

**CULTURE AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN ECO
KIDS: A CONTENT ANALYSIS**

SERGIO ANDREI ROSAS TAFUR

**UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGÓGICA NACIONAL
FACULTAD DE HUMANIDADES
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BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA
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KIDS: A CONTENT ANALYSIS**

SERGIO ANDREI ROSAS TAFUR

Thesis Director

Esperanza Vera Rodríguez

**A thesis submitted as a requirement to obtain the degree of Master in Foreign Languages
Teaching**

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2023**

Note of Acceptance

Esperanza Vera Rodríguez
Thesis Director

Jairo Antonio Rincón Becerra
Juror

Nohora Patricia Moreno
Juror

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Abstract

Culture and interculturality have recently gained interest in the foreign language instruction field. Nonetheless, institutions and professionals struggle to integrate them into everyday teaching practices. In Colombia, governmental bodies strive to give preponderance to culture and interculturality in the frame of the National Bilingual Program, a policy that affects every level of language instruction in the country, including teaching material. Since one of the main forms in which language learners explore their own culture, have contact with foreign cultures and develop intercultural skills is using materials, it is paramount to revise them. This content analysis study evaluated the characteristics of the content related to culture and the Intercultural Communicative Competence of ECO Kids, a series of podcasts developed by the Ministerio de Educación Nacional that emphasizes on the exploration of cultures and the development of intercultural skills. To fulfill its goal, this study considered the concepts of surface, deep culture, and the Savoirs of the Intercultural Communicative Competence. Checklists and field notes were implemented to analyze eight episodes of ECO Kids. It was concluded that the series contains some elements of surface and deep culture, with a predilection for elements of the own culture from a typical perspective, which might promote stereotypes and overgeneralizations. It was also concluded that ECO Kids holds elements related to the Intercultural Communicative Competence, but it has a limited potential to develop intercultural skills because of the quality of the cultural information and the poor intercultural relation between the cultures it presents.

Keywords: Culture, surface culture, deep culture, intercultural communicative competence, material.

Resumen

Cultura e interculturalidad han llamado la atención recientemente en el campo de la enseñanza de lengua extranjera. Sin embargo, instituciones y profesionales tienen dificultades para integrarlas en las prácticas cotidianas de enseñanza. En Colombia, antes del gobierno intentan dar un lugar preponderante a cultura e interculturalidad en el Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo, una política que ha impactado cada aspecto de la instrucción de lengua en el país, incluyendo el material de enseñanza. Ya que una de las formas principales en las que los aprendientes de lenguas exploran su cultura, tienen contacto con culturas extranjeras y desarrollan competencias interculturales es a través de los materiales, es importante evaluarlos. Este estudio analizó las características del contenido relacionado a la cultura y la competencia intercultural comunicativa de ECO Kids, una serie de podcasts que el Ministerio de Educación Nacional creó y que se enfocan en la exploración de culturas y el desarrollo de competencias interculturales. Este estudio contempló los conceptos de cultura superficial y profunda, y los Savoirs de la competencia intercultural comunicativa. Se implementaron listas de chequeo y diarios de campo para analizar ocho episodios de ECO Kids. Se concluyó que la serie contiene elementos de cultura superficial y profunda privilegiando la cultura propia con una perspectiva típica, que puede promover estereotipos y generalizaciones. También se concluyó que contiene elementos relacionados con la competencia comunicativa intercultural, pero tiene un potencial muy limitado para desarrollarla debido a la calidad de información cultural y la poca relación intercultural de las culturas que presenta.

Palabras clave: Cultura, cultura superficial, cultura profunda, competencia intercultural comunicativa.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Traditionally, Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) has focused on what are generally known as the big four language skills: Listening, speaking, reading and writing. And proficiency, often regarded as the ultimate goal of learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), has been solely linked to the development of these skills. In consequence, most language teaching material has focused almost exclusively on them (Reimann, 2009; Gómez, 2015b; Guzman 2015; Ali, et al, 2015 and others). The disproportionate attention given to these aspects of language has overshadowed other aspects of language learning that are as important as the “four skills” or even more so, like the development of a better intercultural understanding that eases communicative exchanges using the Target Language (TL) and, allows learners to be more culturally reflective on the contents of those exchanges, and the contexts where they take place.

Though culture is present in every aspect of language it has often been neglected, which is evident in the materials used in TEFL. These are brought into discussion here because the responsibility of the inclusion -or exclusion- of culture in language teaching often rests on the materials used in the EFL classroom and, because they reflect the current policies adopted by the education bodies and the national government regarding bilingualism.

In the Colombian context, in the frame of the National Bilingual Program (NBP) (MEN, 2004) and its more recent version, the Programa Nacional de Inglés: Colombia, very well! (MEN, 2014), efforts are being undertaken to give a more thoughtful approach to the role that the culture of learners plays in TEFL instruction. Hence, material that claims to have an intercultural approach has appeared and, in the present, is being introduced to EFL classrooms in schools all over the country.

In spite of the increasing interest the material emerging from the NBP has generated, mainly because of its accessibility, there is little reflection and analysis about the potential this has on developing skills and attitudes related to interculturality. This research project aims to characterize the cultural content present in a specific series of materials generated within the NBP, the series of podcasts ECO kids, and to determine to what extent elements in this resource might foster the development of the Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC).

Problem Statement

This study is born from the increasing necessity of integrating culture and interculturality in EFL settings that share the characteristics of the school where I teach, Grancolombiano IED, since the implementation of the NBP is in progress, and students learn in contexts that are rich in cultural diversity.

The NBP has brought with it many challenges and to be fair, some benefits. Among them, a comprehensive offer of new didactic material to teach EFL. Unfortunately, often, teachers lack the training needed to make good use of material and educational institutions fail to incorporate material properly to their curriculums (often opting for adapting the curriculum to the contents in the material) (Reimann, 2009). This, added to the fact that materials traditionally used in foreign language (FL) teaching have constantly either eluded or superficially approached the presentation of culture, mainly because the role of culture in learning effectively a foreign language has been misunderstood and underestimated (Byram, 1997; Chlopek, 2008; Liddicoat, 1994; Rico, 2011, and others).

Culture is a broad and dynamic concept and definitions may vary from discipline to discipline and from scholar to scholar. Hernández and Samacá (2006) point out that culture is all

around us and it includes what we are, feel and think and how we behave, and that it can change within the same country, community or even family as it changes according to the different conditions it is exposed to. Ali et al. (2015) state that beyond cultural manifestations such as traditions, folklore and customs, culture is present in beliefs, ideas, knowledge, and values. They also point out that the characteristics of a certain culture are communicated through language, making the former an integral part of the latter.

When language is used, the strong relationship between this and culture is tangible, but in the FLT field it tends to go ignored; therefore, understanding the relationship between learning a foreign language, the culture of the learner, and the culture in which the TL is used, is necessary beyond questioning.

Sun (2013) relates the inextricable bound of language and culture to EFL instruction by stating that the most difficult thing for language learners to deal with in their study of the foreign language is not the linguistic forms or grammar, but the cultural differences, and he advocates that “the teaching of cultural knowledge and the establishment of cultural schema will be of great help to the learners’ linguistic comprehension and expression” (p. 372). This remark goes along with the ideas of Hinojosa (as cited in Hernández & Samacá, 2006) as she says: “in foreign language learning, knowledge of linguistic structures alone is not enough; we also have to understand the way of life of a foreign culture and the individuals living it” (p.41). By the same token, Ali et al. (2015), Chlopek (2008) and Liddicoat (1994) warn that EFL learning, and culture are so interrelated, that using the target language without understanding properly its cultural setting leads to misinterpretation and breakdown in the language communication. And Castro (2007) concludes that one way of helping learners be proficient in a foreign language is making the teaching of culture a relevant part of EFL settings.

Proficiency of the learners is often set as the final goal and the main reason why schools like Grancolombiano School and many others take part in initiatives like the NBP. And it is possible to assert that promoting intercultural skills helps learners improve their communicative exchanges in the TL. Nonetheless, for these institutions, there may be reasons with higher priority to promote intercultural skills in learning settings.

Like most public schools in Bogotá, the EFL classrooms of Grancolombiano school are scenarios where many cultural backgrounds meet. Many public and private schools in the country host every day more students coming from different parts of the national territory and on a more frequent basis, from neighboring countries. The socio-political dynamics that cause the constant movement of population in the country and from nations nearby also cause the EFL classroom to be a space where many cultures meet. For EFL teachers at Colombian schools the existence of cultures within the classroom is notorious and it calls for a more primordial effect of including cultural content in TEFL practices. As Castro (2007) remarks, in addition to the importance of including cultural content to aid students achieve proficiency in the target language, teaching interculturality in the FL classroom should point to help students find a middle ground where they may compare and contrast cultures for a better understanding of cross-cultural differences. She argues that, rather than asking students to blindly imitate patterns of behavior and interactions of the culture of the TL, TEFL needs to promote a sense of appreciation and understanding for cultural differences. This is, instead of having students accommodate to a foreign culture, FL teachers must help students develop intercultural skills like the ones included in the model of Intercultural Communicative Competence by Byram (1997).

This competence may become a means to overcome many of the inequalities that often take place in multicultural communities, like Grancolombiano IED and many other schools all over the

country. And offer a chance within the EFL classroom to learners from diverse backgrounds, so that their cultures become visible to their peers.

Hernández and Samacá (2006) highlight the need in the TEFL field to help students “dig into a culture and to understand why people act or behave as they do” (p. 41) and say, that this only occurs when FL teachers provide students with as much valid and accurate information as possible, about their own culture and that of the foreign language. They assert a better understanding of culture “will not only help our students while they are at school, but also prepare them to become active members of the multicultural society we live in” (p.39). Gómez (2015b) claims the TEFL field cannot ignore that learners must develop ICC to fit into a globalized world in which people from different cultural backgrounds establish international relations and become intercultural speakers.

Prior research on the use of cultural content on FL teaching provides insightful but worrisome findings specifically on the selection of the cultural content presented and how insufficient is the effort put in developing intercultural skills in EFL materials.

A study by Gómez (2015a) on the cultural content in textbooks used in undergraduate programs in Colombian universities and other EFL settings showed these lacked elements of what he categorizes as “deep culture” (content that might help learner develop ICC). And most of the content corresponded to “surface culture” based on congratulatory and homogenizing notions of foreign cultures. In the same fashion, a study by Reimann (2009), that analyzed the cultural content of the most used EFL textbooks in Japan, some of them even claiming to develop cultural awareness and intercultural knowledge, concluded that “many texts are saturated with cultural information without consideration of accuracy, purpose, presentation or practicality” (p.99). And that “very few texts provided either an opportunity for reflection or relating cultural elements back

to the students own culture or even a means for the students to expand on the content and extend it to experiences in the real world” (p.97).

A study by Guzman (2015) that analyzed a Latin American textbook showed that the material did not have enough content related to culture so that students could reflect on their own culture and others and consider them of equal value. On the contrary, the material promoted a feeling of superiority of hegemonic countries. The author concluded the material did not provide enough elements to support the development of ICC in students.

These examples are but the top of the iceberg of the worrisome state of the integration of culture in FL material. But they are useful to draw attention to the importance TEFL material has because it sometimes is the main manner to present cultural content to FL learners and help them develop intercultural knowledge and skills. Above all, these studies call on reflection about the reasons why this content should be included, on what type of cultural content should be presented, and the urgency of developing intercultural skills or even ICC in the globalized world we live in.

Having stated the great impact using materials may have on multicultural settings like Grancolombiano IED, the purpose of this research is to explore the characteristics of the cultural content in a specific set of podcasts authored by the MEN and the British Council (BC), in the framework of the implementation of the NBP: the ECO Kids series and to determine to what extent the cultural content of the series might contribute to the development of the ICC. The possible repercussions of this study aim for fostering a better understanding of the importance of including cultural content that fosters the development of ICC in material designed for young learners in the beginner level.

Research questions and objectives

To fulfill the purposes presented above, exploring the cultural content, and analyzing its potential to favor the development of ICC of ECO Kids, the following research questions will guide this study:

1. What are the characteristics of the cultural content in the ECO Kids series?
2. To what extent elements in the ECO Kids series might foster the development of the Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)?

Along with the questions above, the objectives of this study are the following:

- To explore, analyze and describe the cultural content presented in the series *ECO Kids*.
- To characterize the elements related to the Intercultural Communicative Competence in the ECO Kids series and evaluate to what extent these elements might contribute to the development of this competence.

Rationale

The NBP is the dictating policy for TEFL practices in Colombia and the standards adopted within this policy are the ones in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). This means, the conditions for EFL institutions, teachers, students, materials and learning environments have been, in one way or another, conceived from or affected by the standards the program has set (Escobar, 2013; Ayala and Alvarez, 2005). The NBP has established interculturality in EFL education as one of its pillars. This interest in interculturality is one of the many influences the program has had from the adoption of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) since its birth in 2004.

Hence, the NBP has been fueled by a FL teaching vision that, in theory, should consider of great importance the development of intercultural skills and cultural awareness, as stated in the CEFR:

“The learner of a second or foreign language and culture does not cease to be competent in his or her mother tongue and the associated culture. Nor is the new competence kept entirely separate from the old. The learner does not simply acquire two distinct, unrelated ways of acting and communicating. The language learner becomes plurilingual and develops interculturality.” (Council of Europe, 2001)

The material designed in the frame of the NBP tries to follow that principle, in which the learner is expected to develop intercultural skills as the product of processes taking place in the language classroom that involve both the first and the foreign language. This focus is present in the material that has emerged from the NBP. One of the several resources designed within the program is the object of study of this research, the ECO Kids series of radio podcasts. The ECO Kids series is the result of an interinstitutional collaboration between the MEN and the BC. It claims to be developed under a set of theoretical bases that point towards the development of intercultural skills (Ministerio de Educación Nacional [MEN], 2023):

The transmedia platform for English teaching and Learning, ECO 2.0, comprehends two radio shows, ECO Kids and ECO Teens, and a series of complementary educational resources directed to teachers, parents, and students. This set of resources is permeated by the intercultural approach and the functional communicative approach. This has to do with the possibility of using Spanish and English for different communicative purposes, taking into account both the varied contexts where boys, girls and youngsters interact and the cultural richness of the country (p. 6).

Earlier local studies on the material developed by the MEN and the BC concluded that even though there seems to be progression in the integration of the component of interculturality in printed material, there is still a long way ahead. A content analysis by Henao, Gómez and Murcia (2019) on the series English, Please! found out that despite it claiming to develop intercultural competence, only a minor percentage of the activities of the textbook were related to interculturality. And as they asserted, regarding intercultural awareness, English, Please! entailed a reductionist, instrumentalist, and limited understanding of the concept.

Taking into account the material produced by the BC and the MEN, in the framework of the NBP, is reaching more and more schools in Colombia, it becomes urgent to revise to what extent these resources are accomplishing what they are designed for, if they effectively justify the effort the national government has put into their production and distribution and if EFL teachers in their everyday work can rely on this material to develop ICC, which is of such urgency in the highly multicultural settings where most Colombian public schools are situated.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Foundations

The theoretical foundations presented below have two major components. In the first place, this chapter contains a theoretical framework that presents a thorough revision of the approach to the concept of culture in the TEFL field. This revision leads to the concepts of surface and deep culture. It also has a depiction of the integration of culture, surface culture and deep culture to the TEFL field and its material. Additionally, this theoretical framework contains a conceptualization of ICC and its components or *savoirs*. The elements of this theoretical framework are vital to the present study as they are its basis and are constantly referenced

throughout the subsequent chapters. The second major component of this chapter is a literature review that provides a wide landscape about the research work done in the field to characterize the integration of culture and/or ICC in TEFL practices and material. This literature review provided a powerful starting point for the work done in the present study for it brings forth multiple considerations emerging from the previous research that share the focus of the present study. The contributions from this literature review range from identifying the difficulties integrating culture has experienced in the field, documenting attempts undertaken to give culture the relevance it should hold TEFL practices, and material analysis of resources that, just like the material analyzed in the present study, promise to integrate culture or ICC to TEFL material.

Theoretical Framework

Approaching the concept of culture

Setting an agreeable definition of culture is a task that has been continuously postponed in the TEFL field, even though as many scholars affirm, lately, culture is no longer as much an ignored element as it used to be and is even becoming a trend in the field. Yet, despite the gained interest of the role of culture in teaching and learning an L2, as Arias, Gómez and Vera (2015) point out, defining culture might be complex and problematic. Trujillo (2002) explains this is understandable given the term includes a vast array of different elements.

However, despite this inherent difficulty, Arias, Gómez, and Vera (2015) remark adopting an evolving transformative view of culture is paramount, specially to avoid the fossilization of stereotypes and generalizations of target cultures in the minds of learners. Stereotypes and generalizations regularly come from the predominant perception of culture as the most typical characteristics of a community. This perception is called by Atkinson (1999) a

'received view' of culture (p. 626). He says this traditional view considers culture geographically situated, and in most cases, as the product of a nation. That is why it is recurrent to find depictions of 'Japanese culture' 'or American culture' in TEFL material. Atkinson says the received view of culture has also contributed to the mistaken belief that culture is an all-encompassing system of rules that determines the behaviors of all the members of a community, sometimes even, of all the nationals of a country. Arias, Gómez and Vera (2015) argue, the risk of keeping a static vision of culture is that it promotes culture as unchanging and homogenous, and they state culture is far from being a system of rules that encapsulates the behavior of all people.

Atkinson (1999) argues cultures should not be perceived as "monolithic entities" (p. 627). However, he recognizes cultures do exert a certain constraint on the behavior of individuals within a certain social group. He then calls out for a conciliatory definition of culture, where the most recent definitions balance the older ones to recognize the existence of culture as a social system that does exert certain influence over the behaviors of individuals, but where these are constantly negotiating, reinventing, and reforming the social norm in their daily interactions and behaviors. He highlights it is necessary to acknowledge that human beings exist in multiple social worlds at a time, playing sometimes different roles, and both these social worlds and the individuals interacting in them are constantly changing and reshaping each other. As Atkinson concludes: "cultural descriptions that account for individual heterogeneity and difference within cultural groups are absolutely necessary for a well-rounded understanding of culture. All cultural groups are made up of individuals" (p. 641).

Approaching the concept of culture, Byram says a definition necessarily starts with the "beliefs and knowledge which members of a social group share by virtue of their membership"

(1997, p. 39). Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002) state culture is “a way of life” (p. 9).

Hernández and Samacá (2006) share an all-encompassing definition of culture too, they say it is all around us, what we are, our shared feelings, thoughts, and behaviors, and that it can change within the same country, community or even family as it changes according to the different conditions it is exposed to. Their ideas agree with the assertions of Byram (1997) who claims that any attempt at a definition of culture should not lack an essential feature, that it is dynamic. He says culture is under continuous negotiation and production of meaning from the individuals and from the interactions taking place within the culture itself. He also senses that the traditional definition of culture will always necessarily reflect the meanings shared by the dominant group of a community and will tend to ignore the cultural manifestations from oppressed groups within society. His remarks are very important for the field, because it is often ignored that the cultural content presented in lessons and material represents only a fraction of the society, regularly the dominant group, leaving aside cultural manifestations from other groups and thus, becoming unrepresentative of the whole culture it aims to portray.

Another approach to the concept of culture comes from the thought of Spencer-Oatey (2008) (as quoted by Arias, Gómez and Vera, 2015). He explains culture is the set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures, and behavioral conventions that are shared by a group of people, that influence without determining their behavior and their expectations of the behavior of others. The concept of Bennet (1998) goes accordingly, when he affirms culture refers to the learned and shared pattern of basic values, beliefs and conventions of a group of people. And Arias, Gómez and Vera (2015) agree to this, but add that individuals might be influenced by the norms and values of their culture, but they do

not entirely depend on them, they may in fact contend with them. For this reason, culture is continuously transforming and inclined to change over time.

Considering culture as transforming and changeable is truly relevant for EFL contexts like the one where the research interest that motivated this study was born. Language teachers should avoid promoting the idea that culture is set and static, but they should strive towards building a welcoming environment where practices, materials and every individual involved in the teaching-learning processes taking place in the classroom feel free to share their own culture and where learners can develop adaptative mindsets so that they can accept cultural difference even within the cultural groups they belong to.

To conclude on the matter, Byram (1997) highlights that definitions of culture might be varied, and we need to focus on finding one that suits the purposes of the FL teaching field. For this reason, it is important to characterize culture so that by identifying its components it becomes easier to approach the analysis of material this study intends, with a wide but clear scope.

Surface culture and Deep culture

To facilitate a first approach to the broad concept of culture, several scholars have opted for making a distinction between two of its components: surface culture, (or formal culture (Trujillo, (2002), and deep culture (Gómez, 2015a, 2015b, 2018; Hinkel, 2014). Some authors refer to this dichotomy as big-C culture and small-c culture (Chlopek, 2008; Trujillo, 2002; Rico, 2011), visible and invisible culture (Gómez, 2015a, 2015b, 2018; Hinkel, 2014), or objective culture and subjective culture (Bennett, 1998). The terms chosen for this study are surface and

deep culture, but there are some gains from the terms used to describe these two that come in handy to understand what they embrace.

Surface culture refers to the observable aspects of culture, the most known or representative (Gómez, 2015a, 2015b; 2018), the ones that are most evident to the naked eye, the most “visible and tangible products of a society”, the ones that have become institutionalized (Rico, 2011. p. 134), “readily apparent to anyone and that can be discussed and explained relatively easily” (Hinkel, 2014, p. 5), hence, it is often also called objective culture. It is also called Culture, with capital C, for this component talks about to what traditionally is understood by Culture in the routinized used of the word, as the standard definition of the concept that can be found in dictionaries and literature, or as presented regularly in many educational contexts (Bennett, 1998). It refers to factual knowledge about arts, literature, music, dance, architecture, religion, films, gastronomy, festivals, touristic destinations, celebrities, and many other manifestations (Chlopek, 2008; Hinkel, 2014; Gómez, 2015a, 2015b) that are often easier to observe compared to those of deep culture (Atkinson, 1999; Hinkel, 2014). Surface culture are those elements that often remain unchanging about a country (Gómez, 2015a, 2015b) or a certain social group. Bennet (1998) postulates social, economic, and political institutions as examples of surface culture.

Gómez (2018) asserts most of the work of the TEFL field is done considering only this component of culture, providing learners with superficial experiences of a culture, almost as if students were tourists of the culture of the foreign language they study. He says the work on these aspects of culture merely emphasizes on understanding facts that cultures proudly celebrate. This congratulatory approach to culture promotes a naïve perspective in learners that promotes the deification of the target culture (Gómez, 2015a, 2015b).

Focusing the work of the FLT field only on this component of culture only promotes a celebratory, static, and stereotypical vision of a culture. Gómez (2015b) warns teaching surface culture perpetuates fixed ideas about groups that eventually turn into hazardous stereotypes and standardized labels that overshadow the individualities of people that conform a group. Besides, the generalizations coming from focusing on these surface views can cause misunderstandings of the target culture (Arias, Gómez and Vera, 2015).

The part of culture that might help foreign language teachers overcome the stale conception of culture, usually promoted in the classroom through TEFL material is deep culture.

