de uma estrutura qualitativa e descritiva. A população foi composta por alunos da quarta série de uma escola de educação básica bilíngue. A metodologia envolveu uma série de intervenções usando planejadores de aula, diários de campo e diretrizes institucionais. **Resultados:** os resultados do teste diagnóstico indicaram uma falta de conscientização sobre as culturas ancestrais colombianas. A implementação das aulas despertou o interesse dos alunos em aprender mais sobre as culturas indígenas e promoveu o respeito por grupos étnicos que antes não eram reconhecidos pelos alunos. **Conclusões:** os resultados revelaram que os alunos não tinham conhecimento suficiente para reconhecer os vários grupos indígenas da região. Isso é significativo em uma perspectiva intercultural, pois a compreensão e o reconhecimento das culturas indígenas são fundamentais para a formação da identidade.

Palavras chaves: Culturas ameríndias; educação intercultural; identidade; preservação do idioma (obtido do thesaurus da UNESCO).

Introduction

Since education is the means to guide knowledge, it is important that interculturality is supported by the recognition of English as a foreign language. Through teaching this language, educators can transcend mere grammatical instruction, providing opportunities to impart deeper cultural knowledge. As globalization gains importance, interculturality also becomes crucial, facilitating effective and harmonious coexistence and collaboration in an increasingly diverse society. Therefore, education has started to emphasize the significant importance of fostering intercultural awareness.

Interculturality involves understanding and valuing the cultural diversity present in the world and within communities. This study enables the learning of different cultures, ways of life, and beliefs, thereby strengthening awareness both as individuals and as a society. Another objective is to help build an inclusive society where, through interculturality, people can embrace their own roots and understand the differences in their environment, overcoming stereotypes and cultural prejudices.

The researchers aim to reinforce the teaching of culture in Colombia. One of the fundamental challenges that educational institutions face in the 21st century is promoting cultural education. To achieve this objective, particular emphasis must be placed on the promotion of intercultural teaching as a central element to foster democratic and inclusive citizenship. In this sense, higher education is committed to promoting well-being and social progress, adapting to the continuous changes in contemporary reality. This involves the implementation of educational practices based on values such as solidarity, tolerance, and understanding of different cultures, with the aim of promoting genuine intercultural dialogue (Alcalá et al., 2020).

Teaching cultures is important for students, as it enables them to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to appreciate and respect the cultural diversity in the world. Cultural education helps students understand the complexity of different societies and appreciate the richness of various ethnic groups. This fosters the development of intercultural competences and effective communication with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. Additionally, it guides students toward a deeper understanding of history and cultural heritage. Through learning about the beliefs, traditions, customs, and values of different cultures, students can better understand the perspectives and viewpoints of others.

Cultural education is crucial for the development of an inclusive society, as it enables students to overcome cultural stereotypes and barriers that often hinder effective communication and collaboration between people from diverse

backgrounds. Through cultural education, students learn to value individuals for who they are rather than judging them by their backgrounds, contributing to a more equitable and respectful society.

This paper explores the impact of interculturality on the recognition of Colombian indigenous cultures among fourth-grade students in a bilingual school. The study observed students' perceptions of indigenous cultures in their locality through classroom activities, comparing these perceptions with information about indigenous cultures from other countries.

Colombia, one of the largest countries in South America, boasts a privileged geographical location with thousands of kilometers of coastline along both the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. Its tropical climate and diverse flora and fauna have attracted various social groups over centuries, resulting in significant cultural richness and historical hybridization. This cultural wealth is reflected in hundreds of customs and traditions.

Colombia is a multiethnic country where diverse cultures coexist. Interculturality involves the coexistence of indigenous worldviews within an environment of interaction between different cultures. It emphasizes the recognition of cultures beyond one's own, existing within the same territory. Interculturality seeks to challenge the dominant history of one culture over others, aiming to empower traditionally excluded identities. This approach fosters respect and legitimacy among all societal groups in daily life (Walsh, 1998).

One objective of interculturality is to foster improved relations between social groups of diverse cultures, cultivating citizens who can recognize and respect cultural differences. This approach aims to promote collaboration in creating a fairer, more equitable, and pluralistic society that benefits everyone. It acknowledges that denying or making other cultures invisible is no longer tenable.

Building on these concepts, Espinoza et al. (2019) assert that interculturality involves fostering relationships between different cultures based on principles of respect and equality. It strives for equal rights and opportunities for all cultural groups involved, ensuring their equal participation without dominance by any single group over another.

There has always been ongoing contact and interaction between cultures, illustrating the "relational" aspect of interculturality. The functional perspective of interculturality is explained by Quintriqueo et al. (2020) when they claim that functional interculturality becomes rhetoric, without implications in practice itself, being relegated to the official discourse since the public politics. Therefore, it does not generate changes in society and in hegemonic structure of power, resulting in the social structure remains unchanged and that knowledge and knowledge continue to prevail as a way of relating from western knowledge. In this regard, Walsh (2005a) describes interculturality as aiming "to develop an

equitable interrelationship between peoples, persons, knowledge and culturally different practices" (p. 45).

This research aims to assess the impact of interculturality on the recognition of Colombian indigenous cultures among basic education students. Its objective is to identify effective pedagogical methodologies that can stimulate students' awareness and encourage them to understand, recognize, and respect the cultures of indigenous groups within their community. Increased knowledge of diverse cultures in their surroundings can foster greater understanding, respect, and tolerance among students, contributing to improved societal coexistence.