Deep culture refers to a more intangible yet broader aspect of culture: attitudes, assumptions, beliefs, perceptions, norms and values, social relationships, politeness conventions, patterns of interaction and discourse organization, the use of time in communication, and the use of physical space and body language (Chlopek, 2008). Most of these manifestations might be easily ignored by the naked eye, hence its name, invisible culture. And because it may pertain more to the mind of the subject, it is also called subjective culture (Bennett, 1998). Some of the manifestations of deep culture are observable, but most of them require closer observation or are only evident when one culture is contrasted with another (Chlopek, 2008). Some of these manifestations are elements deeply internalized and subconscious. As Chlopek (2008) states, they are imparted from birth and shape the way people think, act and interact. These often-hidden elements from culture not only determine the behavior of people within their social groups but also set their expectations of the behaviors of other cultures (Atkinson, 1999). These aspects of culture turn into unspoken rules within a community and set a behavioral pattern within it and towards other communities.

Cultural meanings are far from being simple, and their complex nature sometimes causes them to be conflictive. As Gómez (2018) establishes, the fact that they are transmitted from birth does not necessarily make all individuals follow them. There are many factors within a society and within its individuals that make them not bound to obey or accept these meanings, norms, and patterns of behavior. This chaos within culture turns it transformative and evolving. Deep cultural meanings are relative and transformed by people over time either individually or collectively or both. It is the deep component of culture what turns it into a “dynamic entity in a continuous process of transmission-modification” (Trujillo, 2002, p. 106). Deep culture has often been neglected in the field and especially in the production of TEFL material, because as it is obvious, surface culture is much easier to present. However, to consider the richness of culture, both elements of surface and deep culture are necessary for learners to become well-equipped intercultural speakers (Byram, 1997).

Traditional TEFL practices and materials used in the local context, even the ones that we learned with, were often filled with decontextualized surface culture elements that inculcated stereotypes that even today, in our role EFL teachers we might unconsciously perpetuate. It is important for us teachers to constantly review our own practices and discourse within the language classroom so that we do not multiply dangerous misconceptions about the foreign or even, the own culture. Besides, it is important that we as teachers strive to provide learners with well-informed content of deep culture. So that our students can interpret in a more accurate framework the continuous flow of surface culture information they get from language material, EFL classes and even their own interactions with foreign cultures in all sorts of media they can access today. So that they can identify and overcome the stereotypes they meet within the classroom and beyond it.

Culture in TEFL and TEFL material

Even though defining culture is tough and any concept might not be as comprehensive as culture is, there is consensus in the field about the strong link culture and language hold, and how important culture is in TEFL. Considering material reflects the needs, intentions and purposes of TEFL, it is important to revise the relevance of culture in TEFL practices in general.

There is an inextricable bound between culture and foreign language teaching. To achieve successful communication in the target language, learners require much more than what linguistic structures and words, all alone, can do. Rico (2011) remarks that effective communication requires the speaker to consider constantly how what he intends to communicate will be perceived in another cultural context. However, despite the recent interest that culture has received in the field, more often than not, TEFL and TEFL material have focused almost exclusively on the instruction of language components such as grammar and vocabulary, and neglected key aspects of the foreign language, like the culture of the learner and the culture where the language is used. Liddicoat (2004) points out that in addition to the language dimensions that are commonly part of teaching practices in the traditional FL classroom, culture ought to be a must. He remarks how every message communicated through language is necessarily communicated in a cultural context. And he goes on to state that “cultures shape the ways language is structured and the ways in which language is used”. In other words, grammar, vocabulary, and any other linguistic features of a language are affected by the culture where this language takes place. This statement goes along with the ideas of Byram (1997) when he says that even though it is undeniable that the linguistic competence is central for communication, so it is the relationship between the language and the cultural practices and beliefs of a group. He says that the complexity of culture is embodied in language through both reference and

connotations, and he advocates for linguistic competence to be taught along with cultural knowledge.

Since culture holds such a strong influence in language, it should be a more tangible component in foreign language teaching programs and hence, in the material used in such programs, yet it is often overlooked and sometimes ignored completely. Chlopek (2008) complements the ideas of Liddicoat (2004) and Byram (1997) about the importance of culture in language teaching and portrays how lack of knowledge of the culture of the target language can spoil any communicative intention.

She empathically says that knowing about the culture is a necessary part of learning a foreign language. Regarding the importance of culture in effective communication, she argues that lacking proper cultural knowledge can lead to misunderstandings and miscommunications. She claims that native speakers tend to be flexible when a foreign language learner makes mistakes related to form and structure but using the language incorrectly in a certain cultural context can lead to a total failure of a communicative attempt. As Liddicoat (1994) also asserts “problems of cultural mismatch create significant problems for communication and for social relationships, largely because people are much less aware of their cultural rules for interaction than they are of other aspects of language”.

Liddicoat (1994) elaborates in this matter and emphasizes that culture must be a part of foreign language teaching, because learners tend to fill any vacant cultural space with “uninformed and unanalyzed assumptions” based on their understanding from their own culture. And he continues to criticize the way the component of culture has been integrated into foreign language teaching. He says, culture has been given the rank of the fifth skill (the others being speaking, listening, reading, and writing) within classrooms but it is regularly taught isolated,

more than any other of those skills. For him, a good example of this inconvenient integration of culture is its presentation in textbooks, where cultural content usually has a separate section or is presented in small notes, spread in boxes over some pages of most foreign language teaching printed material. This superficial integration is not only particular to printed material but is an indicator of the state of foreign language teaching in general.

As Liddicoat (1994) concludes, this approach does not satisfy the need students have for learning about culture and without this knowledge, they are not likely to communicate efficiently in the foreign language.

Gómez (2018) joins this concern in the field for giving culture a more prominent role in foreign language teaching as he argues that “verbal communication and linguistic forms are no longer the only aspects to be learned in the language classroom” (p. 187), and he draws attention to an aspect of learning he calls the “discovery of the other”, which refers to the increasing need of reflecting on and reevaluating the culture of the learners themselves and the culture of the speaker of the target language. He remarks this knowledge is a necessity in our globalized world. He points out too that culture has been neglected in the foreign language learning setting and he claims classrooms have failed to incorporate culture efficiently as the representation of this component is often filled with elements of surface culture, referring to those celebratory elements of the foreign culture that focus mainly on superficial aspects such as festivals, tourist destinations/landmarks, celebrities, and typical food. He warns that these elements promote only a static view of a culture, reinforcing stereotypes, and they do not contribute to prepare learners to discover their own cultural identity and that of the other, and they make the learner prompt to experience cultural shock in communication.

The work of Rico (2011) goes along with the ideas of Gómez (2018). Rico asserts that TEFL material is largely filled with stereotypes and reinforce boundaries between cultures. He says it is alarming “how language materials (particularly coursebooks) can contribute to shape misunderstandings and stereotypes” (p.134).

Arias, Gómez, and Vera (2015) claim that “considering culture from generalizations, surface views, and oversimplifications can cause the misunderstanding of culture” (p. 34). They assert this conception of culture needs to be in the foreign language classroom and it is necessary to acknowledge complex meanings of culture that involve “sociocultural norms, distinct individual and collective beliefs, values” (p. 34). They say these meanings often do not have a place within the English classroom, specifically, and they also remark this simplification of the cultural content presented to learners -often, through material- puts them in risk of misunderstandings and cultural clash when using the foreign language.

Rico (2011) draws attention to the role of material in helping or denying students of the opportunity of approaching a foreign culture. He asserts “language materials used in teaching should not create false images about cultures. On the contrary, they might bridge gaps between language and culture” (p. 134). However, they often do otherwise, TEFL material often reinforces erratic ideas about language, communication, and culture, reducing these to grammar, memorization of expressions and acquiring decontextualized information about cultures and places. Language material often reduces cultural information to the level of tourist brochures.

Having pinpointed how important culture should be to foreign language learning and to FL teaching processes, Byram (1997) warns about a matter that also usually goes unnoticed when teaching about culture is undertaken in foreign language environments. He alerts the importance given to the culture where the target language is used can become problematic.

Byram (1997) analyzes the power relationships present in learning a foreign language and he claims that there is a predominant assumption in the FL instruction field that is ‘the native speaker is always right’. This refers to how grammatical, idiomatic and pronunciation issues are often solved using the native speaker standard. And how, implicitly, or explicitly, the proficiency of the native speaker is set as the learning goal for the foreign language learner. This, the native speaker performance as a norm of proficiency, to a certain extent, is admissible, he thinks, because having a standard use of the language eases communication for any speaker.

Nonetheless, Byram (1997) says this power relationship may be transferred to the form in which the culture of the native speaker is introduced in the EFL setting. Thus, there is a certain unspoken belief in both the native speaker and the foreign language learner, that the latter should “acquire the culture(s) of a country where the language is spoken natively” (p. 21). Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002) state in language teaching often there is an implicit aim to imitate both the linguistic competence and the cultural knowledge of the native speaker tuning this one into “the expert and the model” (p.18). Coperías-Aguilar (2007) retakes this worrisome idea and says the prominence of the culture of the native speaker leaves the culture of the language learner in a peripheral position if not ignored completely within the foreign language classroom. And she adds that this underestimation of the value of culture of the foreign language learner necessarily distresses the emotional disposition of the learner that, she stresses, is very important to get in contact with a foreign language and consequently with the culture where this is used.

Rico (2011) asserts this disbalance is also evident in TEFL material, as this focuses “solely on one culture, the foreign” (P.134). They tend to overlook the cultural background of the learner and impose an oversimplified version of the culture of the target language.

TEFL practices and resources should focus on developing skills that allow learners to reflect on their own culture and take a broader, more flexible perspective to approach the culture of the other. Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002) remark learners need to develop an ability that promotes among individuals an understanding and interaction where people are recognized as complex, “with multiple social identities and their own individuality” (p. 10).

Rico (2011) underscores the importance of material as the means to bridge the culture of the learner and the foreign culture. Efforts made on the field have failed to approach the teaching of culture so that the everyday more common multicultural classroom can really benefit, and help students develop the ability of negotiate meaning with their peers, and members of the global community, from different cultural backgrounds. Considering the difficulties and the great relevance of including culture more effectively in TEFL and TEFL material, the concept of Intercultural Communicative Competence becomes paramount as to set up a north for the work on the field.

Intercultural Communicative Competence

Byram (1997) says it is important foreign language learners develop a more accurate understanding of their role when they interact with native speakers. Acknowledging they are not mere imitators of the culture of the native speaker, but they are “social actors engaging with other social actors in a particular kind of communication and interaction which is different from that between native speakers” (p. 21). He argues that the foreign speaker, having knowledge of the culture of the native speaker and his own, “is in a position of power at least equal to that of the native speaker” (p. 22). This better understanding of the value of other cultures and the own culture of the learner is what we call Intercultural Communicative Competence.

Fantini (2006) remarks ICC is the unification of several terms that for years have been making presence in the field literature. He points out, nonetheless, “most terms allude to only limited aspects of a more complex phenomenon; for example: cross-cultural awareness, global competitive intelligence, cultural competence, cultural sensitivity, ethno-relativity, international competence, intercultural interaction, biculturalism, and multiculturalism, and so forth” (p. 11).

Fantini (2000) defines ICC as an ability to deal in a positive form with the differences appearing from intercultural exchanges where cultural boundaries are continuously crossed, maintaining communication and interaction. Rico (2011) argues that more than an ability, ICC is an “overall social and psychological capacity of an individual to manage appropriately encounters with people from other cultural backgrounds when people interact in a language that is foreign” (p. 132). Fantini (2000) argues intercultural skills do not differ greatly from interpersonal skills used in everyday communication. He admits, however, that essential themes within these skills, like the ability to keep relationships, of communicating effectively and of obtaining cooperation are complicated when people interact across cultures. This is why developing ICC is relevant.

Rico (2011) explains that a key starting point to fully understand ICC is acknowledging that interlocutors from different cultures or backgrounds, in any communicative situation, bring along their knowledge, their awareness of cultural difference -or similarity-, their beliefs, attitudes, behavior, skills and language to a process of negotiation of meaning. Interlocutors in intercultural exchanges are not *tabula rasas*. This negotiation process is eased by ICC helping interlocutors value and mediate between their different perspectives, experiences, and perceptions of the world. Rico (2011) also describes ICC as an approach that allows individuals to deal appropriately with cultural differences whether ethnic, racial, gender, class, religious or

cultural” (p. 138). For him, individuals should develop their ICC to set up a relationship between their own and other cultures, to mediate the difference and accept it, and value the humanity beneath cultural difference.

This characteristic of ICC might become problematic for a FL learner, as Liddicoat (1994) analyses. He argues that many learners do not have enough opportunities to analyze their own language and culture and how their own language reflects their culture. Coperías-Aguilar (2007) elaborates on this matter. She says all FL learners hold “certain frameworks of assumptions, ideas and beliefs” that determine how they experience and understand the behavior of others. She draws attention to the fact that the learners are often so familiar with their own culture that they are not aware of how it affects the manner they establish contact with people belonging to a different culture. The ideas of Fantini (2006) go along with this, for he pinpoints that developing ICC requires “nothing less than reconfiguring one’s original worldview” (p. 11).

The foreign language classroom is a scenario where students can explore their own culture through comparing it with that of the target language. Liddicoat (1994) argues that although students might not be aware of it, they do have knowledge about their culture, and he suggests “Language teachers can be effective in teaching culture when they allow the learners’ own experiences, understandings, and insights a place in the language classroom”. In other words, the knowledge of the learners about their own culture is the starting point from which teachers can help students reach a better understanding of the culture of the native speaker, and through analysis and comparison they can understand better and value their culture and the cultures of others. These reflection processes are the means to develop Intercultural skills.

Chlopek (2008) characterizes ICC as the ability of the learner “to compare their native culture to other cultures, to evaluate critically and interpret the results of such comparisons, and

to apply this knowledge successfully in both verbal and non-verbal communication, for both transactional and interactional purposes” (p. 12). Also, she calls attention to the particular importance of developing ICC when students learn EFL. She asserts these FL learners are not only likely to speak to native speakers but also with non-native ones. It becomes then, necessary that learners develop intercultural competence to successfully function in an environment where they will interact with their own culture and the ones of the other speakers, all of this, while using a language that might not be native to any of their cultures. For her, developing this competence is an important step to overcome intolerance and prejudice against many cultures that suffer discrimination in our society and a good way to promote acceptance, understanding and respect within educational spaces and beyond.

The same concern is present in the work of Coperías-Aguilar (2007), who underscores the need foreign language learners have of understanding the relationships between cultures, of making sense of behaviors and attitudes different to the ones present in their own cultures and to interpret diverse ways of understanding the world.

Coperías-Aguilar (2007) remarks FL learners need to embrace the role of mediators “who have the ability to manage communication and interaction between people of different cultural identities and languages, coming out from their own perspective and taking up another, able to handle different interpretations of reality”. From her perspective, the task of the teacher is not merely facilitating the access of students to cultural content but to develop in students the ICC that will help them relativize their own culture and approach with a similar attitude, the culture of the other.

Byram (1997) introduces the concept of ‘intercultural speaker’ to refer to “interlocutors involved in intercultural communication and interaction” (p. 32). Byram, Gribkova and Starkey

(2002) call intercultural speakers, “mediators” and describe them as individuals who “are able to engage with complexity and multiple identities and to avoid the stereotyping which accompanies perceiving someone through a single identity” (p. 9). They claim this capacity of the intercultural speaker comes from perceiving interlocutors as human beings with attributes to be discovered, more than representatives of a culture with fixed characteristics.

Considering contexts like Grancolombiano School, transforming language learners into intercultural speakers is a must, since it would mean creating environments where individuals from varied cultural backgrounds can interact and contribute each other in interactions whose effects might transcend the TEFL classroom. FL learners in contexts like these schools might become citizens capable of fully enjoying the richness of the globalized world where they coexist, understanding better their cultural origins by contextualizing these into wider landscapes where several other cultural origins thrive.

Savoirs of the Intercultural Communicative Competence

To achieve this capacity, Byram (1997) proposes a model of ICC that he says intends to be as comprehensible as possible. His model considers knowledge, skills, attitudes, and points towards developing awareness. Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002) complement this including values, the ones the individuals hold for belonging to certain social groups. These components come into play whenever an intercultural exchange takes place and having them as basis, intercultural speakers should develop five different savoirs (dimensions of knowledge), closely interrelated and interdependent (Gómez, 2018). The savoirs present in the model of Byram are the following (Byram, 1997; Byram, Gribkova and Starkey, 2002):

Savoirs (knowledge): Rico describes this savoir as the “conceptual framework” (p.138). This savoir goes beyond specific knowledge about the target culture and relates more to an understanding of the way culture itself works, including knowledge about how social identities function and what is involved in any intercultural interaction.

For Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002), the knowledge of this savoir can be divided into two main components. On the one hand, knowledge of social processes (culture, identity, values) and on the other, knowledge about examples of those processes and their products (cultural manifestations, characteristics of certain identities of social groups, how values affect behaviors). “The latter includes knowledge about how other people are likely to perceive you, as well as some knowledge about other people” (p.12). Rico affirms this savoir constitutes “the frame of reference of people living in a particular culture” (p.138).

Savoir être (intercultural attitudes): This *savoir* refers to the willingness of intercultural speakers to relativize their values, beliefs, and behaviors. It is the ability to decenter, to overcome the assumption that the own culture is the right one, to be able to assume the position of an outsider (Byram, Gribkova and Starkey, 2002). As Rico (2011) highlights, “to understand the shared meanings, individuals have to decenter the self and take up the role of the other” (p.133).

Rico portrays this savoir as the capacity “to abandon ethnocentric attitudes” (p. 139), and the eagerness to establish and maintain relationships with a foreign culture, to engage with the other as equals.

Savoir comprendre (skills of interpreting and relating): It implies the “ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one’s own” (Byram, Gribkova and Starkey, 2002, p. 13). It encompasses the ability of the

learners to compare and relate any product from another culture to products of the culture to which they belong.

Using the concept of *savoir comprendre* in the model by Byram as a basis, Rico (2011) formulates another savoir, *savoir communiquer*, which is strongly linked to proficiency, to understanding and expressing in the foreign language. He claims proficiency in the foreign language allows the individual to adjust his thinking processes and to develop an adaptive mindset to find alternative communication strategies to take part effectively in intercultural exchanges. The contribution made by Rico will be considered in the present study for it can be complementary of the model of Byram in the sense that it brings into consideration a focus into FL instruction.

Savoir apprendre/ faire (Skills of discovery and interaction): It is the ability to explore new knowledge about cultures and “to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction” (Byram, Gribkova and Starkey, 2002, p.13). This set of skills includes not only the ability to discover information about the target culture, but also the ability to use this new knowledge in intercultural exchanges (Byram, Gribkova and Starkey, 2002; Rico, 2011).

Savoir s'engager (critical cultural awareness): It relates to the intercultural capacity of the speaker to evaluate critically the products in diverse cultures as well as their own. Rico (2011) states that this awareness points towards transforming interlocutors in both ethnographers and informants, capable of gaining perspective, through comparison, of their own culture and the other.

Furthermore, Rico (2011) points out this savoir requires the intercultural speakers to reflect on their own cultural values, beliefs and perceptions and identify their differences with

those of others. For him, developing awareness about our own culture and cultures of others starts “when we answer the question: why do we do things in that way?” (p. 139).

The model of Byram (1997) constitutes a frame where professionals in the TEFL field can see reflected their practices and evaluate the reach of their work and the several strategies and resources used in it. It also becomes a strong basis for the present study where aspects of elements belonging to the TEFL setting, like materials, can be analyzed and understood and hence, improved to favor the development of the intercultural skills of FL learners.

Literature Review

This literature review provides a revision of recent studies that researched on the integration of culture in the TEFL field. It has an emphasis on the observation and reflection on previous work related to the integration of culture and interculturality in TEFL material.

Though, as pointed before, culture is becoming a trendier topic in language research, the reality of FL learners in their everyday classrooms seems to be going in another direction and the integration of culture in TEFL material continues to be slow, troublesome, and mostly unsuccessful. Put another way, researchers in the field show they are particularly concerned with the integration of culture in TEFL and its materials, but TEFL practices and the material in use remain very much untouched, unchanged, repeating themselves in the mistakes FL learners have always been subject to. Most efforts to incorporate culture in a properly planned, meticulous and oriented approach belong in research work, not yet in the daily teaching practice.

A good example of research on culture that has strived for change in TEFL practices is the exploratory study of Hernandez and Samacá (2006). Their research on the interpretations of cultural content in FL allowed Colombian undergraduate students to reflect on how culture is

embedded in language learning processes. Their study provides reflection on how several aspects of TEFL are in one way or another affected by culture and the views teachers may have about it and promotes exercises of reflection so teachers are more aware of how their views of culture may affect their practice. In the same fashion, the work by Gómez (2015a; 2018) attempts to give a more prominent place to culture in TEFL practices as he promoted the development of ICC in different learning contexts through teaching more than only superficial culture. In a research study where he worked with an advanced EFL class in a public university in Colombia, Gómez (2015a) promoted ICC by creating a space where his students could work with authentic material to address topics of deep culture of the US. Gómez continued his line of work in another study, promoting ICC in undergraduate students. This time, he used news from renowned news outlets to encourage learners to approach beliefs, values and behaviors in foreign cultures and contrast them with their own (Gómez, 2018). His work constitutes an example of how interculturality can be approached in TEFL settings by defying stereotypes through helping students go deeper from initial assumptions and gaining a better understanding of the complexity of culture. The work of Gomez also provides a contextualized approach to the concepts of culture, surface and deep culture and ICC for his conceptual approach is situated in a local context.

Another example of how research has served as a means to ease the integration of culture to TEFL is the case study by Arias, Gómez and Vera (2015). They designed a hypermedia methodology that used ICT to create culturally rich spaces where students not only practiced their language skills but approached foreign cultures and hence, could develop intercultural competence. Their project is another example of how teacher can revolutionize their teaching settings by providing student with more than the typical celebratory information about target cultures that often is presented in traditional TEFL material and proves that facilitating students

with access to wider and deeper cultural content can not only help students develop a better understanding of cultural phenomena of the target culture, but also help them develop intercultural skills as well as communicative skills.

Nonetheless, despite the apparent recent push the integration of culture and the development of ICC has had in the field, research projects like the ones mentioned above seem to still have very limited effects on TEFL and TEFL material in regular everyday practices in the field. The following studies are useful to understand how complicated it has been for concepts like culture and interculturality to further permeate TEFL practices and materials. A study by Bugnone and Capasso (2019) about how teachers in an Argentinian university include cultural content in their foreign language teaching and pedagogical practices showed some concerning findings. Bugnone and Capasso categorized the different ways teachers dealt with culture in their FL classes in Universidad Nacional de la Plata. They divided them into three groups: The first group considered culture a separate component of their lessons, hence, they planned to teach specifically culture within their FL lessons providing abundant activities for learner to get in touch with the target culture. The second group considered culture was an implicit element of TEFL and considered dividing cultural teaching from language teaching was unfeasible. The last group did not even consider culture a part of language teaching. For them, cultural content was not directly related to their practice. They regarded cultural content as an unrealistic teaching goal in their contexts mostly because of the proficiency level in the foreign language of their students.

The study by Bugnone and Capasso (2019) presents a very accurate portrait of the present state of TEFL practices of many teachers and institutions in the local and international context. It provides the reader with somewhat worrisome insights about how many EFL teachers do not

actually consider teaching culture as part of their work in classroom, some of them considering this as unattainable goal and some others considering culture as an element that might take care of itself in TEFL settings. The work by Bugnone and Capasso is a serious call for more attention to the active teaching of culture in everyday practices which undoubtedly requires teachers to be more prepared to introduce cultural content and promote the development of intercultural skills in their contexts. This study also promotes a necessary reflection on how the conceptual frameworks of teachers regarding culture and interculturality necessarily enriches or limits their practices.

The evident neglect that culture has been constantly subjected to in TEFL practices is naturally reflected in their material. Several studies around the globe are adamant examples of the current situation of culture in TEFL material: A research study by Ali, Kazemian and Mahar (2015) showed students were unlikely to develop ICC in colleges and schools in Pakistan and Iran, because traditional methods were still predominant in these institutions. After accessing the pedagogical strategies and the textbooks used in a set of colleges and schools, they concluded there was a problematic scope on the teaching of English for it did not fully consider the incorporation of intercultural aspects through EFL teaching. The work of Ali, Kazemian and Mahar draws attention to the fact that most TEFL settings continuously make use of traditional methods that focus mostly exclusively on the development of linguistic skills but completely underestimate the role of culture in the development of such skills. Their study also puts in evidence the importance of material in the incorporation of cultural elements in EFL settings, for these are the primary source and contact many students have with cultural information.

Another Example of the unsuccessful incorporation of cultural content in language material comes from the study by Reimann (2009), who analyzed the potential of different EFL

textbook series used in Japan, many of them claiming to include cultural content, to be multicultural or raise cultural awareness. His critical analysis however, put into light the fact that in most cases publishing groups approach culture in a superficial manner by including limited and unrealistic cultural information which, rather than aiming to coincide with the needs of learners to develop intercultural skills to interact in a globalized world, tend to satisfy the market needs. This research study shows how on many occasions, the highly needed adjustments to the way in which culture is included in material are applied in a very superficial level, encapsulating culture within sections spread across the material and emphasizing on visiting cultures in a superficial manner that promotes stereotypes and hinder the development of intercultural skills.

Research studies carried in the local context seem to show similar conclusions: Gómez (2018) studied the cultural content in different Textbooks used for learners in basic, intermediate, and advanced level of English in Colombia. His analysis focused on figuring out if the cultural information provided by the material focused on surface or deep culture. His study concluded that most of the cultural content in the textbooks held mainly elements of surface culture. Thus, they promoted only static and congratulatory aspects of the cultures they presented, promoting the stereotyping of these cultures, and hindering the development of the intercultural competence by omitting a more complex and transformative view of culture. The work of Gómez provides a strong framework of the conceptualization of surface and deep culture as well as it provides powerful reflections about the general situation of EFL material in a local context. It also warns about the role material might have in the transmission of dangerous stereotypes to learners.

Another example of how most materials used of TEFL in local settings comes from the work by Guzman (2015). She undertook a content analysis of a Latin-American textbook from a popular publishing house in Colombia used to teach highschoolers. Her work focused on

exploring the material to identify elements of surface and deep culture and to establish the ICC savoirs, as understood by Rico (2011), that the material might develop in students. Her analysis concluded that even though the material did include elements from surface and deep culture, and presented aspects that might relate to the different ICC savoirs, the content was unlikely to develop ICC in their target learners as it was as well filled with information that portrayed a static and stereotypical vision of the target culture, which mostly referred to predominant cultures. Non predominant cultures lacked representation in the material as also did the culture of the learner. Without this crucial element, the reflection of their own culture, the material was not sufficient to help students become intercultural speakers. Her study not only presented a powerful insight about the cultural content in this textbook but also provided a strong research design which was considered as starting point in the present study. The work of Guzman showed a meticulous analysis of the content of the textbook by analyzing all its components and identifying several aspects of surface, deep culture, and the components of the ICC. The instruments she used were considered in the present study as well as the scope she held; for her work attempted to describe not only the characteristics of the cultural content in a textbook but also, how likely this content was to facilitate the development of intercultural skills.

Another study that contributed greatly to the scope of the present study is the one by Rico (2011) that studied the potential to develop ICC of an unspecified coursebook. His research considered cultural aspects necessary to develop ICC, and it also analyzed how useful the different activities the coursebook provided were to develop the different savoirs of the ICC. His study considered the perceptions of students as well as content analysis of the material. His findings showed students perceived the material mainly focused on presenting information about the target culture, but they did not really promote reflection on their own culture. They also

thought most cultural information related to superficial aspects. His analysis also showed that although the coursebook did point toward the development of some savoirs of the ICC, it fell short in the aim of having students become intercultural speakers. They were at best capable of presenting points of view of the target culture. The work of Rico is extremely valuable because it provides further perspective to the current state of the integration of culture and ICC in material used in the Colombian context, it also provides examples of how to carry out a content analysis. Additional relevance of his work comes from the theoretical framework, for Rico theorizes about a component that is not initially considered by the savoirs model of Byram (1997). He calls this component 'savoir communiquer' (as presented in the theoretical framework above), and complements Byram's model making it more adjusted to what can be observed in the classroom practices as well as in the material used in TEFL for it concerns mainly with observable proficiency.

Throughout this review it is easy to observe how poorly the TEFL field, and the material designed to work in it, have performed in the task of incorporating culture and how insufficient they have been to help learners develop ICC and become intercultural speakers. Mostly, because there is little awareness of the importance of culture, and it is either ignored or superficially approached. Nonetheless, recent policies in the local context, as the NBP (MEN, 2004) and the Programa Nacional de Inglés: Colombia, very well! (MEN, 2014), have considered culture and interculturality as central in development of the curriculum and the material used in EFL teaching in institutions all over the country. An earlier study that analyzed the success of the material emerging from the alliance between the MEN and the BC is the one by Henao, Gómez and Murcia (2019) about the English, Please! series.

In their exploratory study that combined both quantitative and qualitative techniques, Henao, Gómez and Murcia (2019) analyzed whether the material in question achieved one of its flag goals: to develop intercultural skills. To guide their work, they set as goals to tally the number of activities that actually promoted intercultural awareness and to find activities with potential to develop this skill. Their results showed the vast majority of activities in the English, Please! Series (over 80%) were not even related to interculturality and only a few (less than 2%) were devoted to the development of intercultural awareness.

Henao, Gómez and Murcia (2019) highlighted the importance of national policies that encourage the inclusion of cultural content and focus on helping learners develop intercultural skills, which mean in their words a “relative progress” in the approach to foreign language education in Colombia (p. 189). They also remark interculturality has become a central concept in the development of material in the frame of the NBP. Nevertheless, to their consideration, English, Please! entailed a “reductionist, instrumentalist and limited understanding of the concept” (p.190).

Beyond the fact that the study of Henao, Gómez and Murcia (2019) provides further insight about the difficulties in the integration of culture and interculturality in EFL material, it also provides elements of analysis about governmental initiatives in the local context that look after the development of intercultural skills and the integration of culture to language teaching, and invites to reflection on how they might not be as productive as they should. Their work also provides novel elements regarding the research design because their analysis holds a strong quantitative component. Thus, they make inferences and support their conclusions from data approached in statistically manner as well as maintaining a more reflective perspective from a qualitative approach.

The previous literature review presents a worrisome landscape about how culture has been regarded in the TEFL field despite the efforts of several scholars, institutions, and even governmental bodies. It also shows how sometimes developing intercultural skills has been restricted to isolated efforts or so far unfruitful initiatives. The present study aims to provide a fresher analysis of how culture continues to gain space in the design of TEFL material and to prove how efficient the integration of this key component has been in the frame of current national policies like the NBP. It also aims to provide a research design that parting from previous research projects adapts to the characteristics of the material in question to provide a fair view of it.

Chapter 3

Research Design

The following research design is based on the one constructed by Guzman (2015). She studied the characteristics of the cultural content and the elements of a Latin-American textbook with potential to develop ICC. Several orientations from her research design were suitable for the present study. Just like the work of Guzman, this study follows the qualitative paradigm with a descriptive methodology. For the characteristics of the object of study, this research project is also a content analysis with a deductive approach, in the terms described by Schreier (2012). The instruments used by Guzman were considered too. Her research instruments were two: checklists and coding frames. Although these were used as a starting point, checklists and coding frames were modified and supplemented in order to adapt them for the particular characteristics of the object of study and to correspond to the theoretical basis of the present project. Besides, a

complementary research instrument was used to provide further insights about the sample, that is observation, recorded in field notes.

Research paradigm

This study is situated within the characteristics and principles of the qualitative paradigm. In the words of Creswell (2011) a study belonging to this paradigm holds as a principle to reach a deep understanding about a certain phenomenon through the exploration of a problem. The need for such exploration often appears from the scarce knowledge about the object of study in a certain context. This principle frames the basis of this study because it aims to explore the ECO Kids series that is being currently implemented at Grancolombiano School as part of the steps following the school's adhesion to the Colombian Bilingual program. The analysis of the characteristics of this series seeks to provide a more complete and contextualized insight into the cultural content and the elements that might relate or even foster the development of ICC in this material.

About the search for a better understanding of a certain phenomenon, Schreier (2012) points out that in qualitative research this requires an active effort at interpretation on the part of the researcher. Creswell (2011) draws attention to this defining characteristic of the qualitative paradigm by saying it is subjective and reflexive. This refers to how researchers in this paradigm bring into their work their own experiences and backgrounds, as they discuss and collaborate with participants during the phases of the project. This aspect is reflected in this research for the personal background of the researcher and his experience while using ECO Kids is the starting point and what motivated a more structured observation of the material. Also, because to secure the reliability of the analysis, this study will nourish from the collaborative observation and

discussion about the material in question between the researcher and the advisor of this project, to ensure there is more than one point of view in the revision of the sample. The selection of this approach goes along with the ideas of Schreier (2012) who admits several interpretations of the same material can be equally valid and that understanding and attributing meaning is a constructive process. In the end, she emphasizes that addressing a research question in the qualitative paradigm involves exploring personal and social meanings. This aspect is capital for the definition of the paradigm of the present study. Even though part of the analysis of the material included working with amount and percentages, the basis of this seemingly quantitative part, is a presentation of a subjective understanding of the elements in the material.

In addition to the aspects already mentioned, the qualitative paradigm fits the purpose of this study because as Creswell (2011) highlights, the analysis of data necessarily sums up into revising and interpreting language. Regarding this aspect, he adds “the qualitative researcher analyzes the words to group them into larger meanings of understanding, such as codes, categories, or themes” (p. 19). Their description depicts in general terms how the data pertaining to this research depends primarily on language as well as it encompasses the methods this study will use to procure data and analyze it.

Research Methodology

This study used descriptive methodology. This methodology is often linked to quantitative research, however as Cohen et al (2000) highlight this type of studies are “set out to describe and to interpret what is” and “look at individuals, groups, institutions, methods and materials in order to describe, compare, contrast, classify, analyze and interpret the entities and the events that constitute their various fields of inquiry” (p. 169). Schreier (2012) points out the instruments

pertaining to the descriptive methodology, used to approach an object of study, aiming to explore what it is more than theorizing about it. In other words, descriptive studies do not attempt to create new theories but to provide deep insight into phenomena, or in this case, teaching material.

This study uses a descriptive methodology because it is concerned with exploring the characteristics of the cultural content in the ECO Kids Series and the characteristics of this material that relate to the concept of ICC and may foster its development.

Type of study

This research will be carried out as a content analysis. Schreier (2012) calls this type of analysis Qualitative Content Analysis, and she defines it as “a method for describing the meaning of qualitative material in a systematic way” (p.1). She says it is suitable for analyzing material that requires some level of interpretation in a way that the researcher constructs meaning from the data in it. She clarifies content analysis is not a method that will depict every single aspect of the material under analysis, but it is the role of the researcher to determine which are the criteria present in the material, that is to be observed and described.

McKee (2003) calls this method Textual Analysis, and he considers it a tool to interpret the content of certain material. McKee argues these materials, which he denotes as texts, are a way in which people immersed in a culture make sense of their reality. This way, he subscribes the material to the context where it is produced. Guest et al (2013) denominate this type of study as Document Analysis. As Schreier (2012) and McKee (2003), they consider the kind of material that is susceptible to be analyzed with this methodology is not only the one that appears in written form. Visual, audiovisual, audio recorded, and printed materials can be approached by

using content analysis. Materials are as diverse as their possible sources and presentations and their contents cover an infinite span, including educational material.

According to Schreier (2012) content analysis can be inductive or deductive. In an inductive approach, categories are emergent from data itself. In a deductive approach, the one selected from the present study, categories can come out from theory. Also, in a deductive approach, categories can arise from previous research. Both components are part of the present study, theory, and the previous study by Guzman (2015), though the first one occupies a main role and is nourished by modified elements from the second.

Object of study

This research aims to explore and analyze one of the various materials that the Colombian NBP has produced to be used by the different schools where it is being implemented. That wide set of materials is available on the website ECO 2.0 (ECO stands for English for Colombia). It displays a variety of TEFL resources that include textbooks, podcasts, and videos to be applied by institutions, teachers, students, and independent learners. The source is open to the public, and the materials can be easily accessed, downloaded, or broadcasted without charge at <https://eco.colombiaaprende.edu.co>. From that group of material ECO Kids, a series of TEFL podcasts, was selected. In the words of Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN) and the NBP representatives this material intends to respond to two main purposes: in the first place, they aim to promote English learning to foster the integral growth of kids. In the second place, the material holds the aim of acknowledging the cultural and social diversity of the regions and the schools of Colombia (MEN, 2023).

In fact, according to its creators (including the MEN, the United States Embassy, the Peace Corps, and preponderately, the BC) ECO Kids was earnestly thought to consider the diverse contexts, richness, and backgrounds in which kids grow. The emphasis put on intentionally permeating culture into the teaching of EFL is one of the main reasons why this material was selected to be analyzed in the present study.

Criteria for material selection

After careful consideration of the multiple materials in ECO 2.0 and the variety of populations they are directed to, it became necessary to focus on only one series. ECO Kids was selected based on the following criteria:

Firstly, the population I teach. The podcasts of the series are specifically directed to children in the primary level, beginner learners of EFL. Intently, to those who have connectivity and technology difficulties, which is the situation of many students at Grancolombiano IED. ECO Kids has been recently adopted as TEFL material at Grancolombiano School, this, following an invitation of the BC personnel who act as advisors in the implementation of the policies from the NBP that the school is enrolled in. ECO Kids has gradually gained some space to be used in third and fourth grade English classes as well as becoming a suggested complementary material for students to listen at home.

Secondly, the series openly claims to have an emphasis on interculturality. This is an aspect that is prominent not only in the classrooms at Grancolombiano School, but almost in every single educational setting in our country. For they have learners with very diverse cultural backgrounds, coming from many different parts of the country, from varied communities and cultural groups, and even from neighboring nations.

Finally, as Guest et al (2013) suggest, it is important to consider the availability of the resources to be analyzed. The ECO Kids series is available online for any person and the supplementary material that complements the podcasts (visual aids and material to be printed) and the documentation about the theoretical basis considered to develop the series are fully available too.

After selecting the object, a sample was delimited. To narrow the entire material to a representative sample some criteria were definitive. First, it is important to note that ECO Kids, as well as the material available on the ECO 2.0 website, seems to be a work in progress. When my research interest formed, the series had one season and only one document explaining the intercultural approach the material has. By the time this sample was selected, ECO kids had three seasons, teacher and student supporting material, and explanatory videos for every episode. However, after carefully revising the resources of the series, it was found that both teacher's and student's guides have no components related to culture or interculturality. The whole content of these guides is related to the instruction of English, with a strong emphasis on vocabulary and expressions. The Student's Guides are about 3 pages long and include a few written exercises. The Teacher's Guides are about 4 pages long, one and a half pages are devoted to what might be described as a typical scope and sequence, and the rest to a few extra exercises. Neither the scope and sequence nor the exercises refer to cultural or intercultural components. The explanatory videos and the teacher guides are part of a section on the website called Teacher Toolkit 2.0, but none of the videos refer to culture or interculturality, they focus on explaining how teachers can make use of material for EFL instruction. These supplementary resources were available only for season 1 of ECO Kids.

Despite the clear neglect of culture in the supplementary material, the podcasts do contain cultural information and elements that might relate or point towards the development of ICC. After hearing most episodes, it was decided that neither season 2, called ‘Climate Change Edition’, nor Season 3 were to be selected for the sample. Season 2 has a clear orientation towards environmental issues and Season 3 was, so far, only 6 episodes long. Since season 1 seemed to be the only one complete, 8 episodes out of the 16 in this season were selected as a sample.

To choose these 8 episodes, another criterion was taken into consideration: the contents of Grancolombiano School curriculum. To increase the opportunities to listen to the material, the advisor and the researcher preferred this criterion over random sampling to give the researcher the opportunity to be exposed to the material in the setting where it is implemented. Even though this study does not concern with the implementation of the material or actual development of ICC by any group of students, exposition to the material was thought paramount to explore it in depth. These are the eight episodes that compounded the final sample:

- Episode 1: Here is the Radio!
- Episode 2: At the farmer’s market.
- Episode 5: Indy and the Arhuaca mochila.
- Episode 7: The blackout, a dark night with stars.
- Episode 9: The one hundred arms of the immortal, a righteous cause.
- Episode 11: Indy and the ajiaco santafereño.
- Episode 12: Indy wants to learn to dance joropo.
- Episode 13: New Year’s Eve in Villa Alegría.

Sample preparation

The nature of ECO Kids posed a challenge. Since the material to be analyzed is a podcast, it was necessary to transcribe its contents prior to the application of the instruments. Different from other audio materials, podcasts not only contain conversations, but sound effects, music, jingles, intros, and ambient sounds that enrich the audience experience. After listening to some podcasts, the researcher and advisor agreed that some of these resources did contain relevant elements for the present study. To make transcriptions as comprehensive as possible, most of the process was made by the researcher himself, trying to be meticulous so no relevant aspects were left out.

To help the posterior analysis be accurate and organized, the transcriptions were modeled after theater or movie scripts, and to make possible the labeling, part of the coding frame process presented below, time marks were added (by minutes) and every intervention of the characters or other sound effects in the podcast were separated in units or lines and called ‘utterances’. These utterances were then numbered, so that when they are referred to in the instruments or data analysis they will usually be codified as M#U# (Minute, number of the minute; Utterance, number of the utterance in the minute). An example of the transcription process can be found in appendix A. This preparation of the sample made easier the application of the instruments described below.

Data collection instruments

As mentioned beforehand, this research will use content analysis as the methodology to approach and describe data. As Schreier (2012) mentions, this content analysis is a powerful tool to reach a more refined portion of data, coming from a large amount, to allow the researcher to

identify certain criteria pertaining to the objectives of the study, in this case, identifying the characteristics of the cultural content used in the ECO Kids podcasts and the content related to the concept of Intercultural Communicative Competence.

For this purpose, the content analysis of this study used checklists combined with coding frames, and observations in the form of audio field notes.

Checklists: Guest et al (2013) include checklists in a set of instruments regularly used in content analysis designs. They mention checklists often have several criteria the researcher sets as starting point to observe if they are present or not in the sample. Following this statement, as part of the process of observation, checklists were implemented to serve as criteria markers that allow the identification of elements relating to the cultural characteristics and elements that might be related to the development of ICC present in the material.

The present study used the checklists in the research by Guzman (2015) as a reference. Hers contained 27 items divided into three sections. However, these were modified considering the own theoretical framework of this study and some limitations that were observed in the work of Guzman. The checklists in the present study used a total of 73 items, divided into five sections in the following form:

- Section 1: Culture views. This section included some general views, concepts, and descriptions of culture emerging from theory. This section was not present in the study by Guzman (2015). It had 8 items in total.
- Section 2: Surface culture: This section had 14 items of surface culture manifestations.
- Section 3: Deep culture: This section had 11 items regarding deep culture elements.

Sections 2 and 3 have a similar counterpart in the study of Guzman (2015), however, the number of items differs for more elements were searched in the present study. Besides, these three sections added an indicator that is not present in the work of Guzman, a differentiation between elements related to the own culture and the foreign culture. For own culture, it was contemplated the communities in the Colombian national territory, for foreign culture, every cultural content related to a community from abroad Colombia. These sections were constructed to answer the research question about the characteristics of the cultural content in ECO Kids.

- Section 4: Orientation of the cultural content towards the ICC. The items in this part (21 in total) were aimed to search for characteristics in the material that might favor or hinder the development of ICC. The items here were drawn from literature and were not part of the design of Guzman (2015).
- Section 5: Intercultural Communicative Competence. This section was divided into five subsections. To provide insight into more than just the presence of elements related to each of the savoirs in the model by Byram (1997), items were numbered (starting with 1) to establish how basic or advanced the elements presented by ECO Kids were regarding the development of the ICC. The definition of the level of these items came from theory but also from the constructive dialogue between advisor and researcher.

Sections 4 and 5 had no columns to show if the items corresponded to their own or foreign culture because they were constructed to answer the second research question about the elements in the material that pointed towards the development of ICC. Nonetheless, some of the items in them did make a differentiation, between own and foreign culture, when it was considered useful.

Sections 1 and 4 were thought to provide a broader scope or explore in-depth elements related to sections 2, 3 and 5, which were the main and the ones that are most reflected in the data analysis below. The checklists had columns to report the existence or non-existence of the elements in the material and a column to write codes with the information of the location of the utterances in the material with the searched content. From the number of utterances, it was possible to obtain percentages about the presence of the elements in the material. This aspect was not present in the work of Guzman, who obtained percentages based on qualitative descriptors only.

An example of the checklists used in this research can be found in Appendix B. This instrument was used along with coding frames.

Coding frames are a means by which the researcher organizes and handles the data coming from the material (Schreier, 2012). Coding frames work by developing a systematic description of the material by dividing it into segments and assigning them to categories of a coding frame. Schreier (2012) says they solve a regular issue that affects the researcher, which is getting overwhelmed by the amount of data. It solves it by focusing the attention of the researcher on smaller more representative aspects of the material. Guest et al (2013) remark they need to be enclosed by the objectives of the research and the research questions themselves. The coding frames of this study are to be focused on the characteristics of the ECO Kids series about the cultural content and to figure out to what extent this content might foster the ICC. The coding frames in this research were constructed a priori from theory and would later become categories and subcategories in the data analysis.

Despite the wide span of items this approach aimed to identify, advisor and researcher resolved that it was necessary to find a complementary instrument that could add depth to the

data emerging from the checklists, the coding frames, and the subsequent tabulation of the information. To add a more descriptive and open approach to the research design, field notes were implemented.