Ethnic groups are communities of people who share a culture, traditions, language and other aspects of their collective identity. There are many types of ethnic groups around the world, each with its own characteristics and peculiarities.

One of the main characteristics of ethnic groups is their cultural diversity as each has its own unique cultural traditions and practices, often including its own language, religion, clothing, music and art. This cultural diversity can be a source of richness and creativity, but it can also be a source of conflict and tension. The importance of ethnic groups lies in their contribution to cultural diversity and the preservation of human cultural heritage.

Ethnic groups also play an important role in building people's identity and self-esteem. By identifying with a particular group, people can feel part of a larger community and have a sense of belonging that can be critical to their emotional and psychological well-being. Those groups often face inequalities and barriers in access to education, employment and other social resources, and may be subject to discrimination and cultural stereotyping. However, many of them have fought for their rights and promoted equality and social justice.

Before the arrival of the Spaniards in Colombian territory, the local population encompassed a diverse array of cultures, each with their own symbols, traditions, and extensive knowledge and wisdom. Sadly, much of this cultural richness was disregarded, scorned, and largely obliterated by the conquistadors driven primarily by aspirations of wealth and dominion, with little regard for cultures other than their own.

The arrival of the Spaniards precipitated significant environmental changes in the Americas through the introduction of new plants and animals brought from Europe, as well as the influx of new people from Europe and Africa, each bringing their own cultural practices and traditions that ultimately altered the existing ecosystems, social structures, and cultural landscapes of the region. These changes undoubtedly had a profound impact on the identity, sense of belonging, and social cohesion of the indigenous populations. According to Dunbar (2023), the great civilizations of the Western Hemisphere were systematically dismantled,

halting the gradual progress of humanity and setting a course characterized by greed and destruction.

During the colonial period, there was a significant decline in the indigenous population, marked by both physical and cultural extinction. This decline resulted from several factors: the arduous labor imposed on them as porters or miners, exposure to diseases brought by the conquerors such as smallpox, and efforts to "civilize" them by imposing the culture of the invaders, which undermined their dignity and restricted their ability to express their own thoughts.

According to the DANE (2019) population census, the number of indigenous groups has shown an increase compared to the 2005 census. This growth is attributed to indigenous communities migrating and establishing themselves in border areas. This suggests that the living conditions in their original territories may not have been conducive, prompting them to seek better conditions in rural areas elsewhere.

It should be noted that the recognition of Colombia's ethnic diversity and the participation of indigenous communities in public and political life were not formalized until the enactment of the Political Constitution of Colombia in 1991. This constitutional milestone granted indigenous communities the right to participate in elected office, allowing indigenous congressmen to introduce a project to the House of Representatives of the Congress of the Republic in 2003. This project aimed to empower indigenous groups to develop plans for their territories and establish land use plans in accordance with their own cultural values.

Despite these efforts to protect indigenous rights, the implementation of prior consultation, a fundamental principle in international law aimed at ensuring the active involvement of indigenous and tribal peoples in decisions that affect them, remains a contentious issue regarding its effectiveness (Figuera & Ortiz, 2019).

Indigenous peoples constitute one of the most marginalized groups, a consequence of evolutionary and historical social processes dating back 500 years. During this period, discriminatory practices, including the dispossession of their territories, persist to this day, often exacerbated by violent activities within the country, which disrupt their way of life and well-being. Recognizing and respecting the ancestral customs and cultures of indigenous peoples is crucial for understanding their origins and fostering the consolidation of their cultural identity.

Quijano (2012) argues that since the colonial era, the imposition of Eurocentric modernity has entrenched a dualistic framework of reason versus nature, replacing ethnic and racial differences in a hierarchical manner. This has perpetuated the exploitation and plunder of indigenous lands, undermining

not only the land itself but also the integrity of indigenous peoples and their knowledge systems.

The education of indigenous communities focuses its actions on culture, identity, autonomy, collective memory and elements that allow you to adapt to new ways of life and community and social development from the project's own educational and life plans (Giraldo & Taborda, 2020). Therefore, it is necessary to continue promoting adequate spaces so that indigenous groups can live in harmony with their ancestral cosmogony, living according to their customs and traditions. This approach not only supports their human development but also provides opportunities for coexistence with other cultures.

To avoid relegating indigenous cultures to mere historical footnotes and instead recognize and integrate them into daily life, Santos (2017) argues for moving towards an "ecology of knowledge". This approach acknowledges that reality encompasses diverse epistemological, cultural, spatial, and temporal dimensions. Encouraging this diversity, Santos suggests, means "enlarging the world and enlarging the present".

It is worth mentioning that previous research, such as Stavenhagen's (2010) work entitled "Indigenous Identities in Latin America," describes the evolving identities of indigenous peoples in response to time and circumstances. Stavenhagen also addresses the concept of indigenous communities, which is closely linked to the daily lives of these peoples and their aspiration to safeguard their self-determination. This effort to preserve their identity serves as an alternative within interculturality against the economic modernism that threatens indigenous culture and leads to their social and economic marginalization.

Another relevant document is Rojas' (2020) work, «El sistema educativo indígena propio en la legislación colombiana-SEIPEI». This document aims to address the historical and contextual problems faced by indigenous education in Colombia. It begins by describing the perceived identity of indigenous peoples according to their language and culture to better understand the application of their educational rights.