Field notes: According to Creswell (2011) field notes are texts that can be either written or recorded by the researcher to register observations. In this case, field notes were recorded after using the object of study in context. Rather than focusing on the interaction of learners with the podcasts, the observations focused on the material itself. The type of observation applied in this study is what Cohen et al (2000) describe as structured observation. In it, the researcher approaches the object of study with a predefined set of items or questions. These questions relate directly to the sections of the checklists and the subsequent frame coding. The questions that guided the fieldnotes were the following:

1. What elements in the episode relate to cultural views present in the theory of this study?
2. What elements in the episode relate to surface culture?
3. What elements in the episode relate to deep culture?
4. What elements in the podcasts might show an orientation towards or against the development of the ICC?
5. What elements in the podcasts might relate to the savoirs in the ICC model of Byram (1997)?

They were set at the beginning of every fieldnote entry. A total of eight field notes were recorded, one for every episode of the sample. The recording took place after the implementation of an episode of the material in a class. Though the questions were used to activate knowledge,

while recording, the researcher took liberties to go back and forth to answer the questions to guarantee no relevant aspects were left out.

Field notes in this study contained the two perspectives described by Cohen et al (2000) and Creswell (2011), descriptive and reflective. A descriptive perspective refers to an account of the elements of the material as observed. A reflective perspective refers to the personal thoughts of the researcher, impressions, ideas, or reflections about the content of the material.

It is important to clarify that typically content analysis (Schreier, 2012) does not include field notes. However, both the researcher and the advisor concluded this instrument contributed greatly to the achievement of the objectives set for the study.

Since field notes were taken in the form of recordings instead of written notes, they were later transcribed using an online tool called Transkriptor (app.transkriptor.com). In order not to hinder the quality and fluency of the recorded notes, they were originally recorded in Spanish. So, to use them in the data analysis below, the transcriptions were translated by the researcher into English.

Simple codes were applied to the data coming from this instrument: The ones used in the questions, that also correspond to the sections in the checklists, and the coding frames.

Samples of field notes can be found all along the data analysis chapter.

Role of the Researcher:

Just as Guzman (2015) describes in her project, the role of the researcher of the present study is that of a material analyst. The researcher looks to create a rich and accurate characterization of the cultural content in the ECO Kids series, as well as provide a thorough revision of the elements that might relate to the development of the ICC in the material. For this,

the researcher, even though a user of the material, adopted the role of an outsider to describe impartially the contents of the series.

This outsider perspective has to do with the ethical considerations inherent to the study, just as Freeman (1998) mentions, the researcher must act in all fairness towards the object of study, this necessarily refers to the fact that the material had to be analyzed without a tendentious perspective, without a congratulatory or disqualifying approach of the characteristics of the series. To be as fair and objective towards the material as possible, the instruments were as comprehensible as possible to seek for positive and negative elements similarly. Items included in the checklists contained a positive and a negative counterpart so that the material had equal chances to show its strengths and weaknesses, not just one or the other. By the same token, the descriptions, and reflections in the field notes emerged from questions that didn't incline towards disqualifying or approving the suitability of the material to present cultural content or develop ICC but promoted an unbiased approach to the content of the series.

Another ethical consideration of the role of the researcher arises from the approach used for the data analysis: a priori. To maintain the academic integrity of the study, the categories of analysis emerged only from well-founded theory that did not show a marked tendency to favor or bar the analysis material but provided reference of elements for a fair analysis. The data was also handled with integrity, securing not any distortion of the information lead to arbitrary conclusions about the characteristics of the material.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis and Findings

This chapter describes the processes undertaken to analyze the gathered data as well as presenting some relevant considerations about the validity of the present study and the triangulation process the data went through. After that, a detailed report of the findings of this project is presented.

Validity and triangulation

Cohen et al. (2000) point out that absolute objectivity in research is quite an unattainable goal, for necessarily, the researcher will bring to some extent, his/her subjectivity to the data. Freeman (1998) remarks finding the absolute truth and procuring the replicability of the results of a study are characteristics that have been inherited from a positivist point of view, but they are mostly not applicable to research in education. Cohen et al. conclude validity does not concern with complete objectivity but with giving valid meaning to the data, and an understanding of a phenomenon from a properly structured research process. Cohen et al. and Freeman define this type of validity as internal validity (External validity refers to the implications of the research). He mentions internal validity refers to the design and the research process itself.

Cohen et al. (2000) list certain criteria that can be used as indicators to ensure the validity of qualitative studies. Among these, the present study meets several of these criteria. To start with, the present study used peer examination of the data. This study is the product of the collaboration between researcher and advisor, who planned the approach to examine the object of study and who, continuously observed the progress and revised the emerging data, during and after the administration of the data collection instruments. The work of advisor and researcher

can be observed in what Cohen et al. call cogency of the data, referring to an area of validity Freeman (1998) calls descriptive validity, which means that the data and findings here presented reflect what was studied. Another attribute of this research project listed by Cohen et al. is the auditability of the research design. The research design of the present study is a product of the revision of the work of Guzman (2015), but it included several adjustments made by the researcher and the advisor and the inclusion of a different instrument, field notes, that were suitable for the purposes of the study. These instruments were carefully considered and planned so they could address the guiding research questions. Freeman (1998) refers to this characteristic as ecological validity. Instruments not only went through careful planification prior to their application, they were also piloted and refined so they could provide insight about the material.

Besides, the object of study and the instruments, as well as the resulting data, can be audited by any person. This can be done thanks to the means used to record, store, and retrieve the data, which is another aspect of the study that contributed to reinforce its validity in Cohen et al. terms (2000). To preserve the data coming from the application of the instruments, these were recorded, transcribed, and then tabulated and preserved in digital format, so they can be accessed at any time.

Additionally, this study meets the validity aspects mentioned by Guzman about content analysis. She mentions Levine-Donnestein (1999) to say a key indicator for the validity of content analysis comes from the criteria used to establish the coding frames. The validity then of the criteria used in this study relays on the ideas of Schreier (2012) who remarks coding frames can emerge from theory, which was the fundamental aspect that guided coding frames in checklists in this research project. Guzman (2015) also highlights the importance of maintaining consistency at the time of applying code frames. To ensure this item was met, researcher and

advisor revised carefully all the items that compounded the checklists, so that it was clear what every item was seeking. To maintain a stable criterion, descriptors were added to some items. Besides, to attain 'fairness,' another key characteristic of validity mentioned by Freeman (1998), items in the checklists were not tendentiously positive or negative towards the material. Negative aspects always had positive counterparts in the checklists and the guiding questions for the field notes were open to act according to that principle of fairness towards the object of study.

The triangulation process in this study follows the principle stated by Freeman (1998) who describes this process as an act of bringing several sources of information or more than one point of view into the research of a phenomenon. Triangulation can take place in different forms. Creswell (2011) characterizes triangulation as corroborating information by either considering perspectives from different individuals, different data or applying different instruments. The triangulation process in this study fits some of the types presented by Cohen (2000) and Freeman (1998). They concur to mention one of the types to triangulate in a research process is Data Triangulation or using several sources of data. In the case of this project, it is reflected on the use of two different instruments as sources of data. They also mention Investigator Triangulation, which is present in this work in the form of the collaboration between advisor and researcher, who continuously discussed the data emerging from the instruments as they were applied. Finally, this research project also has elements of Methodological triangulation, Freeman describes it as multiple ways of collecting data, and Creswell (2011) says it can refer to using a quantitative and a qualitative approach to the object of study. In spite that this study cannot be considered as to have used a mixed methods approach, the tabulation coming from checklists and coding frames provided a quantitative perspective, and the description, coming from the field notes, supplied a qualitative perspective. Both perspectives provided elements that

complemented the analysis for in the one hand, checklists and the corresponding tabulation coming from them allowed the researcher to describe in an orderly fashion the material and field notes allowed the contrast of this description exercise and also they provided a space for a more flexible reflection on the contents of the samples.

Data Analysis

This study used a priori approach for data analysis. According to Freeman (1998), a priori codes are those that do not emerge from the data itself but from outside. In this project, they come from theory and as Freeman establishes, in this approach categories are predetermined, they correspond to an aforethought approach to the object of study.

To prepare the data resulting from the application of the instruments some procedures were carried out on them. In the first place, as explained before, after carefully obtaining detailed transcripts from the selected sample, checklists were implemented to establish the existence or non-existence of the specified items in the material. Later, coding frames were applied to the transcripts using colors to mark every single utterance (line of dialogue or sound effect in the transcripts) according to the elements of the five sections of the checklists regarding cultural views from theory, surface culture, deep culture, the orientation of the material towards the development of ICC and the ICC savoirs. If it was necessary, an utterance could be marked using different colors. Then, the representation of every item in the checklists was registered in a cell in the checklist. These registries were counted, and it was determined how many times every item was referenced in the material. The same process was repeated with every single item in the checklists. Total utterances of every episode were counted too. With that information, it was possible to quantify and calculate percentages of the representation of every item in the sample.

After carrying out this process in the transcript of every episode, the information was tabulated providing a general landscape of the presence of the searched items in ECO Kids.

The process of tabulation was carried out using a spreadsheet. The data were revised to obtain insight regarding the existence or absence of elements of the five sections in the checklists. Graphs came in handy to express in a more visual form the finding coming from the tabulated data.

Separately, at the time checklists were being implemented, observation was applied, and field notes were recorded. After these recordings were transcribed, they were coded as presented before, using the five codes related to the initiating questions and the sections in the checklists. Finally, the information from the checklists and the code framing process, was contrasted with the data emerging from the field notes. The resulting categories correspond to a prior plan and are presented in Table 1.

Table 1*Categories and subcategories of this study***Culture and Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in ECO Kids****Research question 1:** What are the characteristics of the cultural content in ECO kids?**Category 1****ECO Kids presents some elements related to surface culture****Subcategories**

- 1 ECO kids presents some elements related to gastronomy/cuisine, traditional arts, and geography.
- 2 ECO kids presents few elements related to dressing style, traditions, and customs.
- 3 ECO kids presents scarce elements related to arts and people history.
- 4 ECO Kids presents abundant elements related to surface of culture of the own culture compared to surface culture elements of the foreign culture.
- 5 ECO kids does not present sufficient elements of surface culture of foreign cultures.

Category 2**ECO kids series presents some elements related to deep culture****Subcategories**

- 1 ECO kids presents scarce elements related to social relationships and value system, beliefs and assumptions and, the way people see the world
- 2 The presentation of deep culture in the ECO kids series relays mainly on language in use.

Research question 2: To what extent elements in ECO Kids might foster the development of ICC?**Category 3****ECO Kids series presents some aspects that point towards developing ICC in a very basic level.****Subcategories**

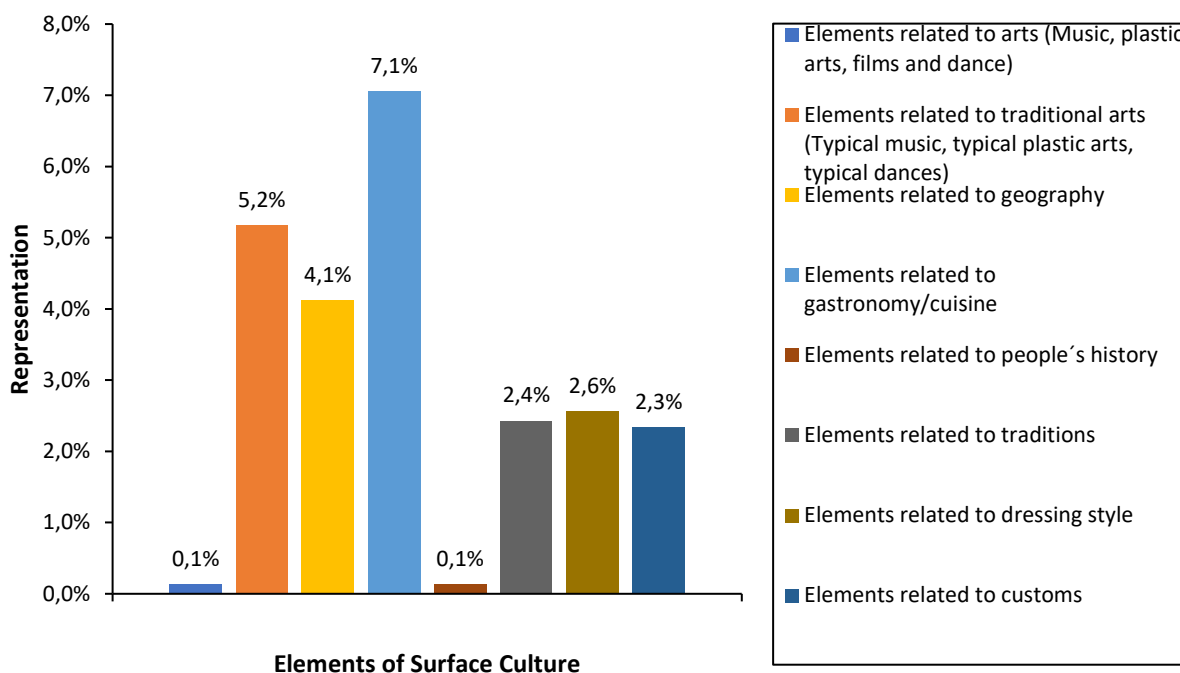
- 1 ECO kids presents some elements related to savoirs (knowledge).
- 2 ECO kids presents some elements related to savoir être (intercultural attitudes).
- 3 ECO kids presents very few elements related to savoir comprendre (skills of interpreting and relating).
- 4 ECO kids presents some elements related to savoir apprendre/ faire (Skills of discovery and interaction) and savoir communiquer.
- 5 ECO kids presents few elements related to savoir s'engager (critical cultural awareness).

Findings

The findings presented in this section correspond to the results of the data analysis and answer the research questions stated at the beginning of this project. They also reflect the fulfillment of the research objectives that supported the research questions. The first and second categories of this data analysis give answer to the first research question of this study: ‘What are the characteristics of the cultural content in ECO kids?’ and according to the first set objective these categories, explore, analyze, and describe the cultural content presented in the ECO Kids series from the perspective of the theoretical constructs developed earlier. The third category answers the second research question: ‘To what extent elements in ECO Kids might foster the development of ICC?’ and it shows the achievement of the second research objective stated in the project by characterizing the cultural elements related to the Intercultural Communicative Competence in the ECO Kids series and evaluating to what extent these elements contributed to the development of this competence. The findings presented below nourished from the constructs presented in the theoretical framework and are accompanied by a comparison of the results of prior research on the topics of cultural content and development of ICC in material used in the TEFL field.

First Category: ECO kids presents some elements related to surface culture

Overall, though in a low proportion, the ECO Kids series does present some elements related to surface culture. There are in total 523 references (in the 2184 utterances that totaled the sample) made to surface culture elements in the analyzed material. Figure 1 shows the general representation of single surface culture elements in the sample, both of the own culture and of the foreign culture.

Figure 1*Elements of surface culture in ECO Kids*

Proportions of surface culture elements are not very high in general terms but still, they are a key component, for most of the cultural content of the series concerns with surface culture. The following is an analysis of the elements of surface culture present in the material and what they tell us about the broad layout the creators of ECO kids may have intended with their inclusion in the podcasts.

First subcategory: ECO kids presents some elements related to gastronomy/cuisine, traditional arts, and geography.

Among the surface culture elements presented in the material, the most noticeable elements are the ones related to gastronomy/cuisine, traditional arts, and geography.

The surface culture element with the largest representation in the selected sample relates to gastronomy/cuisine (with 7,1 % of the total sample, 154 of 2184 utterances). This proportion

might have a certain influence from the criteria used to select the sample (becoming supporting material for the curriculum of the school where the research problem emerged). However, it is important to clarify that only three out of the eight episodes related to this topic. Yet, this element transpired in episodes where it was not the main topic. The following is an example of how elements related to gastronomy/cuisine were presented in ECO kids where these were not the main topic:

- 2 RAMÓN: OK, kids. Mi mamá y yo necesitamos su ayuda para nuestra gran celebración de fin de año. (Almost whispering) Por favor llamen, llamen ya.
- 3 (Phone ringing)
- 4 RAMÓN: This is fantastic!
- 5 MAXI: Hello? Who is there?
- 6 CALLER 1: Hi, my name is Fernanda and I m from Socorro. I recommend that Ramon's mom makes cabrito al horno. We eat it in special occasions, like birthdays and weddings.
- 7 IRENE: Fernanda, that sounds delicious. ¿Ves, Ramón? El cabrito al horno que prepara la familia de Fernanda para celebrar cumpleaños y bodas puede servir para tu celebración. Tell us more!

(ECO Kids. Season [S] 1 Episode [E] 13 transcript. Minute 8 Utterances 2 to 7)

In the previous example, gastronomy/cuisine elements are presented along some other cultural information, as noted in the field notes of the episode:

And also, it can be observed that from the topic of the New Year celebration, not only elements related to gastronomy are talked about, but also, some elements related to traditions, national and foreign ones, to celebrate New Year.

(Field notes episode 13. May 5, 2023. Starting at 0:00:59)

However, different from the previous excerpt, on some occasions, elements related to gastronomy/cuisine were included in the podcasts without an adequate context, isolated or portraying incomplete information in a manner that might hinder their effective presentation and development. The following excerpt is an example of this:

- 6 MAXI: OK, I would like to try the sancocho with fish. Thank you.
- 7 WAITER: Perfecto, buena elección. Y la niña ¿qué va a pedir?
- 8 IRENE: What do you recommend?
- 9 WAITER: Sopa de cebada perlada. Es el plato del día. It has a unique flavor! I recommend it! It comes with pieces of meat and some vegetables.
- 10 IRENE: Con pedacitos de carne y vegetales, es perfecto. Listo, voy a ordenar cebada perlada.
- 11 RAMÓN: A mí tráigame una mazamorra chiquita, ¡pero bien grande!

(ECO Kids. S1E11 transcript. Minute 6. Utterances 6 to 11.)

About gastronomy, it is necessary to point out that it is the feature that has the highest number of elements in the program. Despite that, there are some elements that are decontextualized. I mean, several kinds of soup are mentioned but there is no context

about where they come from or what is their [historical] origin as it is done with one in specific, the ajiaco.

Many of the dishes that are mentioned in the program lack adequate contextualization, it is not possible to identify what their origin, neither geographical nor historical, is, like it's done with the central dish of the episode, ajiaco.

(Field notes episode 11. April 26, 2023. Starting at 00:02:39)

As noted, elements about gastronomy/cuisine sometimes lacked either the context or the necessary information. This way they were not enriching cultural content in the radio program but isolated references.

After gastronomy/cuisine, the surface culture element with the second highest representation in the series is the one related to traditional arts. This element is present in 5,2% of the sample (113 references were made about this element in 2184 utterances). This item encompasses several typical cultural manifestations: typical music, typical plastic arts (including artisan products) and typical dances.

It is important to observe ECO Kids has a clear emphasis on typical manifestations, privileging a focus on traditional elements over an approach to culture in its current state, as lived in everyday life, regarding both own and foreign cultures. Clear evidence of this inclination comes from the comparison of the total count of references of traditional arts (113 elements in the sample) vs artistical manifestations as they might appear in daily life (only 3). For instance, non-typical music appears only a few times, as ambient sounds in the podcast while typical music was a common element of intros and ambient sounds and presented along with other

elements like typical dances. There is a very marked neglect of music as it currently is, especially for a radio show.

Altogether, music in general is poorly used in the series, only acting as ambient sounds. Although these, for obvious reasons, are important features of any radio program, the unexplained use of music often turned this an unsuccessful contribution to the presentation of cultural content in the series:

Like in previous episodes, in this one, some elements related to traditional arts are presented, especially typical music. Though, this is done basically through the intros of every section of the show, where as usual, some artistic expressions are presented in an isolated form, maybe, a little decontextualized. And there is no mention about their origin, nor are they connected to the other content of surface culture that is included in the program.

(Field notes episode 13. May 5, 2023. Starting at 00:01:50)

The same approach is given to other art manifestations, such as typical dances. These are the central topic of an episode and yet, the information included about them in the podcast is very partial, and several cultural aspects that might have been addressed through this element (like music, the symbolism behind dances, historical origin, etc.) are left aside:

11 IRENE: Así fue como le enseñamos a un extranjero bailar uno de los bailes más representativos de nuestro país. Lo recuerdo muy bien.

12 (Rewinding sound effect)

13 (Joropo music playing)

14 IRENE: Indy, move your shouldeeeers! Your hips! Your legs! One, two. One, two. Faster, faster, faster! One, two. One, two. One...aaaand turn!

15 (Stamping feet)

16 INDY: One, two. One, two. One... Irene, like this?

5:00

1 IRENE: (Exhasperated) Indy, come on. Feel the beat!

2 INDY: (Panting) Irene, estoy tratando de sentir el golpe musical.

3 IRENE: Move your shourldeers!

4 INDY: ¿Así? ¿Moviendo mis hombros así? (sighs)

5 IRENE: (Despotic) You need to practice.

6 INDY: (Gasping for air) oh, sí. Sé que necesito practicar, y mucho.

(ECO Kids. S1E12 transcript. Minute 4. Utterances 6 to 11. Minute 5. Utterances 1 to 6.)

The poor contextualization and lack of more complete information about this typical dance makes it difficult to approach other cultural aspects that might relate to this element. This field notes entry reflects upon that fact:

Joropo, for example, could have been used to talk about the integration of cultures, or common elements that different communities, like Colombia and Venezuela, for example, have. And this is not seen anywhere in the podcast. (...) The same thing happens with some other dances mentioned in the show.

(Field notes episode 12. May 2, 2023. Starting at 00:01:39)

Another element related to Surface Culture with a significative representation in the material is geography. Geography references are common in the jingle intros of several sections. Besides, geographic locations are constantly mentioned in the podcast as guests or interviewees from different backgrounds interact either with phone calls or in person encounters. The total percentage of references made about geography in the sample is 4,1%, (90 utterances out of 2183). The following fragments show how geography was referenced in the podcast:

- 4 NARRATOR: Acá comienza...
- 5 (Kids speaking out loud) ECO Kids!
- 6 NARRATOR: ...English for Colombia. Te invitamos a que nos acompañes en esta aventura recorriendo nuestro país.
- 7 MAXI: Desde el Amazonas hasta los Andes.
- 8 RAMÓN: Desde el caribe, hasta el Caquetá.
- 9 IRENE: Desde los Llanos, hasta el Pacífico.
- 10 (Kids speaking out loud) From Colombia to the world!

(ECO Kids. S1E1 transcript. Minute 0. Utterances 4 to 10.)

- 1 REPORTER: Where are you from?
- 2 (Carnival music starts to play in the background)
- 3 INTERVIEWEE 1: Hi, I'm from Brazil.

- 4 REPORTER: What actions do Brazilian people take to protect the environment? Le acabo de preguntar qué acciones toma la gente en Brasil para proteger el medio ambiente.
- 5 INTERVIEWEE 1: We follow the three Rs: reduce, reuse, and recycle.

(ECO Kids. S1E9 transcript. Minute 10. Utterances 1 to 5)

Regardless of the many references made to geography in the material, it is important to clarify that most of them are superficial, sometimes lacking deeper information about locations or connections to other aspects of culture.

Despite the material being directed to kids that are studying in primary, and that they should know in advance many of the geographical elements presented in it, there is not a deep focus on these elements, but they are simply mentioned, only represented by name within the podcast. By the same token, the elements related to geography of foreign cultures in the podcast are merely mentions of countries. There is no depth regarding the content of geography that is presented.