Rojas also highlights the necessity of having centralized communication that effectively collects and addresses the concerns of indigenous communities. This communication should be conducted in an atmosphere of respect and tolerance to help indigenous peoples regain confidence in the government. These backgrounds reveal a significant gap between policies (text) and reality. Historically, indigenous people have faced numerous challenges regarding identity and language. In some contexts, intercultural policies may favor certain dominant cultures to the detriment of others, perpetuating inequalities and marginalization. Often, the dominant culture is privileged in areas such as education, legislation, and access to resources, while other cultures are relegated or ignored.

Barabas (2014) presented a study called “Multiculturalism, Cultural Pluralism, and Interculturality in the Context of Latin America”. In this study, the author examines interculturality within the social sciences, referring to the interactions between different cultures and the ideology of egalitarian relationships among them. This framework is constructed within the broader contexts of globalization and human rights policies.

There is also an article by Monje (2015) «El plan de vida de los pueblos indígenas de Colombia, una construcción de etnoecodesarrollo», in which the author proposes methodological alternatives on how indigenous people can build life plans that are closer to their social reality to achieve the cohesion of these indigenous communities in the municipalities that host these collectives, from the approaches of agroecology. This study mentions the concept of eco-development, according to Sachs (1981) this process seeks to define the coevolution between the peasantry, its way of life and nature, the relationship with its social and economic environment, but under the deep look of a functional and balanced knowledge of the ecosystems it intervenes. The author proposes to give fulfillment to a real request so that the life plans are far beyond the simple conception, adjusted to the indigenous reality and not of a merely theoretical construction.

Although geographical location and fieldwork can facilitate coexistence and acculturation between cultures, it is crucial that this process occurs in a respectful and equitable manner. This involves promoting intercultural dialogue, mutual respect, and appreciation of cultural diversity. Furthermore, it is essential to ensure that all people have equal rights and opportunities, regardless of their cultural background. In short, these documents emphasize the importance of recognizing land as a vital component of life. Social science is a field in which students can learn about and appreciate the diversity of the community.

The vicissitudes faced by indigenous peoples as they encountered other cultures gave rise to what is currently known as interculturality, the interaction of different cultures, including native indigenous, Creole indigenous, and Afro-descendant communities within Colombian territory. However, due to the historical disdain and minority status of the indigenous population, there is often a noticeable lack of interest among students in learning about and recognizing indigenous cultures, despite their daily coexistence with these communities.

Disappointment arises among teachers when basic education students are unable to identify indigenous groups in their municipality despite daily interactions. For example, students often fail to recognize indigenous mothers in distinctive attire with their children in public spaces or selling their handicrafts. Teachers find it perplexing that people fail to recognize the proximity and presence of indigenous groups in their communities.

The culture of indigenous groups is often not valued. It would be worth asking students: What aspects of indigenous culture make you feel proud or embarrassed, considering that these ancestral cultures are part of your past? Additionally, why do these aspects generate pride or shame? These answers would undoubtedly be interesting and insightful.

Therefore, the main purpose is to analyze the incidence of interculturality on indigenous culture in fourth-grade basic education. Promoting interculturality among students is essential for developing good citizens who are tolerant, participative, and collaborative members of society. It is important to foster students' interest in acquiring knowledge about indigenous cultures, including their origins, to help them recognize the diversity of native groups. Unfortunately, it is evident that there is a lack of sufficient knowledge about the indigenous cultures of the region.

The general objective of this study is to analyze interculturality with respect to the recognition of Colombian indigenous cultures among basic education students. The specific objectives are: first, to assess the students' level of knowledge about indigenous cultures, including the largest Colombian indigenous groups, their native languages, and their main locations within the national territory; second, to design and implement intercultural pedagogical practices aimed at enhancing the recognition of Colombian indigenous cultures; and third, to evaluate the degree of knowledge gained in this area. Consequently, the study aims to reinforce students' identities through interculturality, focusing on knowledge, competencies, behavior, and values.

Numerous native indigenous groups are present throughout the national territory, and people should take pride in these groups as they are integral to their ancestral roots. These indigenous peoples and their cultures existed in this territory long before the arrival of the Spaniards. Therefore, there is a pressing need to preserve their culture, language, and identity.

Considering that all cultures are dynamic and evolve through the incorporation of elements from other cultures, it is important within communities to recognize the elements that have been adopted. From this perspective, a pedagogical approach that promotes the analysis and development of decolonial pedagogical proposals is essential. Such proposals aim to challenge and dismantle material, symbolic, and cultural chains, working towards societies characterized by justice, equity, and dignity (Walsh, 2013).

Teachers have a crucial role in helping students recognize the importance of valuing, understanding, and acknowledging indigenous cultures. They are central figures both in the classroom and the community as agents of interculturality. Consequently, teachers need to continually build and refine their knowledge, behaviors, competencies, values, and attitudes concerning cultural diversity. This

development is essential both as individuals with their own backgrounds and cultural experiences and as educators (Walsh, 2005b).

Recognizing the presence of other cultures is beneficial as it allows individuals to contextualize their own existence and appreciate human diversity across different environments. Therefore, engaging with other ways of thinking and understanding—through stories from diverse individuals or literature addressing diversity—are effective approaches for fostering intercultural awareness. According to Papini et al. (2019), there is a belief that a social pact among social groups can benefit humanity by promoting development and democracy, as well as introducing innovations at cultural and institutional levels.

Method

In this research, action research has been adopted as the primary method. Action research, described by Clark et al. (2020) as "learning by doing", helps teachers or researchers improve educational practices by enhancing the quality of their decisions and actions, which ultimately boosts student engagement, teaching, and learning, thereby improving educational processes. This method involves identifying a problem, taking action to address it, evaluating the results, and, if necessary, making further adjustments.