(Field notes episode 1. April 11, 2023. Starting at 00:02:39)

It is also important to point out that since geography was a recurrent component of intros, it tends to lose relevance as references to locations are constantly repeated and eventually become rutinary.

Second subcategory: ECO kids presents few elements related to dressing style, traditions, and customs.

Though in a lower proportion compared to the elements already presented, dressing style, traditions, and customs have certain representation in ECO kids.

References made to dressing style in the analyzed sample add up to 2,6% (56 mentions). Continuing with a trend also present in the elements about arts, the presentation of content related to dressing style is also approached through a traditional lens. The references made to this component are made through the presentation of artisan products. Most of the content regarding dressing style is presented in episode 5. The following is a sample of how the content about this aspect of superficial culture is presented:

- 5 INTERVIEWEE 1: I bought a woolen ruana in Boyacá, in a small town called Cucunubá.
- 6 (Ding)
- 7 ELSA: Niños, niñas. Si escucharon que este entrevistado dijo *bought*. Bought es el pasado de buy. Él dijo *I bought* a woolen ruana in Boyacá. Es decir, yo compré una ruana de lana en Boyacá.
- 8 INTERVIEWEE 1: I learned that a ruana is similar to a poncho, and it's made of wool. It's typical in the cold highlands in the department of Boyacá.

(ECO Kids. S1E9 transcript. Minute 10. Utterances 1 to 5)

Elements about traditions can also be found in the podcasts. The highest count of references made to this topic can be found in episode 13, where the main topic was New Year's celebration. It has a clear emphasis on food, but the creators of the material integrated some other traditional aspects and different celebrations, as can be observed in the following fragments:

- 1 NEWS ANCHOR: Nuestra reportera estuvo también visitando tierras incas en Perú.
Escuchemos su reportaje.
- 2 REPORTER: Esta vez los saludo desde tierras cercanas y sagradas. Machu Pichu en Perú.
- 3 Hi, could you please tell us what traditional food you prepare for this New Year's Eve?
- 4 (Peruvian flute music playing in the background)
- 5 INTERVIEWEE 2: We celebrate New Year's Eve with our family, everybody brings food and drinks.
- 6 REPORTER: Qué delicia compartir en familia y que cada uno aporte con comida y bebidas.

(ECO Kids. S1E13 transcript. Minute 11. Utterances 6 to 12)

- 1 RAMÓN: Some traditions include celebrating New Year's Eve with your family, Enjoying food and drinks.
- 2 MAXI: El año nuevo yo siempre lo celebró con mi familia. Compartimos comidas y bebidas. También bailamos, cantamos, jugamos al amigo secreto y nos tomamos muchas fotos para ponerlas en el álbum familiar.
- 3 (People in a party in the background)
- 4 IRENE: Another tradition is to eat grapes at midnight and making wishes.

- 5 RAMÓN: el año pasado yo me comí todas las uvas a las 12 en punto, y pedí varios deseos.

(ECO Kids. S1E13 transcript. Minute 16. Utterances 7 to 11)

Elements of both surface and deep culture are presented in this episode through the central topic of New Year's Eve celebrations:

In this episode we can see there is an integration, which is ideal to present elements of surface culture. So, from the New Year topic, not only information related to food is presented, and despite it not being very deep or not having much analysis, it allows us to make a connection with the topic of traditions. Also, it is possible to observe some relationships of family members, for example, that interact in the New Year celebrations. This is important because this is a form addressing surface culture elements, allowing the presentation of deep culture elements as well.

We can find some elements related to deep culture too, about value system. Then, from traditions, we can observe the importance some family relationships have, the value that, for example, elderly people have inside families.

(Field notes episode 13. May 5, 2023. Starting at 00:04:11)

Among the surface culture elements in the series, it is also possible to find references to customs. Most references made to this item can be found in episode 2 and they share a central spot in the episode with Gastronomy/Cuisine. The way customs were referenced along with gastronomy can be identified in some fragments of the podcasts and are mentioned in the field notes:

- 1 (Dogs barking in the background. Market sounds)
- 2 INDY: Do you have chirimoyas? ¿Usted sí tiene chirimoyas o sabe dónde las encuentro? Where can I find them?
- 3 VENDOR 2: Pues, no tengo. Pero, ¿sí ve ese señor de ruana y sombrero?
- 4 INDY: Yes. I see him. Lo veo.
- 5 VENDOR 2: Pues ahí no es. Es más allá. Al fondo a la derecha.
- 6 INDY: Oh, great. Ando buscando esa chirimoya. Thank you, bye! Have a nice day.
- 7 IRENE: Sí, que tenga un buen día, adiós y gracias.

(ECO Kids. S1E2 transcript. Minute 6. Utterances 2 to 8)

It is possible to make a link between the form in which some gastronomical products are sold or bought, for this may vary greatly in some cultures. So, from a visit to the farmer's market, it is possible to see something related to the customs in our country. Those two elements are the most predominant in this episode, gastronomy, and customs.

(Field notes episode 2. April 13, 2023. Starting at 00:02:30)

Third subcategory: ECO kids presents scarce elements related to arts and people history.

Arts (considered as present artistical manifestations) are among the two last ranked elements with representation in the analyzed material. As has been established before, this element is greatly underused in the material. It is surprising that music, part of the arts component, is not used in a high proportion given the podcasts resemble a radio show but the 3 times elements related to arts showed in the sample, it was in the form of ambient music.

The other element ranked last, with representation in the material, is History. Like elements related to arts, history is barely considered in the series. The references made about this element talked about historical information about typical products of culture, like in this fragment where the characters comment about the origin of the movements in Mapalé:

- 3 MAXI: Un baile muy exigente físicamente.
- 4 IRENE: Muchos vienen de las influencias afro e indígenas.
- 5 RAMÓN: Y también algunas españolas. Es que somos la mezcla de muchas culturas.
- 6 IRENE: Sí, eso me gusta.

(ECO Kids. S1E12 transcript. Minute 14. Utterances 3 to 6)

Or this interaction where a chef explains the history behind ajiaco's ingredients:

- 2 RAMÓN: What is the origin of ajiaco? ¿Que cuál es el origen del ajiaco?
- 3 CHEF: La historia del ajiaco une lo que los conquistadores españoles se encontraban aquí, como la papa y el maíz. Y de España, las alcaparras y la crema de leche. Lo que le da el sabor único al ajiaco, son las guascas.

(ECO Kids. S1E11 transcript. Minute 3. Utterances 2 and 3)

History is one of the elements that is greatly underused in the podcast, but regarding surface culture there were some elements, searched by the instruments applied to the sample, that did not show any representation in the material. These are elements related to literature, religion, festivals, and personalities. It is also important to clarify that no elements that were not considered by the instruments had presence in the sample.

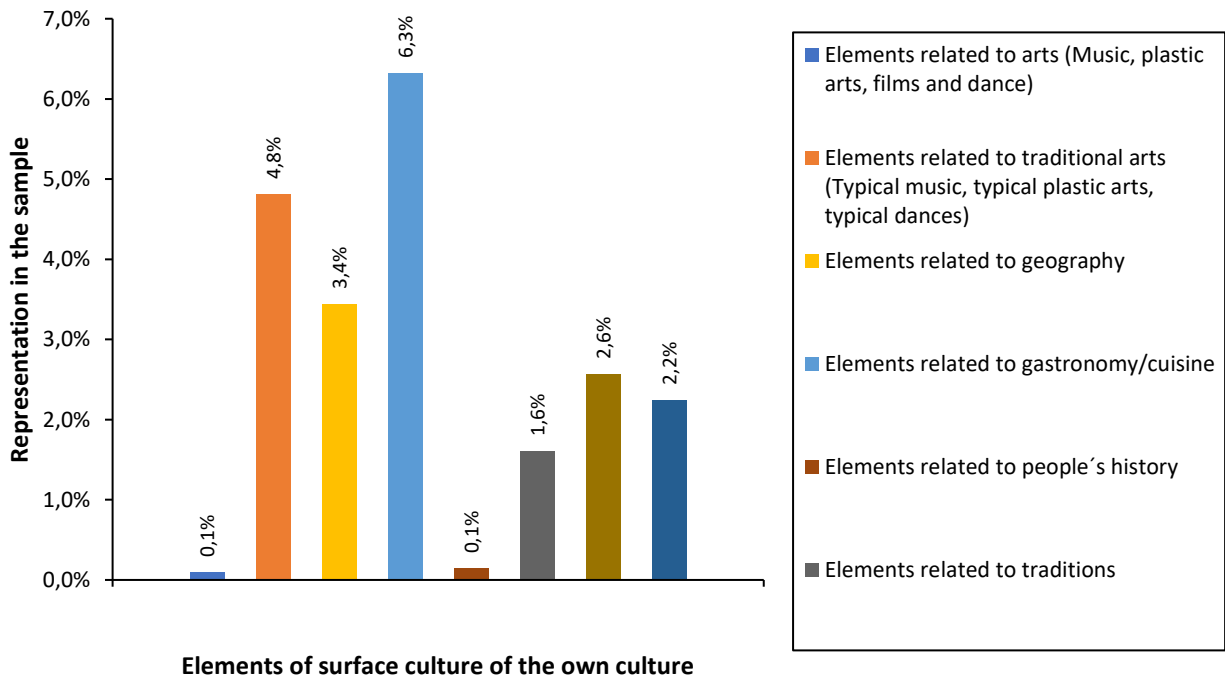
Fourth subcategory: ECO Kids presents abundant elements related to surface culture of the own culture compared to surface culture elements of the foreign culture

Surface culture of both the own culture (for “own culture”, this study regards the different cultural manifestations that might take place in the Colombian territory) and a foreign culture (from a country different from Colombia) is referenced 523 times in the 2184 utterances that were subject to analysis. throughout eight episodes of the series.

The representation of the different elements related to surface culture of the own culture in the sample are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Elements of surface culture of the own culture in ECO Kids



Elements related to gastronomy/ cuisine have the highest proportion in the sample with a 6,3% (138 out of 2184 utterances). The next most recurrent item in the material was the one related to traditional arts (typical or traditional artistic manifestations) with 4,8% of the material (105 utterances). Elements about geography come next, with a total of 75 references in the analyzed sample, equivalent to 3,4%. Then, with a 2,6% comes dressing style (56 out of 2184 utterances). Next, elements related to customs hold a small representation of 2,2% (49 utterances) in the sample, and elements related to traditions only have a representation of 1,6% (35). The element with the lowest representation in the sample are arts (as they might appear in everyday life, from a modern perspective) and people's history. These elements only reached 0,1% of representation in the sample (only 3 references). Other elements analyzed by the instruments that did not get any representation when talking about own culture were elements related to literature, festivals, and personalities. There were not any elements related to surface culture of the own culture that were not considered in the instruments but presented by the material.

Often, elements related to the surface culture of the own culture were presented along with others. This integration can be seen in the following fragments:

10 (Vallenato playing in the background. Bus sounds)

11 Bus driver: (Shouts) ¡Última parada!

12 INDY: ¡Vecino, adiós! ¡Gracias!

13 Finally, I'm here. I'm so tired. I need energy. I need coffee, delicious Colombian coffee.

(ECO Kids. S1E1 transcript. Minute 2. Utterances 10 to 13)

- 5 Irene, ¿y esa canasta de frutas? ¿Hiciste mercado antes de venir?
- 6 MAXI: ¿Nos trajiste un regalo?
- 7 RAMÓN: A present? Delicious!
- 8 IRENE: (Jiggles)
- 9 ¡Sí! ¡Traje naranjas de Antioquia!
- 10 MAXI: Oranges! Very tasty!
- 11 IRENE: Strawberry, banana, passion fruit, papaya, mangoes.
- 12 MAXI: Fresas de Cundinamarca, bananos de Urabá, curubas, una papaya gigante y mangos del Tolima. Yummy!
- 13 RAMÓN: ¿Irene, no tendrías por ahí unas uvitas? They are my favorite.

(ECO Kids. S1E2 transcript. Minute 1. Utterances 5 to 13)

Here, the most recurrent element, gastronomy/ cuisine, is presented along with elements referring to customs and arts in the first fragment and with elements related to geography in the second fragment. However, as mentioned before, surface culture elements sometimes were presented decontextualized or in a very shallow form, more like a reference than a in a deep form. The lack of depth in the presentation of some elements is noted in the following excerpt from the audio field notes:

In this episode, some elements about geography related to the origin of some fruits and some elements of typical gastronomy of our country are presented. The other elements of surface culture that are very outstanding in this episode are elements related to

gastronomy. Especially, the fruits that are eaten in our country. So, from that cuisine element, of the gastronomy of our country, there are some references to geography. However, they are not very deep again, they are not very specified. They are just mentions. Then, from only the material itself it is not possible to talk about the geography elements that are presented in the episode. This would require -or required- some teacher's work, to give sense to the elements related to geography included in the podcast.

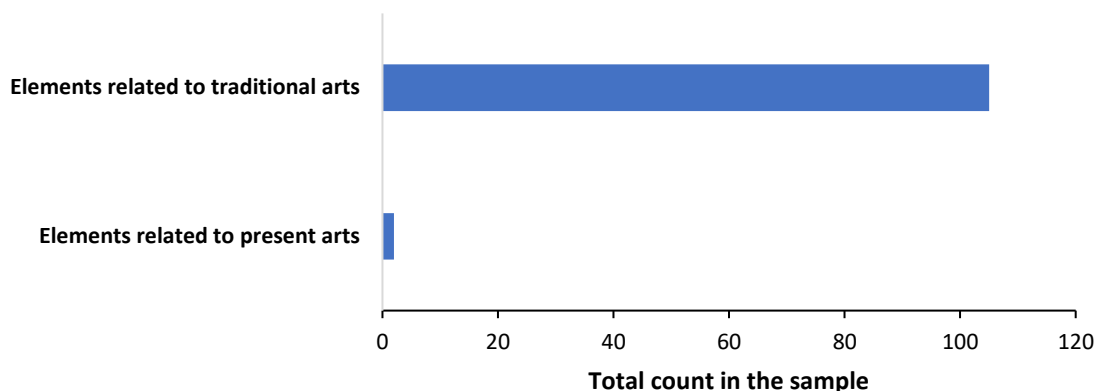
(Field notes episode 1. April 11, 2023. Starting at 00:00:42)

Here, elements referring to customs, arts, and gastronomy/ cuisine are referenced in the podcast. However, it is possible to tell there is a tendency to include elements of our own culture with a certain lack of depth in the material.

Another inclination that is noticeable across the material is that the surface culture elements of the own culture presented in the sample mostly relate to typical or traditional manifestations. The total of utterances relating to traditional arts outnumbers greatly the numbers of utterances relating to present arts (See Figure 3). Most utterances relating to gastronomy/ cuisine also come from a typical perspective. And all the utterances referring to dressing style also had as starting point typical manifestations in Colombian culture.

Figure 3

Traditional arts vs. Present arts elements of the own culture in ECO Kids



The approach to culture in ECO Kids seems to transmit some problematic cultural views. Items that searched for cultural views in the checklists found scarce elements that strictly related to a predominant perception of the culture of the own culture in the terms described by Arias, Gómez and Vera (2015) (0,4% of the sample) or a traditional view of culture in the terms described by Atkinson (1999) (0,1% of the sample). Though these proportions are not significant, the predilection of typical cultural manifestations in the material tend to fall into the inconvenient scope Atkinson (1999) warns about when he says cultures should not be perceived as monolithic entities. The typical perspective in ECO Kids does not account for the negotiation of meaning (Byram,1997) and counteract behaviors that don't necessarily fit in the cultural norm (Atkinson, 1999) which continuously take place in any culture.

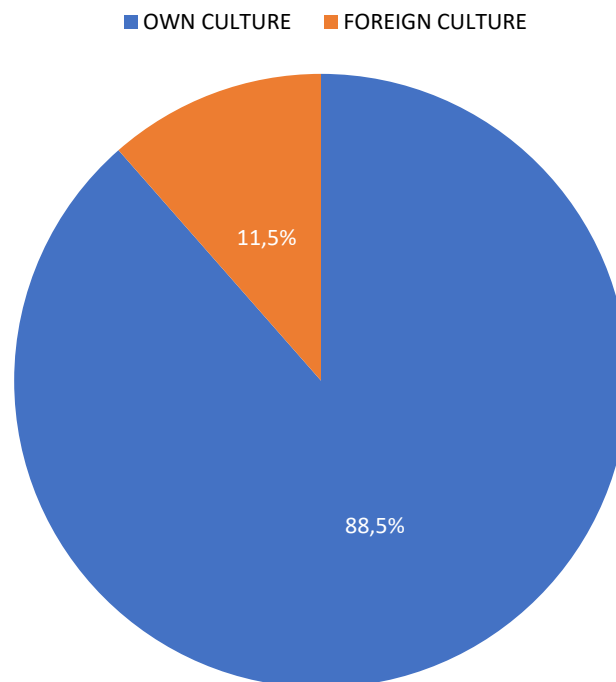
Despite the characteristics of the elements of the surface culture of the own culture in ECO Kids presented above, it is clear these elements are predominant when compared to elements of the foreign culture. Elements related to surface culture (of both own and foreign cultures) are referenced 523 times in the sample. Within this account, it is possible to identify

that there is a marked predilection from the creators of the series towards surface culture elements related to their own culture. Figure 4 shows the proportions of surface culture elements of the own culture and foreign cultures in the total account of references about surface culture in the analyzed sample.

References made to elements of the surface culture of the own culture amount to 463 and of the foreign culture, only to 60. There were no utterances in the material that referred to both elements of their own culture and of the foreign culture.

Figure 4

Surface culture elements of the own culture vs. of a foreign culture in ECO Kids



It is notorious that surface culture elements of the own culture outnumber by much the ones related to the foreign culture. Although it is not explicit in any of the material that accompanies the podcasts (introductory material, official documentation, complementary videos, teacher guides, or student guides), the creators of ECO Kids might have chosen to focus on presenting elements of their own culture as a first step towards interculturality. The abundance of elements in the ECO kids series that relate to the different communities coexisting in the Colombian territory goes along with the ideas of Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002), Coperías-Aguilar (2007) and Rico (2011), who invite to avoid the excessive attention typically given the presentation of foreign culture information in TEFL practices. This emphasis in the material might aim to fight what Rico (2011) considers as an overlook of the cultural background of the learners and his claim that materials become a bridge between the culture of the learner and the culture of the target language.

Besides, ECO kids attempted to present their own culture as a group of diverse manifestations from several communities. Though only 1,1% of the utterances in the material included references about this topic, either superficially or properly contextualized, ECO Kids presented information from different communities in Colombia, attempting to consider different cultural backgrounds and not focusing exclusively on predominant communities of the country.

Fifth subcategory: ECO kids does not present sufficient elements of surface culture of foreign cultures.

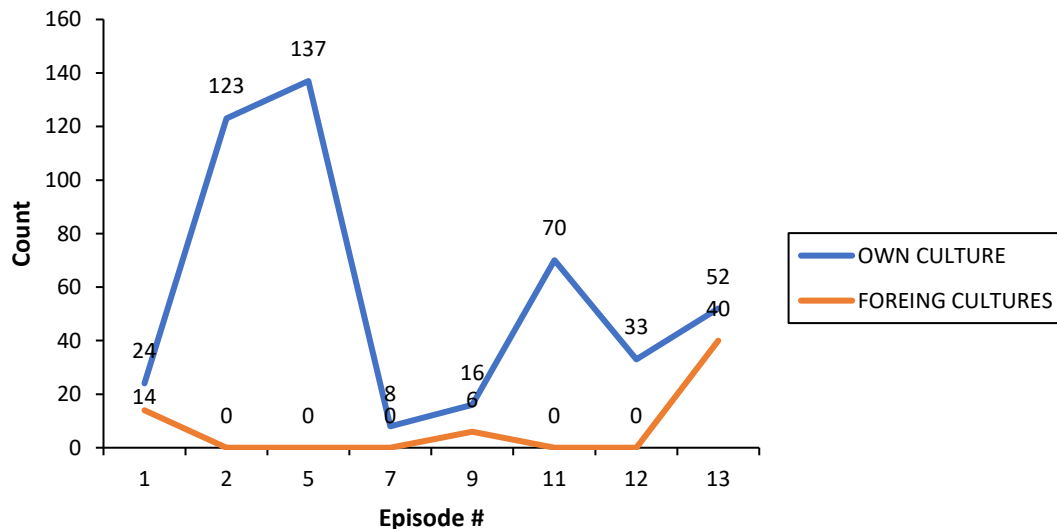
Contrasting the relatively large proportion of elements related to surface culture of the own culture presented in ECO Kids, there is an evident neglect concerning the presentation of surface culture elements of foreign cultures. The final count of references made to this item in

the sample is of only 60 (in the 2184 utterances in the analyzed sample), a very low number of the total count of surface culture elements registered in the sample (523). As shown in Figure 4, this means surface culture of the foreign culture mentions only amount to 11,5% of the references about surface culture elements in ECO kids. Figure 5 compares the count of references made to surface culture elements of both the own and foreign cultures in every episode of ECO kids:

The trend in the material to ignore elements regarding foreign culture is also evident in the fact that surface culture information is present in only three out of the eight episodes of the analyzed sample. Even though it is not explicit in any supporting material of the series, it is evident ECO kids mostly focuses on the presentation of information about the own culture and so, elements about foreign cultures might have been intentionally left out, or not regarded as a priority.

Figure 5

Surface culture elements in ECO Kids per episode in the sample



To add to that, references to foreign cultures in ECO kids were sometimes too superficial. In some sections of the show, references made to foreign cultures were geographical connotations of foreign countries to explore elements of Colombian culture:

- 4 (Plane noises. Zither Indian music starts to play)
- 5 CORRESPONDENT: Hi, how are you today?
- 6 INTERVIEWEE 3: I'm fine.
- 7 CORRESPONDENT: Have you heard about a country in South America called Colombia?
- 8 Le acabo de preguntar si conoce un país de Sudamérica llamado Colombia.
- 9 INTERVIEWEE 3: When I was young, I visited some friends in Nariño. I met a beautiful, beautiful, beautiful animal called Guinea pig or cuy.
- 10 RAMÓN: ¡Oh! ¿Vieron? ¡como mi mascota! Oh, yeah! It is famous!
- 11 IRENE: Claro, tu mascota es famosa e internacional. En algunas partes del mundo se conoce como cury o en inglés como Guinea pig.
- 12 (Zither Indian music playing)
- 13 CORRESPONDENT: Nuestro amigo de la India dice que estuvo en Colombia en su juventud al visitar unos amigos. Dice que encontró un animal divino, divino, divino: el cuy.

(ECO Kids. S1E1 transcript. Minute 11. Utterances 4 to 13)

The content about foreign cultures is still extremely low. Many times, interlocutors from countries where a foreign language is spoken are present, but they are there basically to present information that could have been perfectly presented from the own culture, or decontextualized from any culture, because they do not make any contribution to cultural knowledge about the cultures of their origins. They are simply used to give the appearance that people from different intercultural, or cultural contexts are included but the contributions from these people about their culture is minimum.

(Field notes episode 9. April 25, 2023. Starting at 00:03:19)

Furthermore, it is notable that even though ECO Kids has a main character from England, an English-speaking country, who is actively participating in almost all episodes, there are no explicit contributions from him about the surface culture of the target language in any of the episodes of the sample.

Second Category: ECO kids series presents some elements related to deep culture.

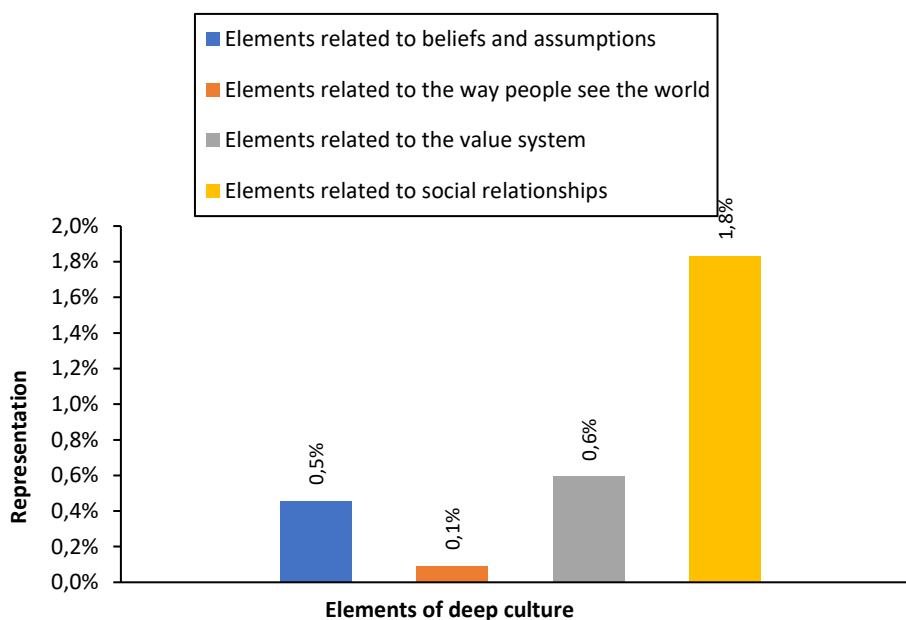
It was established before surface culture elements are far easier to examine than deep culture elements. Observing deep culture is difficult since its main component relates to insubstantial manifestations, sometimes deeply internalized by individuals, acting at a subconscious level (Chlopek, 2008); that is why it is often called invisible culture. However, deep culture is not entirely impossible to identify. Although individuals might follow or go against cultural patterns (Gómez, 2018), these are in every culture and have an influence on how people behave within a certain community. These patterns might be made explicit and explored and they are most evident when they are contrasted with elements of other cultures (Chlopek, 2008). Regardless of the inherent difficulty that any material creator might face when including

deep culture elements, these, along with surface culture elements, are crucial in the development of interculturality in FL teaching practices (Byram, 1997).

It is arguable ECO Kids creators attempted to include deep culture elements in their material. However, data shows the inclusion of these key elements was too partial -regarding elements not strictly related to language in use. Figure 6 shows the representation of deep culture elements in the series.

It is important to clarify that not only the elements presented in the figure 6 and mentioned in this analysis were searched by the instruments, elements regarding attitudes, perceptions, norms and use of physical space and body language were also searched but were not identified in the sample. Likewise, it is necessary to keep in mind there are several elements of deep culture that are present in language in use. Nonetheless, these are going to be presented separately in this data analysis.

It is arguable ECO Kids creators attempted to include deep culture elements in their material. However, data shows the inclusion of these key elements was too partial. Figure 6 shows the representation of deep culture elements in the series:

Figure 6*Deep culture elements in ECO Kids*

First subcategory: ECO kids presents scarce elements related to social relationships and values system, beliefs and assumptions and, the way people see the world

The deep culture element with the highest representation in the material was social relationships, but it just had 1,8% of representation in the sample (only 40 references in 2184 utterances). This item included any reference to family, friends, neighbors, or any other social relationship that might happen in a culture. It did not consider any relationships among the main cast for they were never made explicit and remained very unclear (there was no mention of them being friends, neighbors, classmates, etc.).

Like other elements in the material, social relationships were presented on a very superficial level. Most references to the topic are related to family relationships and were mainly nominal or even merely hinted within the show. The episode of the sample where this topic was

most referenced was Episode 13 and most mentions seem to aim to practice the vocabulary about family. The following is a sample of how social relationship elements were referenced in the episode:

- 3 RAMÓN: La noche de Año Nuevo es especial para mi mamá, quería una foto de todos: de ella, mi papá, mis hermanas, mis hermanos, mis abuelas y abuelos, mis primos... ¡todos! junto al sancocho (dissapointed).
- 4 IRENE: Your father, your mother, your sisters, brothers, your grandmother, grandfather and, your cousins...oofff. That is a lot of people!

(ECO Kids. S1E13 transcript. Minute 11. Utterances 3 and 4)

Elements related to social relationships were sometimes presented along with other elements or facilitated their presentation. The following excerpt shows elements related to social relationships along with elements related to the value system:

- 10 INDY: Sure! I love to! Me encantaría ser parte de su programa de radio.
- 11 IRENE: Really? Wow! Thank you! Cool.

6:00

- 1 Le voy a pedir permiso a mi papá, para que puedas participar.
- 2 (Door opening. Countryside sounds. Birds singing)
- 3 (Shouting) Papá, papá. Ya tenemos a nuestro primer invitado especial para la emisora.

(ECO Kids. S1E1 transcript. Minute 5. Utterances 10 and 11. Minute 6. Utterances 1 to 3)

Field notes talk about the integration of these two elements. They also talk about the predominance of surface culture over deep culture elements in the sample:

About the deep culture elements present in the podcast, there are very few (...) compared to elements of surface culture, intentionally included in the podcast. They are identified more in an implicit form. And, in this case, it was possible to identify some related to the value system, especially about the father figure, so it means, there are also mentions about social relationships. In which the girl, who is the protagonist of the podcast, tries to ask for permission to ease the participation of the foreigner in the show. This, by asking for permission to her father.

(Field notes episode 1. April 11, 2023. Starting at 00:06:10)

The previous sample shows what this study understood for value system. Elements related to this topic talked about the values underlying cultures. Bennet (1998) defines values as the sense of goodness and badness shared by a social group. In other words, what is right and what is wrong. Thome (2015) emphasizes culture offers individuals a repertoire of these standards, and they are inculcated through socialization processes and practices. Values are not isolated, but they are part of a value system where they are hierarchically ordered and influence individual behaviors in certain contexts.

In this case, the preponderant value, the right action to undertake, was the respect given to the father figure. This element was presented closely to social relationships, like in Episode 13, where solidarity is presented along with references to social relationships among neighbors:

10 MAXI: Hello?

- 11 MAXI'S DAD: Quihubo, mijo. ¿Cómo van por allá? Dile a Ramón que le conseguí tremendo bagre para el sancocho a doña Ceci. Ajá, que ella ya puede dormir tranquila, que lo de la comida ya está resuelto.
- 12 MAXI: ¿En serio papi?, ¡Eres lo máximo!

(ECO Kids. S1E13 transcript. Minute 19. Utterances 10 and 12)

References to value system were found in only 13 utterances, equaling just 0,6% of the total sample.

Other deep culture elements that had certain representation in the material were the ones related to beliefs and assumptions, though they were found in only 0,5 percent of the sample. This study regarded beliefs in the terms of Bueno (2012) who says these encompasses ideas, viewpoints and attitudes shared by a particular group. He adds they are a product of social experience, formed by the common knowledge of a certain community. Bennett (1998) affirms several beliefs might be present in cultural groups at a time, but they show preference of some beliefs over others. Bennet asserts assumptions are closely interrelated to values, and they refer to the existence of phenomena rather than the valuation of right and wrong. Only 10 references about beliefs and assumptions were made in the whole material, and most of them were made in episode 5. The following is an example of how this item was presented in ECO Kids:

- 5 RAMÓN: ¿Indie, y alguna esperanza de encontrar la mochila que quieres?
- 6 INDY: I have my doubts. I've seen many: some small, some big.
- 7 MAXI: Y entre esas mochilas pequeñas y grandes ¿no has visto la tuya?

- 8 INDY: Not yet. I've also seen mochilas that have different drawings, shapes, and designs.
- 9 IRENE: Sí, las mochilas tienen dibujos, formas geométricas y diseños que representan algunos animales importantes, y también los ciclos de vida.
- 10 RAMÓN: That is interesting!

(ECO Kids. S1E5 transcript. Minute 5. Utterances 5 to 10)

Elements related to beliefs are presented here integrated with elements of surface culture.

The integration achieved by the creators of the series is noted in the following excerpt:

The elements of Deep culture that are worked in the podcast are mainly related to the beliefs and assumptions of the communities where the mochilas are crafted. There are mentions about the Arhuaco people, and communities in Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. Through this surface culture element, some content related to deep culture in which the symbology that is part of the crafting of the mochila is effectively presented. There is a discussion about some beliefs and the symbols that are part of the crafting of the mochilas and how the thoughts of the people who craft them are reflected in the art that is included in these clothing pieces.

(Field notes episode 5. April 18, 2023. Starting at 00:04:11)

Ranked last among the deep culture elements that reached representation in the material are elements related to the way people see the world. These elements appeared along some related to the value system. References about this topic were only two utterances. Both are included in the following fragment:

- 1 INDY: They are peaceful people that care deeply about nature.
- 2 (Ding)
- 3 ELSA: Niños, niñas. Indy nos está contando cómo son algunos indígenas que viven en La Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. Él dijo, son personas pacíficas a quienes les importa mucho la naturaleza.

(ECO Kids. S1E5 Minute 3. Utterances 10 to 12)

Throughout the fragments of the transcripts of the analyzed episodes and the field notes presented here, it is possible to determine the presentation of deep culture regarding elements not strictly related to language in ECO Kids almost completely focused on the own culture. Only one reference (about social relationships) was made about deep culture of foreign cultures. Taking into account the material used a strategy of translanguaging, and information was often presented in both Spanish and English -as well as the interactions among the characters-, and many elements of deep culture are presented implicitly through the language in use, it is possible to assert that just like it happened with surface culture, elements of deep culture in the series are greatly concerned with the own culture.

Second subcategory: The presentation of deep culture in the ECO kids series relays mainly on language in use.

As stated before, the presentation of deep culture elements in ECO kids mostly focuses on the own culture. However, it has been established that many aspects of culture are presented through language. Culture necessarily transforms the structure of a language and how it is used (Liddicoat, 2004). Fantini (2000) claims “language, in fact, both reflects and affects one’s world view, serving as a sort of road map to how one perceives, interprets, thinks about, and expresses

one's view of the world" (p. 27). Chlopek (2008) lists some elements of deep culture that are present in language: politeness conventions, patterns of interaction, discourse organization and the use of time in communication. Language in use provides elements of deep culture that are often too hard to present in another form in TEFL material, especially for the population ECO Kids addresses, young beginner learners. For this reason, language, as a platform that presents multiple elements of deep culture, was especially observed by the research design of this study.

English, the target language of instruction in the material, was presented along with Spanish, the first language of the target audience. The integration of these languages for the present study is considered translanguaging in the terms presented by García and Lin (2017) in their work. For them, translanguaging differs from other phenomena like code-switching, for the first does not refer to going back and forth from one language to another like the second. García and Lin state translanguaging refers to a linguistic phenomenon in which bilingual speakers use elements of different languages to negotiate, clarify and share meaning, and as a pedagogical tool that involves using one language to reinforce the other, to increase understanding and to provide students with opportunities to augment their activity in the educational setting by using both languages. ECO kids makes use of translanguaging for these two purposes.

First, the interactions of the cast did not take place exclusively in one or the other language, all the speakers in ECO kids use English and Spanish to communicate. Utterances sometimes contained speech in the two languages.

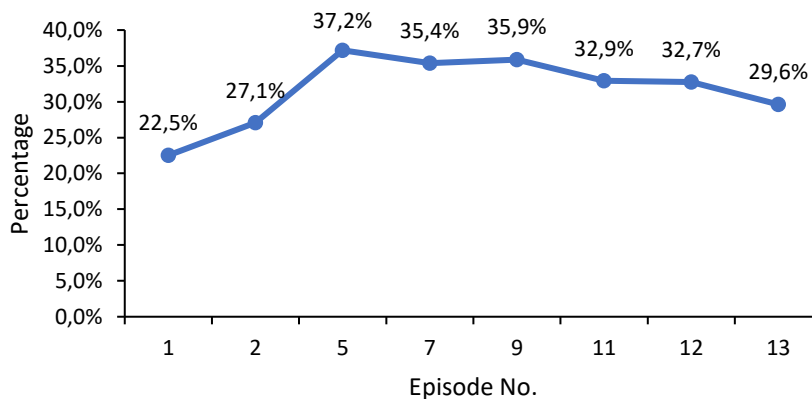
Second, the presentation of instructional content used translanguaging as a strategy to clarify meanings and to reflect on elements of EFL. This resource was used in the series to compensate for the lack of other means -like images to present vocabulary, for example- that were limited by the nature of a podcast.

Li Wei (2011) says translanguaging becomes a space where multilingual users bring together aspects of their personal history, experience, attitude, beliefs, and ideologies. For this reason, this study explored this element, to attempt to establish the amount of exposure students had to these elements of the foreign culture of the target language.

Yet, it is important to clarify, that identifying each and every aspect of culture that is presented through language constituted an enormous task and was not the focus of the present study, so, to be as comprehensible as possible, instruments searched an element that was denominated as 'English in Use' but this category will not center in analyzing every possible aspect of deep culture that is presented through the use of the foreign language, it will mainly report the proportion in which English appears in the sample

English in the ECO kids series was part of a translanguaging strategy and used for mainly two purposes: to instruct and to communicate. The data presented in this subcategory relates exclusively with language in use for communication purposes, for it is considered this might provide the richest elements regarding deep culture of the foreign culture (Use of Spanish exclusively was not tallied in the instruments though it surely provides elements of deep culture of the own culture).

English was used for communicative purposes in 31,4% of the sample. A total of 685 of 2184 utterances (the count of utterances included those in which English was used with Spanish as well, but it seems the creators of the material attempted to avoid this, and they regularly appeared separated, most of the utterances tallied were in English only). It is the element in the instruments that reached the highest representation. Figure 7 shows the proportion in which English for communication was used throughout the eight episodes of the sample

Figure 7*English in use for communication in ECO Kids*

In this figure it is not possible to identify a steady increment in the use of English throughout ECO kids. It was expected that the material was going to progressively increase the use of English but that is not observable in the count of utterances. Though there is a positive difference within the first and the last episodes analyzed, the use of English peaked in episode 5, the third one of the sample.

Since language in use is the only element present in all the episodes of the sample and the proportion in which it appears in all the material is considerable, and since, English in communicative use intrinsically includes elements of deep culture -especially when compared to the explicit presentation of other deep culture elements- it is possible to assert the presentation of deep culture in ECO Kids, intentionally or not, depended greatly on this component of the show. In episodes with a low count of cultural elements, like Episode 7 of the series, English in use is the only manner in which learners might get some information about deep culture. The following sample shows how translanguaging transpires the show and how English is presented as part of this strategy in ECO kids:

- 7 RAMÓN: Era viernes 7 de la noche. Yo estaba en mi cuarto y estaba leyendo un libro que se llama “The Mistery Of Darkness”. Y de repente, ¡cata pum! (electric failure sound) Se fue la luz.
- 8 ALL KIDS: (Shouting) AHHHH!
- 9 RAMÓN: I heard a strange noise (bat flying sounds) like the sound of bat flying!
- 10 IRENE: ¿Estás seguro que era un murciélago? (bat flying sounds).

3:00

- 1 RAMÓN: A bat or a cat? (Meow sound) I was so confused and scared too!
- 2 MAXI: Ajá, ¿y qué pasó? ¡Sigue contándonos!

(ECO Kids. S1E7 transcript. Minute 2. Utterances 7 to 10. Minute 3. Utterances 1 and 2)

Field notes, however, talk about the difficulty of making use of the element of Language in Use to present further elements of deep culture:

There are no elements of deep culture different from English in use. As it has been mentioned, being this a series in which a translanguaging strategy is used, not many elements related to cultures represented in language can be identified. Despite language is obviously used and conversations (...) effectively can take place within the frame of a culture, there is not focus on any of the elements that can be addressed through language.

(Field notes episode 7. April 20, 2023. Starting at 00:04:54)

Though it is undeniable language and culture go together, the ECO Kids series, resents the lack of supporting material to help both learners and teachers make sense of some of the

cultural aspects presented, particularly when it comes to cultural manifestations difficult to explore as the elements of deep culture subjacent to language. ECO kids also suffers from a certain lack of definition at the time of presenting language, and it is their interactions often sacrifice naturality to favor instruction. In other words, sometimes Eco Kids forced artificial scenarios where target expressions and vocabulary could be presented and used, but it affected the quality of the language presented because it appeared decontextualized from an authentic communicative situation. The following is an example of this:

12 CALLER 1: Hello, my name is Memo.

13:00

1 And I dance San Juanero with a partner.

2 MAXI: ¿El San Juanero se baila con pareja? No sabía.

3 CALLER 1: And you need to dance in circles moving your right and left feet forward and backward.

(ECO Kids. S1E12 transcript. Minute 12. Utterance 12. Minute 13. Utterances 1 to 3)

Again, there are some elements of language present, but in this case, it is important to remark that, maybe, the form in which communicative content within the podcast is addressed is a little artificial. The topic of commands is supposed to be presented, following instructions, in this episode and it is done in a not so natural manner, relating it with the dance and having the main character, Irene, giving instructions about how to dance to the foreign character, but it is a little unnatural to be honest. It is difficult (to justify) the choice of this topic in a radio show, because, well, naturally, movement is

usually accompanied by images and, despite, in this case, it is nourished by the translanguaging strategy, it looks a bit decontextualized. The use of language looks a bit unnatural and, again, it is difficult to identify some elements that could be analyzed if language were used in a more natural cultural context.

(Field notes episode 12. May 2, 2023. Starting at 00:05:26)

So, in spite of its large representation in the show, English in use is an aspect that fails to effectively present aspects of deep culture because of the logical complexity of exploring these cultural elements in language, and the lack of supporting material in the series to help the users cope with that complexity. And also, because in an attempt to favor instruction over natural communication, English is presented in an artificial form that affect the authenticity of the communicative situations that take place in the show.

It was mentioned before the results presented in the First and Second categories emerging from the data analysis answer the first research question: What are the characteristics of the cultural content in ECO kids? And correspond to the achievement of the first objective, to explore, analyze and describe the cultural content in ECO Kids. After meticulously exploring the series and considering the information emerging from the instruments presented above, it is possible to assert that ECO kids follows a dangerous trend that has been constantly repeated in TEFL material and denounced by several scholars (E.g., Gomez, 2018; Reimann, 2009) who criticize most of the content in textbooks and other teaching material emphasizes almost exclusively on presenting surface culture elements. ECO kids does not elude this trend and shows a strong focus on this sort of content that might promote a congratulatory approach to culture and the reinforcement of stereotypes (Gómez, 2015b; Arias, Gómez, and Vera, 2015). The presence of cultural content of such nature is consistent with the findings of the studies by

Gomez (2015b) who concluded most of the cultural content in several series of textbooks used in the undergraduate level concerned mainly with surface culture and left deep culture elements in a secondary position. As Arias, Gómez, and Vera (2015) remark, these elements are often the means to defy stereotypes in the EFL classroom, but ECO Kids does not contain enough deep culture elements to fight against the perpetuation of cultural stereotypes. The predilection of the series for surface culture information is also consistent with the results of the work of Guzman (2015). Her analysis of a Latin American textbook showed how much of the content about culture in her sample mostly related to surface culture. However, different from her findings, the cultural content in ECO kids was not related to predominant cultures (British and American, like in the study by Guzman). ECO kids attempts to present surface culture content mostly from the perspective of the own culture, trying to give a voice to several national communities.

Unfortunately, the cultural content in ECO Kids is often presented out of context and in a superficial manner. This characteristic of the cultural content in the series is shared by the content in the material analyzed by Reimann (2009) who found out most of the cultural content in TEFL material used in Japan that was part of his study tended to be presented in a decontextualized fashion, encapsulated and often, corresponding only to a shallow integration of cultural elements to TEFL resources. As he remarks “Cultural references in textbooks are in fact mostly limited to titles, unit chapters and arbitrary content or tourist information. When culture is presented it is usually either biased, oversimplified or without a validating context” (p. 86).

Sadly, the decontextualized and superficial presentation of the culture content in ECO Kids affects not just surface culture but deep culture as well. Even though these elements were not expected to be easily identified by their own nature, since these tend to be acting often in subconscious level, they were still expected to show up for they are most evident when they are

part of comparisons among cultures (Chlopek, 2008). However, only a few elements were identified in the sample, and their effective presentation was affected by the general lack of context most cultural elements suffered in the series and the inexistence of proper supporting material from which teachers and students could make sense of the deep culture information presented. The neglection experienced by deep culture elements in ECO Kids is a tendency that is repeated in studies like one by Gomez (2015a). His study showed there is still an excessive focus on surface culture elements while deep culture elements are most of the time not addressed in TEFL material.

To give a better chance to the search of deep culture elements this study considered the presence of language in use in ECO Kids. However, yet again, regardless of the fact that deep culture elements are present in the strategy of translanguaging that the series used, such elements are not sufficiently clear in the material and since the series does not have extra resources that could serve as orientation for teachers and learners, most of deep culture element might just passed unnoticed for as Reimann (2009) points out, teachers and students lack training to properly interpret cultural content and depend on the material itself to guide them through the exploration of such content.

Besides, the quality of deep culture elements in language in use in ECO Kids is affected by the artificiality of some of the interactions it contains. This is caused mainly by the difficulties the creators of the show had to balance the use of language for authentic communication and for instruction. Reimann (2009) claims most material faces the same difficulty and often fails to find a balance, causing it to twist authentic communication for the sake of developing linguistic skills using traditional methods.

Nonetheless, analyzing language in use as a component where deep culture elements might be present proved to be a valuable source of information of the characteristics of the cultural content of the object of study. This aspect of analysis might be considered an important contribution of the present study to the TEFL field, and it was not present in the reviewed literature.

All in all, to give answer to the first research question it can be stated that the cultural content in ECO Kids is characterized by a predominant presence of surface culture elements, privileging elements of the own culture to the point elements of the foreign culture are mostly completely disregarded. Cultural content in ECO Kids does contain deep culture elements, mainly presented by language in use. However, despite the presence of elements of surface and deep culture, ECO Kids cultural content is also characterized for being most of times superficial and decontextualized. Though ECO Kids attempts to include cultural content from several communities it fails to do so successfully for it promotes a congratulatory and stereotypical vision of such cultures.

Third Category: The ECO Kids series presents some aspects that point towards developing ICC in a very basic level.

This category answers the second research question of the present study by revising to what extent elements in the ECO Kids series might foster the development of the ICC. This is achieved through a characterization of the content related to the different Savoirs of the ICC in the sample and evaluating its potential to contributing to the development of the ICC.