In this study, a series of interventions were conducted with fourth-grade students at a bilingual school. These interventions consisted of two-hour sessions held over a period of ten weeks, focusing on activities related to interculturality, knowledge, competencies, behavior, and values. The objective was to facilitate the recognition of Colombian indigenous cultures among the students.

Following the curriculum of the institution, students are expected to explore the linguistic families of Colombia, including the Chibchan, Caribbean, and Arawak families, and to discuss their political, social, religious, and economic organizations. Additionally, fourth-grade students are at a developmental stage where they can engage meaningfully with aspects of indigenous culture.

The interventions began by showing students images about these indigenous tribes. Without any prejudice involved, the teacher encouraged students to express their thoughts about the people depicted in the images. This elicited responses such as, "Professor, they are poor people, people from other countries", "What strange clothes!" and "Why do they use those accessories?", which highlighted the students' limited understanding of their own native roots.

In the same way, teacher allowed them to socialize it in order to catch the information that they had in the moment regarding these cultures. As a second step, the teacher played native music from the indigenous tribes. Students recognized some of the music but identified others as originating from countries such as Peru or Ecuador. This feedback revealed that the students lacked concrete information about the linguistic families of their own country.

The teacher guided the students in recognizing indigenous tribes, their locations, histories, and the reasons they have become a minority in the country. The teacher posed questions such as, "Why don't indigenous people study?" "Why do the natives speak another language?" and "Why do most of them live in poverty?" Then, through exploring the history of these tribes, the teacher facilitated an understanding of the societal differences between mainstream society and indigenous groups. The goal was to foster empathy towards these minorities, highlighting their significant role in the country's history. This approach aimed to change students' perspectives by providing accurate information about indigenous history and emphasizing the importance of preserving their cultural roots.

The project adopted a descriptive scope, which facilitated the characterization of various aspects such as age range, group size, practices, and recognition. According to Alban et al. (2020), descriptive research aims to describe fundamental characteristics of similar groups or phenomena using systematic criteria, revealing their structure and behavior. It provides systematic and comparable information with other sources and helps to illuminate the angles or dimensions of an event, scene, setting, or situation.

In this study, it was essential to have a sufficient repertoire of prior knowledge about interculturality and indigenous peoples. Therefore, the objective was to enhance the recognition of indigenous cultures among the target population. The descriptive scope was developed through practicing speaking, listening, reading, and writing with simple and short phrases that describe physical and cultural characteristics.

In this research, qualitative methodology has proven valuable for describing, understanding, and transforming contextual and ideographic issues to generate substantive theories. Such issues could not have been effectively addressed through abstractionist and generalizing approaches (Pearse, 2021). Qualitative research often relies on non-statistical data collection methods, such as description and observation, which were utilized in this project.

Questions and thoughts frequently arise as part of the practice, with the research process being flexible and dynamic, moving between experiences and their interpretation, and between responses and theory development. In the context of this study, qualitative research within the cultural environment of

indigenous communities in Colombia provides an opportunity to immerse in the richness and uniqueness of their ways of life. This approach allows for the exploration of deep-rooted values and customs, sacred beliefs, and traditions passed down through generations. These elements are crucial for gaining a comprehensive understanding of their cultural identity and the way these traditions have shaped their history over time.

As Fernández et al. (2020) note, the data collected allow for sharing the country's educational situation with the international community and offer other researchers the opportunity to reflect on similar findings. Researchers employ a specific research design, beginning their projects with open questions. This method also emphasizes viewing the environment and people from a holistic perspective; individuals, systems, or groups are not reduced to their differences but are seen as a whole. Learning from past and present circumstances was particularly beneficial in conducting the interventions.

For the research team, every opinion was valued, and the focus was not on seeking truth or morality but on gaining a deeper understanding of others' feelings. All individuals were regarded as equals, with the understanding that morality is personal. To study people effectively, it is essential to understand them and listen to how they feel about their everyday problems in society or organizations. This approach facilitates learning about concepts such as beauty, pain, faith, suffering, sadness, and love.

The research aimed to bridge the gap between data and people's actual statements and behaviors. By observing individuals in their daily lives and listening to their thoughts, the researcher gained first-hand knowledge of the community's lives, unfiltered by theories, operational definitions, and measurement standards.

In this project, the population consisted of 55 fourth-grade elementary school students, divided into three groups: 4a (9 girls, 9 boys), 4b (10 girls, 7 boys), and 4c (10 girls, 10 boys). The students were between 9 and 10 years of age.

Regarding techniques, observation is utilized as it allows for the direct and objective collection of data. According to Arias (2020), observation is characterized by the researcher observing the phenomenon or object of study in its natural state. The researcher remains physically separated from the study population, allowing them to carry out their usual activities.

The importance of observation in this research lies in its ability to provide detailed and contextualized data on human behavior, social interactions, natural processes, and other phenomena of interest. By directly observing people in their real environment, researchers can capture aspects that might be missed by other data collection methods, such as questionnaires or interviews. Furthermore, observation offers greater realism, as participants engage naturally in their

activities without being influenced by the presence of the researcher or by questions. This approach facilitates a better understanding of the true nature of indigenous people and helps minimize reporting errors caused by prejudices.

In this project, a diagnostic test was conducted to assess the students' prior knowledge of indigenous cultures. A series of questions were posed, which the students were required to answer based on their experiences within the Colombian context.

It is considered that observation during the various interventions allowed researchers to gather qualitative data that could be analyzed, such as expressions of astonishment at new information, discontent, or empathy regarding the situation.

Field journals play a crucial role in this method, as they allow researchers to systematically and reflectively record their experiences, observations, and reflections throughout the research process. These journals are invaluable for capturing contextual details, students' reflections, and emotions that cannot be captured solely through other data collection techniques. According to Luna (2022), field journals are both a personal and consultative instrument in their preparation, valuable for individual and team work, and serve as a source of information for professionals working on the same issue, providing continuity and supervision for a project. These records can include descriptions of situations, interactions, non-verbal language, unexpected events, or any other relevant details that contribute to understanding the investigated phenomenon. Additionally, researchers can document thoughts, questions, ideas, and changes in behavior related to interculturality and indigenous people. These documents or data provide a view of the decisions made and the problems encountered, increasing the credibility and integrity of the study.

Considering that a series of interventions were carried out with the population, the researchers needed to plan prior to the meetings to guide the activities and orientations. The importance of the lesson plan lies in the fact that objectives were established beforehand, referencing sociolinguistic competences as outlined in *Guide 22: Basic Standards of Competences in Foreign Languages: English* proposed by the Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN) (2006) and the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). This preparation facilitated the effective execution of the interventions.

Formative assessment is an important pedagogical tool that allows teachers to collect real-time information on learning progress and understanding. This includes ongoing informal assessments that occur throughout the learning process and provide valuable feedback to both teachers and students. According to Irons and Elkington (2021), formative assessment and formative feedback are powerful and potentially constructive learning tools for students and staff.

Any task that generates feedback or feedforward about students' learning achievements can be considered formative assessment. Furthermore, Heritage (2021) emphasizes that effective formative assessment provides information about students' learning in relation to short-term goals. The feedback loop operates as a continuous process during learning to ensure that all students' learning progresses effectively. These insights help teachers design meaningful assessments and provide timely feedback to improve student learning. By utilizing formative assessment methods, teachers and students engage in a process focused not on finding right or wrong answers, but on understanding how students think and determining the steps needed to advance their learning from its current status (Heritage, 2021). Adopting a cross-cultural approach, this proposal builds on and enhances the contribution of Mora (2019), who advocates for an evaluation model of intercultural learning at school. This approach aims to strengthen pedagogical, evaluation, and self-assessment skills of teachers within schools, enabling them to review and refine their evaluation methods according to their specific context. It involves leveraging both the teacher's pedagogical knowledge and the students' insights.

To achieve the third objective—evaluating the degree of students' knowledge regarding Colombian and other cultures—the teacher utilized music and photography as resources. These tools provided students with meaningful opportunities to connect with their cultural heritage, strengthen their indigenous identity, and deepen their understanding of the traditions and values of their ancestral communities.

The intercultural evaluation model of learning objectives proposed by Mora (2019) was adopted for this work, as it aims to evaluate learning objectives through processes of continuous regulation developed by teachers and students in formative assessment. This model establishes a dialogue of knowledge that appreciates the diversity of cultures among participants as a means of advancing educational improvement. Consequently, this model served as a reference for the development of a tailored evaluation framework to assess the competencies required for this research.