Eco kids creators emphasize the aim of the series is to develop interculturality. The instruments used in the present study explored to what level the material reaches this goal. The

checklists that were run through the material contained basic indicators that started from level 1, varying in each of the savoirs that compound the ICC. The indicators correspond to a description of very basic content, expected to be in the material, that relates or aims towards developing the savoirs in the theory of Byram (1997) developed by Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002), and complemented with the contribution of Trujillo (2011). There is no distinction between the own and the foreign culture in these items for the skills described in the savoirs pertain to interculturality in general. This category shows to what level and in what proportion the material had the potential of contributing to the development of ICC.

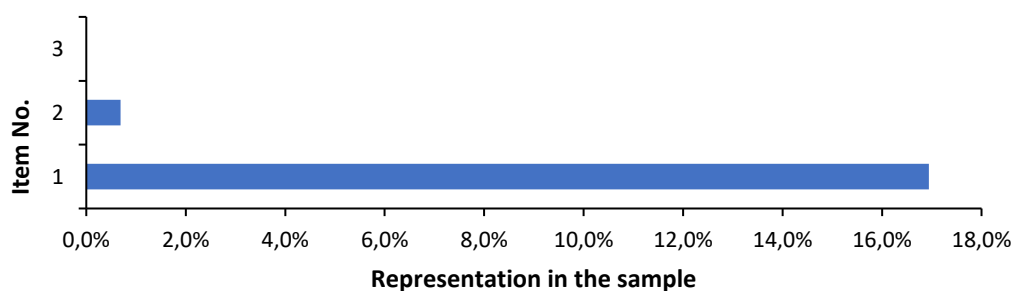
Additionally, supportive sections in checklists contained items that aimed to help the description of the elements related to the savoirs of ICC found in the sample. These items, as well as the reflections and observation from the field notes aim to qualify the efficiency of the elements in ECO Kids in their task of helping the development of intercultural skills.

This category has five subcategories, one for each of the savoirs presented in the theoretical framework.

First subcategory: ECO kids presents some elements related to savoirs (knowledge)

Figure 8

Elements related to savoirs (Knowledge) in ECO Kids



Savoirs (knowledge) has two main components, the knowledge about cultural manifestations and the knowledge about social processes (culture, identity, values). Cultural manifestations are thought to be dependent on underlying social processes. In the conjoint work of advisor and researcher, these items were thought as realistic possibilities for the content in ECO Kids: 1. Includes knowledge and examples about cultures (cultural manifestations), 2. Includes some basic knowledge and simple examples about social processes. 3. Promotes in a very basic level some understanding of the way culture itself works. Figure 8 shows the presence of content related to these items in the sample.

As expected, the item with the highest representation in the sample is the most basic, the one related to cultural manifestations. In here, manifestations of own and foreign cultures were included. Several samples of how ECO kids included these elements can be found above in the present analysis. Item 2 is also present in the sample. This item directly relates to some elements of deep culture that, as discussed above, did not get a high representation in the sample.

Despite the existence of these items in the material, it is important to note that the relatively high proportion of cultural manifestations in ECO kids and the inclusion of element relating social processes were sometimes tarnished by the quality of the information presented in the material.

Though in a low proportion, it was possible to identify that there is content in ECO kids that promotes a stereotypical view of culture, and views proper of the definitions provided by Atkinson (1999) who mentions the concepts of traditional (geographically situated) and predominant (popular aspects of a culture) views of culture. None of these elements in the checklists surpass 1% of representation in the sample. But there are no elements in the analyzed episodes that contradict these views. These tendencies are most evident regarding the

presentation of foreign culture. Ambient music in the series was a very problematic part in the series. The following is a sample of stereotyping in ECO Kids:

- 10 NEWS ANCHOR: Ahora, ¿qué nos trae nuestra corresponsal desde Japón?
- 11 (Shinto temple music playing in the background)
- 12 CORRESPONDENT: Sí, gracias. Estoy aquí en el ancestral Japón. Y ahora, voy a preguntarle a la gente en la calle si conocen un lugar llamado Colombia.
- 13 Hi, good evening. Do you know a place called Colombia?

(ECO Kids. S1E1 transcript. Minute 10. Utterances 10 to 13)

The elements that were used to refer to the music of each country might tend to reinforce stereotypes because they correspond to elements that promote a traditional vision of culture, like geographically situated. I mean, when, for example, to refer to or to ambient the country of Japan, music of Buddhist temples is used, or the ancestral past of Japan is mentioned (...), this tends to contribute to see Japan as a unit, not like a country with diverse cultural manifestations. There is no acknowledgement of the modernity of the country. I think there could have been some other kind of ambient music. Because the idea was to present to kids how a correspondent visits those countries. And it is very unlikely that in a regular street, in the case, for example, of Japan, there would be music of a temple. In the case, for example, of India, zither music. In the case, for example, of England, music related to the royalty and Buckingham palace.

Then, this approach in the material, presenting these cultural elements related to traditional arts, can be considered somewhat wrong and that it contributes to the stereotyping of these cultures.

(Field notes episode 1. April 11, 2023. Starting at 00:04:02)

Regarding the other component of this savoir, social processes, ECO kids presents some disputable information regarding some of these social processes that go along with culture:

- 1 INDY: Lo que sí he aprendido, es que las expresiones artísticas y artesanales son parte importantísima de la cultura de un país. Le dan identidad y sentido de pertenencia.
- 2 IRENE: Yes, for example, Wayuu bags are possibly the country's most famous and iconic artisan product.

(ECO Kids. S1E5 transcript. Minute 7. Utterance 1 and 2)

Here, identity is dangerously equated to artisan products as well as two of these are presented as the product that might represent a whole country.

Finally, there were no elements in the material regarding the third item in the checklists, promoting understanding about how culture itself works.

Second subcategory: ECO kids presents some elements related to savoir être (intercultural attitudes)

Byram, Gribkova and Starkey, (2002) define this savoir as the ability to decenter, to relativize values beliefs and behaviors to put oneself in the place of the other, to reflect on the

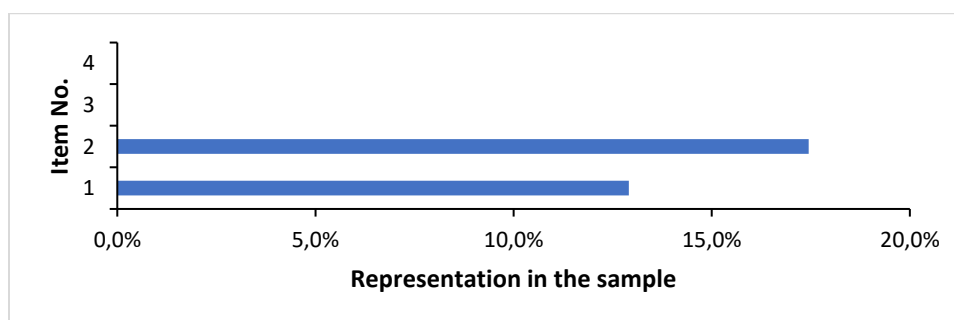
own culture as an outsider. As Rico (2011) points out, it is the ability to abandon ethnocentric attitudes. The following indicators were established as attainable goals for the material: 1. Motivates to establish and maintain relationships with a foreign culture, 2. Promotes engaging with people from multiple cultural backgrounds as equals. 3. Promotes reflection on the role of the other. 4. Promotes decentering. Further elaboration about the content searched in every item can be found in the descriptors of every item in the checklists format in Appendix B. Figure 9 shows the presence of elements related to these items in the analyzed material.

Elements related to *savoir être* (intercultural attitudes) are present in ECO kids. Though in a lower proportion than the previous *savoir*, elements about this *savoir* are very noticeable throughout the material.

It is undeniable ECO kids lacks elements of foreign cultures, but it uses the foreign character of the show (Indy Walker) to encourage creating and maintaining relationships with a foreign culture. It is around this character that mainly revolves the content related to this first item, he was the one for whom our culture was foreign as he attempted to form relationships and, also, he was representative of a foreign culture with whom the other characters kept a relationship. Representation of the first item reached 12,9% of the total sample (282 utterances).

Figure 9

Elements related to savoir être (intercultural attitudes) in ECO Kids



Item 2 relates closely to item 1. But it also included interactions with people from different cultural backgrounds in Colombia where interlocutors acted as equals. This item reached 17,4% of representation in the sample (381 utterances) The following is an example of how the two most basic items of savoir être (intercultural attitudes) were presented in the material:

11 INDY: Hi, ECO kids

12 ELSA: Hello, dear kids!

13 ALL KIDS: Hi, Indy! Hi, Elsa!

14 INDY: This power cut is just great!

15 RAMÓN: ¿Este apagón te parece genial? Are you serious?

5:00

1 I'm scared!

2 INDY: No tienes nada de que temer, Ramón. Darkness is great. It helps us to see the stars. Es perfecto para ver las estrellas más luminosas. Look up in the sky! (Shooting star sound effect)

(ECO Kids. S1E7 transcript. Minute 4. Utterances 11 to 15. Minute 5. Utterances 1 and 2)

19 CALLER 1: Hi ECO kids.

20 (Traditional flute music from Pasto starts to play)

21 My name is Margarita.

10:00

- 1 And I'm from Pasto. I've learned many new words in English with you.
- 2 IRENE: What is your favorite colombian food?
- 3 CALLER 1: My favorite Colombia food is the locro pastuso. It's a kind of soup that has chicken, potatoes, and carrots.
- 4 MAXI: Uy, esas sopitas tienen pollo, papas y zanahoria. Y son (snacks mouth).
- 5 CALLER 1: Yes, the locro also has onions, peas, beans, and corn. You have to try it.

(ECO Kids. S1E11 transcript. Minute 9. Utterances 19 to 21. Minute 10. Utterances 1 to 5)

Showing examples of interactions with speakers was the main way in which ECO kids motivated to establish and maintain relationships with of a foreign culture. In these exchanges, as well as with people from a local context, holding each other as equals was a predominant characteristic. This is noticed in the field notes:

Also, there are several elements that contribute to keeping that perception, that it is possible to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds like equals. Again, this is achieved mainly through the relationship the kids, especially the main character, the girl Irene, have with a person of foreign origin. But also, with the phone calls, for example, that kids take in the show, because they interact with kids from different cultural backgrounds, even though they are from within the country. They do this as equals. There are no vertical relationships.

(Field notes episode 1. April 11, 2023. Starting at 00:04:02)

The field notes report how interactions with people from different backgrounds took place not only with foreign speakers but also with interlocutors from numerous communities within the national territory.

ECO kids contained a very small number of elements that promoted deification of the target culture and its members and a congratulatory approach to cultures in general (each equaling to 0,4% of the sample). Nonetheless, it was predominant to see people from different cultural backgrounds interacting as equals.

As it possible to see in Figure 9, indicators 3 and 4 did not get any representation in the material.

Third subcategory: ECO kids presents very few elements related to savoir comprendre (skills of interpreting and relating)

This savoir refers to the ability of an individual to compare the products from one culture to the ones of another, (Byram, Gribkova and Starkey, 2002). To seek the presence of elements related to this savoir, the following indicators were constructed: 1. Includes content that may promote comparison between elements of one's own culture with another culture, and 2. Includes elements that may allow the comparison of functions of the own language with another. Both items were expected to be found on a very basic level in the material.

Elements related to this savoir are very few in the analyzed sample. The utterances that can be linked to the first item only amount to 23, 1,1% of the total utterances of the sample. The following is an example of how comparison of elements of the own culture were contrasted with those of another culture:

- 8 CALLER 2: Hi, my name is Nico. ¿Sí vieron? Los saludé en inglés. Aquí en el Cauca, le dicen a esa bebida, Salpicón de Baudilia.
- 9 IRENE: Wow! Great! How different. Thank you for calling (inaudible). And the last call...la última llamada.
- 10 (Phone ringing)
- 11 INDY: Hi, little friends.
- 12 ALL KIDS AT UNISON: Indy!
- 13 INDY: I was listening to you, friends. Los estaba escuchando. Bueno, yo sé de otro nombre para este salpicón.

10:00

- 1 We can say it is a fruit salad drink. Cuando estuve en Venezuela y cerca a la frontera con Cúcuta escuché que le decían tisana. It has pineapple, apples, strawberries and more.

(ECO Kids. S1E2 transcript. Minute 9. Utterances 8 to 13. Minute 10. Utterance 1)

Comparisons within ECO kids were considered to be taking place when the interlocutors embraced in contrasting elements explicitly, like in the previous fragment or when cultural manifestations were presented together and providing information about the same aspects like in Episode 13, where information about how New Year's Eve is celebrated in varied national communities and abroad cultures. Field notes describe the richness of elements in this episode that allowed comparisons:

It is possible to find sufficient elements to promote the comparison of products of cultural manifestations from different communities in the country. And, it was possible, in the

same way, to promote spaces for comparison between elements of our own culture and the foreign culture.

(Field notes episode 13. May 5, 2023. Starting at 00:11:13)

Nevertheless, much of the information presented in ECO kids often lacked context, was superficial or incomplete as reported before. That, added to the fact that the podcast provided very little information about foreign cultures, limited severely the occasions in which effective comparisons could take place.

About the second item related to the savoir in question, it is important to point out that there is little reflection about language aspects in ECO Kids. In spite of the strategy of translanguaging that is used in the series and the time devoted to instruction, there are no elements in the podcast that explicitly compare language functions and there is no material that could favor the development of metalinguistic skills.

Forth subcategory: ECO kids presents some elements related to savoir apprendre/ faire (Skills of discovery and interaction) and savoir communiquer

In addition to the widely theorized five savoirs emergent from the theory of Byram (Byram, 1997 and Byram, Gribkova and Starkey, 2002), Rico (2011) proposes a complementary savoir, a set of skills he denominates *Savoir communiquer*. He emphasizes this savoir refers to proficiency in the target language. This study did not aim to measure the proficiency of potential users of the material, but to determine the amount of exposure they have to language elements and instruction, and the main qualities of these two, considering these as indicators of the potential of the material to develop proficiency in the target language.

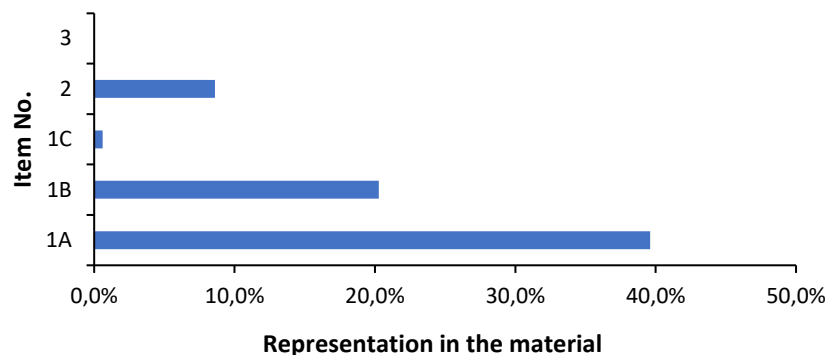
The savoir proposed by Rico (2011) relates directly to the savoir apprendre/ faire (Skills of discovery and interaction) of Byram's original theory. This savoir is defined as the ability to combine attitudes, knowledge, and skills to communicate with speakers and explore cultural products to get new knowledge of other cultures. Proficiency in the target language is fundamental to complement the set of skills described by Byram (1997) as it is key to putting them into action in real settings.

To determine the potential of the material to develop the set of skills related to these savoirs, a series of indicators was designed. As three of them belong to the most basic level, 1, to differentiate them their data will be presented as follows: 1A. Provides language elements that might help to participate effectively in cultural exchanges, 1B. Includes examples of effective intercultural exchanges, 1C. Promotes the use of the foreign language as a means to participate in effective intercultural exchanges, 2. Includes examples of exploration of knowledge about cultures and 3. Promotes an adaptative mindset to participate effectively in future cultural exchanges. The proportion in which each of these items is represented in the material is registered in Figure 10.

The indicator that is most highly presented in the material is 1A, this item was nourished by two types of content: English in use for communicative purposes (as presented in the second category of this data analysis) and English in use for EFL instruction. This indicator has a large representation in the material, 865 utterances of 2184 of the total sample (39,6%).

Figure 10

Savoir apprendre/faire (skill of discovery and interaction) and savoir communiquer in ECO Kids



A description of the elements of English for communication in Eco Kids was presented above. So, the coming section of the analysis focuses on describing the instructional part of the series. To start, the following is an example of how ECO kids managed language teaching:

- 3 ELSA: Niños, niñas, repitamos nuevamente las partes del cuerpo:
- 4 Hombros: *shoulders*.
- 5 (Harp rift. Pause to answer)
- 6 Cadera: *hips*.
- 7 (Harp rift. Pause to answer)
- 8 Y piernas: *legs*.
- 9 (Harp rift. Pause to answer)

(ECO Kids. S1E12 transcript. Minute 4. Utterances 3 to 9)

- 1 IRENE: Elsa, aprendimos también a pedir el menú. Los ECO kids pueden hacerlo desde casa.
- 2 *Could we see the menú, please?* Ahora ustedes díganlo.
- 3 (Harp rift. Pause)
- 4 (You win! Slot machine sounds in the background).
- 5 MAXI: Eso quiere decir, ¿puedo ver el menú, por favor? ¿cierto? Could I see the menú, please?
- 6 ELSA: Exactly.

(ECO Kids. S1E11 transcript. Minute 16. Utterances 9 to 14)

A character named Elsa was in charge of instruction in ECO kids and while it can be found imbedded throughout the whole podcast in a communicative setting, where they were presented in use, there was a section destined for the practice of English exclusively. It was called 'Let's learn' and the general idea was to register the instructional content in every episode in 'The Great Book of Knowledge'. In this section, the instructional part was often found detached from any cultural elements, and language items (regularly, vocabulary and expressions) were practiced isolated.

There are several elements related to teaching a foreign language in a communicative context. There are some elements directly related to foreign language teaching too, but these are totally separated from the cultural part.

(Field notes episode 9. April 25, 2023. Starting at 00:14:22)

(...) also, there is a high count of elements that are devoted exclusively to the instruction of English as a foreign language. So, some elements of vocabulary and some of expressions are worked. But I think that the presentation of vocabulary, though this vocabulary is well supported in the podcast, may become a little excessive and a little decontextualized when it is presented from an instructional part only. The presented expressions are basically longer pieces of vocabulary.

(Field notes episode 11. April 26, 2023. Starting at 00:13:54)

When it comes to TEFL, the material seems to focus mainly on teaching vocabulary, either words or expressions. The presentation of the target language items is often made in a communicative setting, but when it comes to practicing or reinforcing the language items introduced through authentic scenarios, the series tends to isolate elements and focus on presenting translations and practicing pronunciation. The cultural element is totally left aside when the language items are reviewed and practiced. This greatly limits the potential of the material to help learners develop the corresponding savoir. Then, the instructional reach of ECO Kids is limited not only by the nature of the material but also by the approach used to present language items. That added to the lack of supporting resources for the series.

Regarding the other indicators, item 1B also makes a strong presence in the material with 20,3% (total 143 utterances). This item refers to examples of effective intercultural exchanges. The series is full of them, mainly through the foreign characters, but also, from interactions with sporadic characters from their own culture and some foreign countries. Examples of these interactions can be found aplenty in this data analysis and are registered in the field notes:

And about examples of effective or successful interactions between members of different cultural groups we can say again that they come from the relationships they, the protagonist kids of the show, develop with the foreign character, Indy Walker, and there are also some examples coming from the interaction that the person that acts like a reporter has with people from different countries. Finally, along the show we can also find, though it is mentioned explicitly only in one part, that it is possible to use English to participate in effective cultural exchanges.

(Field notes episode 9. April 25, 2023. Starting at 00:14:48)

It is also important to highlight that there is an intention that you can tell along the whole show, and it is to show that through English, people can relate with members of communities different from the one an individual originally belong to.

(Field notes episode 9. April 25, 2023. Starting at 00:19:04)

Item 1C has little representation in the material as it searched literal invitations to use English to bridge intercultural exchanges, but as mentioned on the field notes, implicitly there is a clear orientation in the material to show English as a tool to participate of effective intercultural exchanges. Literal invitations to use English as lingua franca usually took place in the sample as shown in the following fragment:

16 (Colombian Beat. Kids at unison)

17 Let's discover Colombia! Let's connect with the world! Let's learn English. Let's play together!

(ECO Kids. S1E2 transcript. Minute 19. Utterances 16 and 17)

Upper indicators also have presence in the sample. Item 2, that searched for examples of exploration of knowledge about cultures where the foreign language acted as a bridge to access knowledge reached 8,6% of representation (188 utterances). Exploration of cultures occupied a central role of the series. It was carried at times mainly by the foreign character, but in general, all the regular characters in the show participated in exploring cultures. The following is an example of exploration of cultures in ECO kids.

- 6 INDY: That's a nice hat!
- 7 GUIDE: Yeah, it's a vueltiao hat. I bought it in Cordoba.
- 8 INDY: Great! Cuéntanos, ¿cuáles son las piezas artesanales más populares por aquí?
- 9 GUIDE: The most popular handicrafts here are...mmm, let me think... oh!
Definitivamente las mochilas, sí. Aquí, en la Sierra Nevada, los wiwa, los kogui, los (ininteligible) y los arhuacos, cada uno tiene su manera completamente distinta de hacer la mochila. Con distintos materiales y colores. Y eso es espectacular, porque cada mochila tiene su propio significado.

(ECO Kids. S1E5 transcript. Minute 11. Utterances 6 to 9)

Separate items of the checklists used a broader approach to search data that relates to the item 2 of this savoir. They searched elements that might motivate the exploration the own culture and of foreign cultures (exclusively from the perspective of a Colombian learner). The item related to elements of the own culture reached 10,3% (224 utterances). This item included not only examples of exploration but also invitations to do so (sometimes containing praises of our own culture). The same item regarding foreign cultures barely reached 1,1% (24 utterances in the

sample). This data clearly confirms the inclination ECO Kids has in almost every aspect to favor the presentation of content of their own culture over content of foreign cultures.

Finally, the last indicator related to this savoir, Item 3, was not present in the sample. In the analyzed episodes there were no situations that promoted an adaptative mindset in students to face conflictive situations in intercultural exchanges. Almost every single interaction in ECO Kids is positive and successful. There are no cultural mismatches or ineffective communicative attempts. That also applies to cultures, all the references about cultures or communities in ECO Kids are positive. A congratulatory approach to culture was searched by the checklists and though in a small proportion (0,4%), it does show a tendency in the material to focus only on positive or neutral aspects of cultures.

Fifth subcategory: ECO kids presents few elements related to savoir s'engager (critical cultural awareness)

Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002), define Savoir s'engager (critical cultural awareness) as the ability to evaluate critically the products of a culture. This is one of the most improbable savoirs to be developed by the material since critical thinking is not very developed per se in the population that it targets. However, Rico (2011) elaborates on the original definition to say this savoir aims to transform speakers into informants of cultures, own and foreign, and ease reflection processes. Thus, making the skills of this savoir more attainable for the material. Keeping this in mind, in order to determine the potential of the material relating to these skills, the following indicators were designed: 1. Includes examples of interlocutors transforming into both ethnographers and informants of diverse cultures, 2. Includes examples of interlocutors evaluating critically the products of diverse cultures, 3. Promotes transforming in both

ethnographers and informants of diverse cultures, 4. Promotes identifying the difference of their cultural values, beliefs and perceptions with those of others. 5. Allows them to gain perspective, through comparison, of their own culture and the other. The representation achieved by the material in every indicator is shown in figure 11.