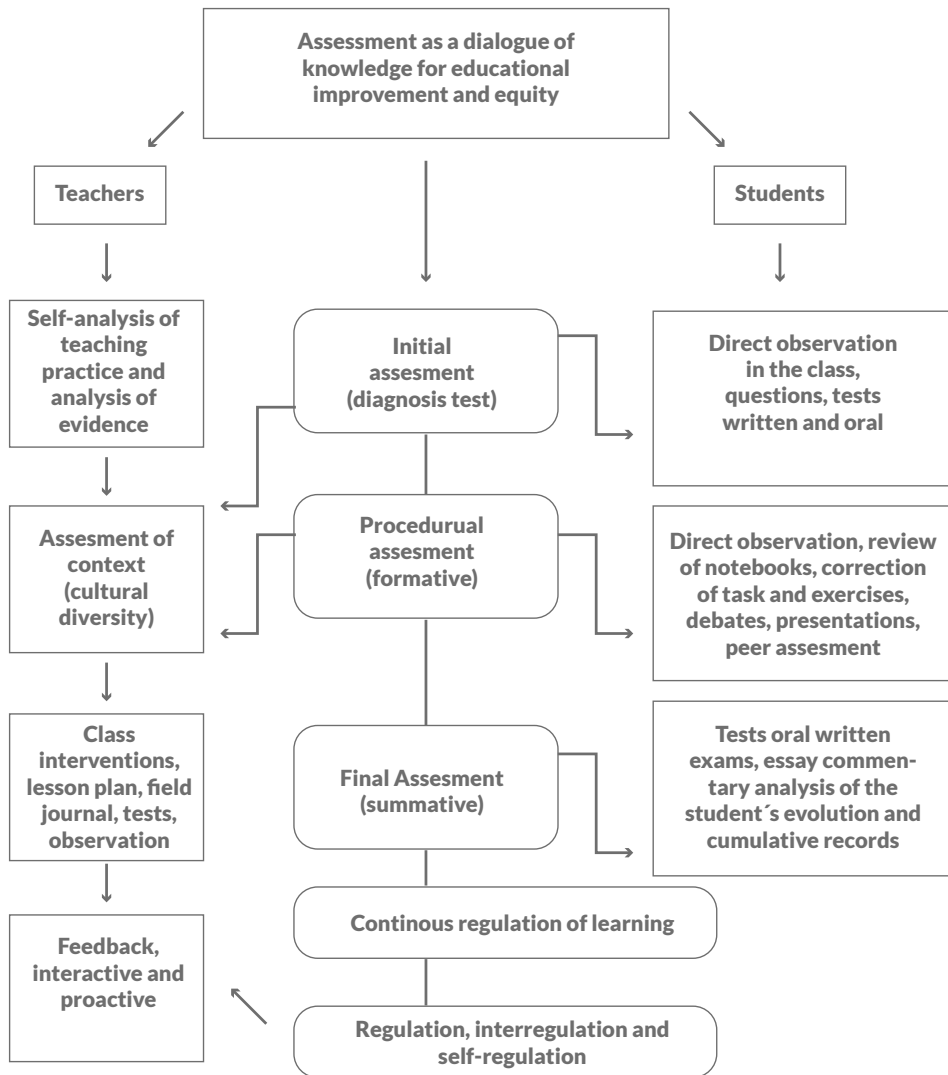


Figure 1. Intercultural Assessment Model of Learning Objectives in School.

Source: Mora (2019).

Results

For the first objective, which is to diagnose the degree of knowledge that students have about indigenous cultures, including the major Colombian indigenous groups, their native languages, and their main locations within the national territory, the information gap regarding students' cultural roots became evident. Diagnostic activities revealed that the students lacked knowledge about the existence and culture of indigenous peoples. However, there was significant enthusiasm and curiosity among the students to learn more about aspects of indigenous life. This eagerness provided valuable insights and generated meaningful questions, guiding the development of subsequent interventions.

An aura of respect was observed in the classroom for the history of indigenous culture, fostering empathy and consideration for the way these minorities live. Students related their experiences to the new information; when they were oriented to properly recognize these cultures, many realized they had already encountered them. There was a willingness and enthusiasm to discuss culture, as the fourth-grade students expressed great admiration for the history and customs of these indigenous cultures.

The discussion and its relation to the objectives revealed that through different practices, students were initially unable to recognize or identify the indigenous groups presented to them in the images. This was evident from questions and exclamations such as, "Teacher, they are poor people, people belonging to other countries", "What strange clothes!" and "Why do they wear those accessories?" This information indicated a lack of knowledge among students about the different indigenous groups that inhabit the region. Therefore, it cannot be considered that they were able to identify cultural elements such as proper names and places in the images presented to them for this purpose. Due to these findings, it can be concluded that there is a lack of intercultural competence among the students, which is defined as the ability to understand people and their attitudes from other cultures.

Being interculturally competent entails embodying attitudes of respect, curiosity, and openness, which serve as the basis for developing essential knowledge areas such as cultural self-awareness, culture-specific knowledge, and understanding other worldviews, along with skills like observation and active listening (Rawal & Deardorff, 2021). These attitudes, knowledge, and skills collectively contribute to internal outcomes in an interculturally competent individual, fostering qualities such as flexibility, adaptability, and empathy. Zapata (2023) also notes that the current scenario of interculturality in Colombia presents significant challenges but also advances and opportunities for promoting cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. Discrimination and racism remain serious problems

in the country, and many ethnic and cultural groups face structural barriers in accessing opportunities and resources. Therefore, the goal of the investigation is to develop intercultural competence and achieve the recognition of Colombian indigenous cultures in basic education students.

Even though students were initially unaware of the indigenous groups in the region, during the activity of representing and characterizing the native people in class, it was possible to observe a curiosity to know important aspects of the life of the indigenous groups, producing even astonishment and interest among the students. They followed attentively what the teacher said and what their classmates expressed during this activity. The students who carried out the representation described the culture of the most important indigenous groups with simple and short phrases, considering their physical characteristics as well as their clothing.

Developing intercultural competence must be considered as the result of an experiential process that consists of facing what is different in the areas of language and culture (Caraballo et al., 2019). Intercultural competences are essential in the knowledge society, as they facilitate understanding of the demands and challenges of current sociocultural realities, while also providing the opportunity to explore various cultures in depth. For students to begin to understand the culture of others, they need knowledge about the target culture, awareness to identify its characteristics and differences between the target culture and one's own, and a willingness to find, analyze, synthesize, and generalize cultural characteristics and differences. Furthermore, it is important to take into account the affective objectives in teaching culture: interest, curiosity, and empathy to know, understand, and interact appropriately with other people's cultures (Ruzieva, 2021).

Ethnic groups have shown motivation to explore, recover, and interpret the traditional aspects of their local identity, which favors the understanding and establishment of a more equitable relationship between the indigenous population as hosts and their visitors. This makes it possible to demonstrate responsibility toward ourselves and others, as well as fostering understanding between cultures, empathy, and peace, as Medina et al. (2019) mention.

Regarding the second objective, the design of the activities allowed us to recognize how the policies in Colombia include cultural aspects, particularly the recognition of Colombian culture, with reference to ethnic groups, languages, and linguistic families. Additionally, the pedagogical practices required the development of students' thinking skills such as listening, reading, writing, speaking, and monologue.

Once the interventions, which introduced students to the main indigenous cultures, were completed and assessments were conducted to evaluate their degree

of knowledge, the students demonstrated respect in the classroom for indigenous minorities in relation to their previous experiences. This process allowed them to address gaps in their understanding of pre-Hispanic inhabitants of the Colombian territory. The enthusiasm displayed by the students to learn more about their ancestors facilitated their recognition of their past and enhanced their understanding of their present. Subsequently, they were able to identify cultural elements such as proper names and places. Additionally, they wrote short stories based on their imagination, describing themselves and noting differences with the newly learned cultures. When individuals are immersed in their own culture, many aspects seem evident, as they may not be aware of their own culture until they encounter and experience others. The development of visual and multimedia activities using ICT (Information and Communication Technology) and the incorporation of cultural elements were pedagogical practices that promoted behavior patterns, values, customs, and active participation among the students.

Limón and Pérez (2019) point out that without a respectful translation of the life world of the other, there is no possibility of achieving the desired understanding between life worlds, and each person interprets cultural otherness through their own criteria, symbolically and materially reproducing their own society. This statement refers to the challenge of bridging cultural gaps, specifically concerning how individuals perceive and relate to time. It highlights the difficulty in understanding and translating these differences, particularly when one person experiences time in an intersubjective manner while another does not. As Peña (2020) asserts, language must be understood as a powerful medium capable of constructing reality through the representations of the world.

Conclusions

As a result of this project, it was observed that the fourth-grade students lacked knowledge about recognizing the various indigenous groups in the region. This lack of awareness is significant from an intercultural perspective, as understanding cultural identities is crucial for working with different groups within an environment of tolerance and mutual recognition. The interrelation between cultures must be conducted with due respect and equality for each culture involved, thereby avoiding segregation and injustice. This is particularly relevant considering the historical victimization of indigenous groups, which has persisted for over five hundred years.

It was observed that the lack of knowledge among students about the indigenous cultures was not due to a lack of interest but rather because these cultures had gone unnoticed. Students lived alongside indigenous groups but did so without engaging deeply with their cultures, leading to a degree of ignorance. Once students became aware that their own country is shared with social groups of diverse languages, histories, and customs—groups that may appear different but are essentially the same human beings with different characteristics—they began to understand and appreciate this diversity.

It can be concluded that Colombian policies are indeed advantageous as they recognize the country's own culture, with history serving as a means for people to stay connected to their cultural heritage. The educational curriculum aims to foster dignity, justice, and equity. Meanwhile, pedagogical approaches that include the human element enable individuals to appreciate and enjoy diversity.

The results obtained provide insight into the current level of students' awareness regarding their cultural reality. The fact that these students were initially unaware of the existence of indigenous groups in the region highlights the need to promote knowledge acquisition that fosters tolerance and collaboration with individuals from different cultures. This is only the first step on a path that still needs to be covered. According to the Common European Framework, which emphasizes the three "Cs" of intercultural competence—cultural awareness, curiosity, and getting close with other cultures—students must be encouraged to understand and appreciate the presence of diverse cultures. This approach aims to achieve greater harmony and respect in a multicultural world.

In light of these findings, students' knowledge of the Arawak, Caribbean, and Chibcha cultures, as well as their intercultural context, has increased. They were able to appreciate their roots, geography, economy, language, and the contexts in which their ancestors lived. Teaching and learning about these cultures has underscored the importance of communication in society, the preservation of the earth, and the family as a central aspect of life.

It is sufficient for the teacher to promote connections between the students' own culture and that of indigenous peoples, encouraging interest in exploring the new horizons these cultures offer within their own country. Colombia is a diverse nation, providing students with numerous opportunities to explore. By bringing indigenous cultures closer to their own, students can better recognize and connect with other cultures while fostering a framework of equality, inclusion, tolerance, and respect.

References

- Alban, G., Arguello, A. y Molina, N. (2020). Metodologías de investigación educativa (descriptivas, experimentales, participativas, y de investigación-acción). *Recimundo*, 4(3), 163-173. <https://recimundo.com/index.php/es/article/view/860>
- Alcalá, M., Villalba, S. y Leiva, J. (2020). Metodologías activas e innovadoras en la promoción de competencias interculturales e inclusivas en el escenario universitario. *European Scientific Journal, ESJ*, 16(41), 6-23. <https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2020.v16n41p6>
- Arias, J. (2020). *Técnicas e instrumentos de investigación científica*. Enfoques consulting EIRL.
- Barabas, A. (2014). Multiculturalismo, pluralismo cultural e interculturalidad en el contexto de América Latina: la presencia de los pueblos originarios. *Configurações. Revista Ciências Sociais*, (14), 11-24. <https://journals.openedition.org/configuracoes/2219#quotation>
- Caraballo, M., Puente, C. y Acosta, Y. (2019). Marco conceptual para desarrollar la competencia intercultural en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del inglés. *Varona*, (68), 1-8. <https://www.redalyc.org/journal/3606/360671526002/360671526002.pdf>
- Clark, J., Porath, S., Thiele, J., & Jobe, M. (2020). *Action Research*. NPP eBooks. <https://newprairiepress.org/ebooks/34/>
- Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística (DANE), (2019). *Población Indígena de Colombia, resultados del censo nacional de población y vivienda 2018*. <https://www.dane.gov.co/files/investigaciones/boletines/grupos-etnicos/presentacion-grupos-etnicos-2019.pdf>
- Dunbar, R. (2023). *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*. Beacon Press.
- Espinoza, E., Castellano, J., & Herrera, L. (2019). The intercultural dimension in the teaching formation in Ecuador. *Psychology, Society, & Education*, 41(18), 1-6. <https://www.revistaespacios.com/a20v41n18/a20v41n18p26.pdf>

- Fernández, M., Alcaraz, N., Pérez, L., & Postigo, Y. (2020). Is Qualitative Research in Education Being Lost in Spain? Analysis and Reflections on the Problems Arising from Generating Knowledge Hegemonically. *TQR*, 25(6), 1555-1578. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2020.4374>
- Figuera, S. y Ortiz, M. (2019). El derecho a la consulta previa a los pueblos indígenas en el Sistema Interamericano de Derechos Humanos. Casos de estudio: Ecuador y Colombia. *Civilizar. Ciencias Sociales y Humanas*, 19(36), 59-76. <https://doi.org/10.22518/usergioa/jour/ccsh/2019.1/a04>
- Giraldo, J. y Taborda, W. (2020). Educación propia como rescate de la autonomía y la identidad cultural. *Praxis*, 16(2), 179-186. <http://dx.doi.org/10.21676/23897856.3657>
- Heritage, M. (2021). *Formative assessment: Making it happen in the classroom*. Corwin Press.
- Irons, A., & Elkington, S. (2021). *Enhancing Learning Through Formative Assessment and Feedback*. Routledge.
- Limón, F. y Pérez, D. (2019). Traducción dialógica decolonial. Experiencia con el pueblo maya-chuj. *Meta*, 64(1), 57-77. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1065328ar>
- Luna, G., Nava, A., & Martínez, D. (2022). El diario de campo como herramienta formativa durante el proceso de aprendizaje en el diseño de información. *Zincografía*, 6(11), 245-264. <https://doi.org/10.32870/zcr.v6i11.131>
- Medina, D., Gañán, P. y Arango, S. (2019). Etnoturismo: una aproximación a las oportunidades y amenazas que implica para las culturas indígenas. *Cuadernos de turismo*, (43), 17-38. <https://doi.org/10.6018/turismo.43.01>
- Ministerio de Educación Nacional (2006). *Formar en lenguas extranjeras: inglés*. El reto. Serie Guías N. 22. Estándares básicos de competencia. <https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/portal/men/Publicaciones/Guías/115174:Guía-No-22-Estandares-Basicos-de-Competencias-en-Lenguas-Extranjeras-Ingles>
- Monje, J. (2015). El plan de vida de los pueblos indígenas de Colombia, una construcción de etnoecodesarrollo. *Luna Azul*, 41, 29-56. <https://revistasoj.s.ucaldas.edu.co/index.php/lunazul/article/view/1253>

- Mora, M. (2019). Migrantes en la escuela: Propuesta de un modelo de evaluación intercultural de los aprendizajes. *Páginas de educación*, 12(1), 75-97. <https://doi.org/10.22235/pe.v12i1.1769>
- Papini, R., Pavan, A., & Zamagn, S. (2019). *Living in the Global Society*. Routledge.
- Pearse, N. (2021). Guidelines for Theory Development using Qualitative Research Approaches. *Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods*, 19(2), 95-103. <https://doi.org/10.34190/ejbrm.19.2.2512>
- Peña, M. (2020). *Ideologías lingüísticas sobre la lengua muchik en el discurso etnoidentitario en el norte peruano: autenticidad y mercantilización* (tesis de maestría). Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú. <https://tesis.pucp.edu.pe/repositorio/handle/20.500.12404/18059>
- Quijano, A. (2012). “Bien vivir”: entre el “desarrollo” y la des/colonialidad del poder. *Viento Sur*, (122), 46-56. https://vientosur.info/wp-content/uploads/spip/pdf/VS122_A_Quijano_Bienvivir---.pdf
- Quintriqueo, S., Morales, S., Quilaqueo, D., & Arias, K. (2020). *Interculturalidad para la formación inicial docente: desafíos para construir un diálogo intercultural*. Editorial Universidad Católica de Temuco
- Rawal, R., & Deardorff, D. (2021). Intercultural Competences for All. In Nixon, P.G., Dennen, V.P., & Rawal, R. (Eds.), *Reshaping international teaching and learning in higher education* (pp. 46-59). Routledge.
- Rojas, F. (2020). *El Sistema educativo indígena propio en la legislación colombiana*. Universidad Santo Tomás.
- Ruzieva, H. (2021). *El material audiovisual como recurso del desarrollo de la competencia intercultural de los estudiantes de ELE/EL2 en Uzbekistán* (tesis de maestría). Universidad de Valladolid, España. <https://uvadoc.uva.es/handle/10324/52547>
- Sachs, I. (1981). Ecodesarrollo: concepto, aplicación, beneficios y riesgos. *Agricultura y sociedad*, (18), 9-32. <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=82465>

- Santos, B. (2017). *Justicia entre saberes: Epistemologías del Sur contra el epistemicidio* (R. Filella, Trans.). Ediciones Morata.
- Stavnhagen, R. (2010). Las identidades indígenas en América Latina. *Instituto Interamericano de los Derechos Humanos IIDH*, (52), 171-189. <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=3645057>
- Walsh, C. (1998). La interculturalidad y la educación básica ecuatoriana: Propuestas para la reforma educativa. *Procesos. Revista Ecuatoriana de Historia*, 12, 119-128. <https://repositorio.uasb.edu.ec/handle/10644/1364>
- Walsh, C. (2005a). Interculturalidad, conocimientos y decolonialidad. *Signo y Pensamiento*, 24(46), 39-50. <https://revistas.javeriana.edu.co/index.php/signoypensamiento/article/view/4663>
- Walsh, C. (2005b). *La interculturalidad en la educación*. Biblioteca Nacional del Perú. Ministerio de Educación.
- Walsh, C. (2013). *Pedagogías decoloniales: Prácticas insurgentes de resistir, (re)existir y (re)vivir (Vol. I)*. Ediciones Abya-Yala.
- Zapata, S. (2023). Interculturalidad y política pública colombiana. *Revista Venezolana de Gerencia: RVG*, 28(9), 731-744. <https://doi.org/10.52080/rvgluz.28.e9.45>