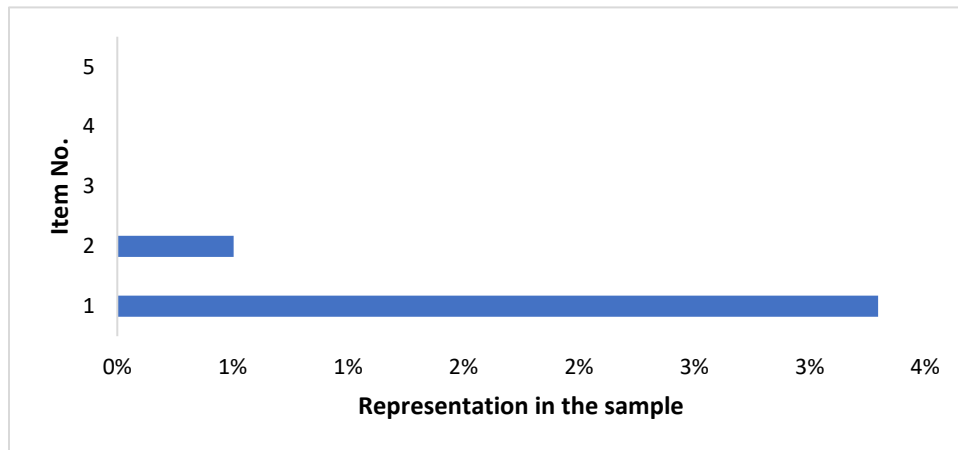
As expected, this savoir has the lowest representation in the sample, even in a very basic level ECO kids presents just a few elements that might develop this savoir. The following excerpt of the podcasts shows the way in which items 1 and 2 were present:

- 3 INDY: What is the meaning of color in mochilas?
- 4 GUÍA: El significado del color de las mochilas, excelente pregunta. Los colores de las mochilas, en algunas castas, son representativos. Por ejemplo, dentro de la casta de los Koguis, el rojo, el amarillo o el blanco, representan su linaje. En los arhuacos y las demás castas, los colores o los motivos representan eventos. Una de las mochilas más famosas representa los picos de la Sierra Nevada. Otra es el creador, otra es igual a la serpiente cascabel. Ellos a través de la mochila interpretan las cosas importantes para su cultura.

(ECO Kids. S1E5 transcript. Minute 12. Utterances 3 and 4)

Figure 11

Savoir's engager (critical cultural awareness) in ECO Kids



In here both items are represented, like in all the sample, in a very basic level. The limited presence of elements related to this savoir is reflected in the little mentions this savoir gets in the field notes, yet it is sometimes mentioned as the following excerpt shows:

There are also some elements related to a critical evaluation of the products of some cultures. I consider this is done through the exploration of symbols and values present in the handicrafts that are mentioned in the episode, because this is not done in a decontextualized form but uses an element of surface culture to talk about values, of beliefs and elements of deep culture that underlie this surface culture elements.

(Field notes episode 5. April 18, 2023. Starting at 00:19:55)

The majority of times, it was the foreign character the one who performed the role of an ethnographer, inquiring and exploring Colombian cultural manifestations. Most of the time, secondary characters acted as informants. The children belonging to the main cast occasionally

inquired about cultures, they regularly acted as receivers of information. Moreover, they barely talked about their own culture and never did this explicitly.

Separate items of the checklists, belonging to section 4, searched for elements in the sample related to this savoir with a more flexible scope. Searching for content in the material that might facilitate an important practice that might be considered either part or a previous stage to the development of critical awareness: reflection. One of these items searched for elements that might allow in one way or another reflection to take place in the listeners of the podcast. Only, 3,6% of the sample was considered to allow reflection processes about the own culture and 1,6 of a foreign culture. Reflection in ECO kids was often difficulted by the decontextualization of the information in the material and by lack of examples where interlocutors reflected on cultural products. Culture information was most if the times only presented, not reflected upon.

Items 3, 4 and 5 did not get any representation in the analyzed episodes, despite being searched in a very basic level. This is probably because most of the content in ECO kids relates to surface culture elements, and continuously, this content lacked the connection to deep culture elements like values, beliefs, and perceptions. Then, ECO Kids falls in the mainstream tendency of TEFL material Gómez (2018), and Trujillo (2002) denounce when they remark most TEFL material leaves aside deep culture elements and focuses mainly on surface culture. Though in fact, elements related to both surface and deep culture are necessary for the development of intercultural skills (Byram, 1997).

The third category emerging from the data analysis aimed to answer the second research question: To what extent elements in ECO Kids might foster the development of ICC? This answer was achieved through the fulfillment of the corresponding research objective: To

characterize the elements related to the ICC in the analyzed material and evaluate to what extent these elements might contribute to the development of ICC. After reflecting on the data presented above regarding the presence of the *savoirs* of the theory of Byram (1997) it is possible to state that these were present in the sample in a very basic form. Nevertheless, the quality of the cultural elements that might aim for the development of ICC makes it unlikely that these might actually foster the development of this competence.

Regarding *Savoirs* (knowledge) it is important to remark that the sample contained abundant content about knowledge of cultural manifestations, for this content relates directly to elements of surface culture. Nonetheless, the material lacked elements about knowledge of social processes, for these elements relate mainly to deep culture, which as discussed before did not have a large representation in the series.

About elements related to *savoir être* (intercultural attitudes) it is possible to assert that, though these are present in the series, they are introduced from an inconvenient scope. In the first place, most of the relationships that are formed with people from foreign cultures are set on the perspective of the foreign character, not on the perspective of the kids that share a cultural background and other several social characteristics (age, origin) of the population the material is addressed to. A different approach to the cultural content related to this *savoir* might have favored the relativization of ethnocentric attitudes (Byam, 1997) but in its current state that process is unlikely to take place. And in the second place, there is a marked absence of elements of foreign cultures which gravely limits opportunities of comparison between the own culture and the foreign culture. The lack of such vital component also limits the potential of the material of contributing to the development of *savoir comprendre* (skills of interpreting and relating), for the comparison processes between products of the own and the foreign cultures that are the key

feature of this savoir (Byram, Gribkova and Starkey, 2002) are not present in the material, not even in the form of examples in the exchanges that take place among the characters.

Savoir apprendre/ faire (skills of discovery and interaction) and savoir communiquer hold a remarkable presence in the sample. This is only logical considering the series is designed to develop linguistic skills of EFL. However, the quality of elements related to the development of these skills is limited by the artificiality product of the disbalance between instructional content and communicative interactions in the series.

The final savoir of the model of Byram (1997), *Savoir s'engager* (critical cultural awareness) is very unlikely to be developed by the series for the series does not actually provide elements that might allow reflecting on how the own culture works or wondering 'why we do things the way we do them?'. Yet again this is caused by the scarce contact the series offers with information of foreign cultures and the role most of the characters of the own culture assume during the show, being passive receivers of cultural information without providing examples of reflection and analysis of cultural attitudes and behaviors in the own or in the foreign culture.

The findings of the present study regarding the potential of TEFL material to foster the development of intercultural skills are comparable to those found in the work by Henao, Gómez and Murcia (2019) who found out the series *English, Please!* (that just like *ECO Kids* is part of the material produced by the MEN and the BC in the frame of the NBP and is focused on developing intercultural skills), also falls short in its objective of developing interculturality because the percentage of activities actually focused on the development of such skills was minimum compared to those activities exclusively devoted to the development of the four skills

traditionally conceived in the field and also, because as it happens in ECO Kids, the series entails a reductionist vision of the concept of interculturality and intercultural skills.

Chapter 5

Conclusions, implications, limitations, and further research

This chapter presents the conclusions of the study after consideration of the findings presented above. It also describes insights into the implications this research project may have on the field and in the actors in everyday teaching practices. Besides, there is an account of the limitations this study faced, both internal, in terms of the challenges that aroused from within the study and the generalization of the research exercise here reported. Finally, there are some considerations about the usefulness this study may have for coming research projects as well as some ideas that emerged from its completion that might be interesting for future work in the TEFL field.

Conclusions

ECO Kids constitutes an honest attempt from the MEN and the BC to include cultural content in TEFL material that might contribute to the development of intercultural skills. The series does include elements related to surface and deep culture, and some of its cultural content might relate to some of the *savoirs* postulated by Byram (1999), and complemented by Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002) and Rico (2011). However, the presentation of such content ultimately fails in fulfilling their promise to develop intercultural skills.

As shown in the previous analysis, the cultural content in the ECO kids series relates predominantly to surface culture. The proportion of cultural elements related to this type greatly exceeds the amount of cultural content in the podcasts related to deep culture. Deep culture

elements are important for they help understand the intangible basis for many surface culture manifestations, they make them meaningful. ECO Kids regularly lacked this connection between surface and deep culture elements that as Byram (1997) remarks is necessary for learners to become well-equipped intercultural speakers.

The marked inclination of the creators of the series of privileging elements related to surface culture is the continuation of a trend in the TEFL field Gómez (2018) denounces. He says through the predilection of the presentation of surface culture elements, TEFL material often provides mere superficial experiences of cultures that consequently lead to promoting a naïve perspective where learners see cultures from a congratulatory approach (Gómez, 2015a, 2015b). This is sadly the case of ECO Kids; the presentation of surface culture information promotes only positive aspects both own and foreign cultures in it. Also, it is noticeable throughout the sample, much of the information about surface culture was presented in a partial, isolated, and decontextualized form which might hinder the potential of the material to accurately represent cultures and make sense of cultural aspects in their context.

Leaving aside the predilection of the series for surface culture elements and the questionable quality of their presentation, ECO Kids implicitly encourages some inconvenient cultural views in other forms, like focusing on only typical aspects of cultures.

Gómez (2015b) points out that the presentation of fixed ideas about communities, like typical aspects only, creates stereotypes and promotes the standardization of the members of a community and consequently causes what Arias, Gómez, and Vera (2015) refer to as a misunderstanding of culture, for this is supposed to be transformative and dynamic not static and unchanging like information about only typical aspects of culture tends to show. The narrow approach of the creators of the series left aside much of the cultural richness of the communities

it aimed to present. For example, individuality and counter-cultural movements were completely disregarded in ECO Kids. This excluding lens greatly limits the potential of the material to show culture the way it is really is complex, conflictive (Gómez, 2018) and in a continuous process of transmission-modification (Trujillo, 2002).

Reflecting on deep culture elements, their presence in the sample relied mainly on language in use. ECO Kids used translanguaging as a strategy to present language elements to learners at a beginner level and overcome the difficulties to present and practice language items inherent to audio material. Thus, the series was expected to provide deep culture information implicitly using language as a means as well as instructing in the target language. Though it is undeniable language provides elements of deep culture, in ECO Kids they are not sufficiently clear so that teachers, learners, or any user of the material can fully make sense of them. Reimann (2009) remarks most teachers simply lack the training to present cultural information, which is why they depend on teaching material to do so. Nonetheless, aspects of deep culture so embedded in language are very difficult to observe without training or the support of complementary material. ECO Kids does not provide either one or the other, so, many of the elements about deep culture might be totally ignored when the material is implemented in a regular TEFL setting.

Adding to the difficulties of exploring deep culture elements in the language in use in the series, there is an aspect that weakens the usefulness of ECO Kids even more, and it is the artificiality of interactions in it. While advocating for more authentic content in Japanese TEFL material Reimann (2009) points out they are often skill based and focus on eliciting irrelevant behaviors. This is an evident weakness of ECO Kids. Communication seems to be forced to favor the practice of language structures. Sometimes to provide more examples of vocabulary

and expressions the interactions of the characters were forced. ECO kids struggled to present natural communicative settings and instructional settings together, sometimes mixing those two and hence, affecting the possibility of presenting cultural elements through language in use.

Regarding the representation of cultures in the series, ECO Kids focuses mainly on the presentation of content about their own culture. Though their approach is sometimes superficial there is a clear effort to present information from diverse communities within their own culture. The clear emphasis the show has on our own culture might correspond to one of the elements Baker (2012) lists as an indicator in an early stage of cultural awareness (CA). Learners are expected to understand culture and the social processes involved in it from their own culture. That includes exploration of cultural manifestations and the communities in the national setting where these come from and the values, beliefs, attitudes, identities, and other social basis that give shape to cultural manifestations. Nonetheless, even in the most basic level of CA, learners are expected to be exposed to rich sources of information about other cultures for understanding the own culture is also possible by putting in a context that makes clear that in spite of its uniqueness, the own culture is one of the many cultures that coexist in a globalized world, especially in the TEFL setting.

Having said that, it is only logical to conclude that although ECO Kids does contain elements that might point towards the development of ICC and the *savoirs* in the model of Byram (1997), the material *per se* has a very limited potential to contribute to their development.

Savoirs (knowledge) is one of the components that has the largest presentation in the material, but given this *savoir* has two elements, knowledge of cultural manifestations and knowledge of social processes, ECO Kids might not supply sufficient information about the second element. Supporting material would have been ideal to put into context the cultural

manifestations presented by the show that resents the lack of information about deep culture, for surface culture elements many times rely on deep culture elements to be fully understood.

Elements related to *savoir être* (intercultural attitudes) are noticeable in the sample. These elements depend greatly on the foreign character of the show. So, even though ECO Kids motivates to establish and maintain relationships with a foreign individual and presents examples of people from different backgrounds acting as equals, the predominant perspective of these encounters is the one of the foreign character more often than the perspective of the characters belonging to the own culture, the ones that in the end are closer to the learners that the material addresses. Besides, the potential of the material to develop this *savoir* is limited by the lack of information about foreign cultures, and the subsequent lack of elements that help the comparison with one's own culture.

This also happens with *savoir comprendre* (skills of interpreting and relating). The lack of information about foreign cultures hinders the development of this *savoir*. In addition to the fact that contrasting cultures have insufficient representation in ECO Kids.

Savoir apprendre/ faire (skills of discovery and interaction) and *savoir communiquer* have the largest representation in the material. Since ECO Kids is TEFL material, it has the purpose and the potential to provide learners with the skills necessary to be part of intercultural encounters. Yet, as described before, the show struggles to present cultural content and language instruction altogether, which affects the quality of these two components. Cultural content and the quality of the language presented in the series are affected by the need of presenting and practicing language items in an instructional form, affecting the naturalness of some of the interactions in the show and consequently the deep culture elements that are present in authentic material. ECO Kids neglects the presentation of realia, all the interactions in the show are clearly

artificial and scripted. Favoring instruction over more natural communication is one of the great weaknesses of the material and it could have been avoided if the creators had opted to supplement the podcasts supporting material dedicated to the instruction of EFL that the material has to provide. Besides, the characteristics of some interactions in the material lower its potential to develop this savoir, ECO Kids does not promote an adaptive mindset for intercultural exchanges because all the interactions in it are effective, successful, and positive. Everybody speaks English in ECO Kids and there are never cultural mismatches, misunderstandings, or negative attitudes that could have provided examples of how to deal when these unsuccessful exchanges occur. And, as predicted, exploration most of the time takes place around the foreign character. It is he who explores and the members of the cast of the show belonging to their own culture most of the time receive information passively.

The most advanced savoir in the model of Byram (1997) is the one that has the least representation in the sample, and accordingly, it is unlike that the material might help its development by itself. There are few examples of interlocutors acting as ethnographers or informants (Rico, 2011). Rico points out gaining perspective through these viewpoints (ethnographer and informant) promotes evaluating critically the products of a culture, in other words, “standing back from ourselves and becoming aware of our cultural values, beliefs and perceptions that are different from the others” (P 139).

ECO Kids would benefit from supporting sources that make the contents in the show cues for further development of the cultural content it presents. Since the material is in development, as it has already been established, these aids might still come to help teachers and learners make a better of what the podcasts already are.

Unfortunately, as it is today, ECO Kids repeats many of the mistakes scholars have criticized. If it is true the series perspires cultural information, its presentation is more often than not superficial like Reimann (2009) remarks is a trend in TEFL material. Also, as Liddicoat (2009) remarks culture is often not successfully integrated into material. In the case of ECO Kids, culture is not given a separate section, but it is often poorly integrated into everyday life. An example of this is the lack of elements related to cultural manifestations as they are in present time and the difficulty creators had to integrate culture to episodes where it was not the main topic (Episodes 7 and 9). When culture was not the axis of an episode the count of cultural elements descended dramatically.

Furthermore, as Gómez (2018) observes in his study about textbooks in use in Colombia, most cultural information in the analyzed material relates to surface culture. The same happens to ECO kids. This trend is dangerous since this type of content tends to reinforce stereotypes and promote a static and congratulatory approach to culture. In favor of ECO Kids, it is important to remark the inclusion of cultural content did not favor predominant cultures, like British or American, which was the case of the content analysis carried out by Guzman (2015) but as she concluded ICC is very unlikely to develop by the analyzed material because of the cultural views that were present in the sample. Her findings are parallel to the content in ECO Kids, where along with some homogenizing views of Colombian culture, the decontextualization of the cultural information in it severely affects the potential of the material to develop ICC.

Speaking of material emerging from the alliance between the MEN and the BC, ECO Kids seem to repeat the mistakes of series like English, Please! That was analyzed by Henao, Gómez, and Murcia (2019) who concluded the concept of interculturality in the series is portrayed from a very limited perspective. This seems to be the case with ECO Kids, since many

times the intercultural approach of the series was merely cosmetic. Cultures, communities and locations are mentioned in the material to provide an appearance of interculturality that, due to the characteristics of the cultural content and the limited exposure that it provides to elements related to the ICC, remains only a superficial and unsuccessful approach to the development of skills it promises to focus on.

Implications

The implications in this chapter aim to provide some insights emerging from this study and of relevance in TEFL field for further reflection in several levels, starting from the current practices regarding material in the TEFL field in general, the effect of ongoing TEFL policies in Colombia, the teaching practices (including the design and selection of material) that take shape as product of those policies and the alliance between the MEN and the BC in the frame of the NBP and finally, the role of teachers as primary users of material in multicultural settings in their everyday labor.

To start, after the analysis presented in this study, it is clear that regardless of the ambitious goals ECO Kids has, there is still a long road ahead of material creators to achieve real integration of cultural content in their work and to effectively contribute to the development of skills related to culture and/or interculturality. The reflections emerging from this research project arise to join the concerns expressed by several scholars (E.g.: Reimann (2009), Gómez (2015a, 2015b; 2018), Rico (2011) Liddicoat (2004)) regarding the importance of culture, its inexplicable neglect and the importance of helping learners develop intercultural skills have still not been solved by publishing houses and private and public educational bodies and that is reflected not only in materials but in the long run, in every single aspect of the instruction in the

FL field for many of these aspects are dependent or affected by the use of TEFL material. And this material still lacks cultural content, fully integrated, that instead of promoting stereotypes, monolithic and static visions about culture and communities promotes a transformative, dynamic, contentious vision of it. A vision where culture is not seen as an absolute but as a pattern that individuals in their communities can validate or contempt.

This study also contributes to put in evidence there seems to be little understanding in the field about the importance TEFL materials have to introduce cultures and develop intercultural skills in general (ICC included) because they are sometimes the only contact many students have with foreign cultures and in the case of multicultural settings, like the public school where the research interest that guided this study emerged, materials are often a necessary starting point to guide learners in the exploration of their own culture, the understanding of the cultures of the other, the fight against discrimination and the development of interculturally sensible skills, everyday more valuable in a globalized world.

Unfortunately, the material object of analysis of the present study seems to fall short in providing such opportunities. This constitutes a failure in the policies and alliances that give birth to material like ECO Kids and other series. The study by Henao, Gómez, and Murcia (2019) had already put in evidence that despite the acknowledgment of the Colombian Governmental bodies of the increasing need of considering the integration of culture and the development of intercultural skills in curriculums and materials, the alliance between MEN and the BC in the frame of the NBP might not be producing the so much expected effect in actual TEFL material and practices. The non-achievement of English, Please! in developing Intercultural Awareness described by Henao, Gómez, and Murcia (2019) is comparable to what the present study found about the potential of ECO Kids to develop ICC. These series do not

fulfill their promises regarding culture and interculturality. Studies like the present are everyday more relevant in the Colombian context for they uncover weaknesses in the alliances and the strategies that are currently being implemented all around the country and create opportunities for objective evaluation and subsequent change and improvement.

The continuous failure of the national policies, its alliances, and the products that are born from them should at least call for their revision. This concern of course is not new, there has been a continuous advocacy in Colombia for changes in the policies that in one way or another set all the practices of the TEFL field in the country. For example, Escobar (2013) and Ayala and Alvarez (2005) call for the construction of ELT standards of national origin and consequently, teaching practices, that acknowledge the particularities of the Colombian context and its socio-cultural needs. However, contrary to this amounting concern, Colombian authorities continuously favor foreign standards. Escobar (2013) exemplifies this by pointing out how Colombian authorities have opted for the adoption of CEFR and forced it into the Colombian context. These foreign standards have influenced every single aspect in the TEFL field in Colombia, from evaluation to the identities of teachers. Ayala and Alvarez (2005) reinforce this idea saying these imported standards affect curricula, syllabi, methodologies, assessment, and of course, instructional materials.

Thus, material like ECO Kids will always represent in one way or another the interests and perspectives of foreign policies and even more so, when foreign institutions like the BC are in charge of the design of material aimed to explore our own and the cultures of others. Guerrero (2008) points out the BC has been working since the beginning of the 20th century to promote the use of English around the world and has pushed the idea that being bilingual means speaking in English. ECO kids contains elements that tend to promote the idea that English is THE lingua

franca and there is also a marked tendency to have every interaction and explorational situation around the foreign character of the show. Unfortunately, the characteristics of the present study limit further exploration about these matters.

Nonetheless, the findings of this study add up to the concerns of many Colombian scholars and call for a revision of the policies and the actors in charge of determining the route of FL Education in the country. Especially now, when the NBP is in progress and more schools are encouraged to adopt suggested curriculums and to implement material generated by the NBP themselves, like the ECO Kids series.

Teachers in Colombia need to address more actively these concerns. The present study is a clear example of how classroom-originated initiatives can become projects that invite the TEFL community in general to analyze more carefully the practices and the materials for they provide a more informed perspective about the classroom elements that we implement sometimes inadvertently in our everyday work.

This project also calls for better preparation of teachers to engage in multicultural settings. If in fact it is true ECO Kids does not fulfill its objective of building intercultural skills, there is a huge question that arises from this study and it is, is it at all possible for any material to teach culture and develop intercultural skills by itself? I am inclined to say no, not by itself.

Teaching materials are sometimes as successful as capable the teachers who implement them. Any suitable material with cultural content that might develop intercultural skills can have zero effect if the teachers that use them are not qualified for making sense of it. Otherwise, teachers working with material that presents inconvenient cultural views or that lacks cultural content can turn around the circumstances and use such material as an opportunity to promote

critical thinking in his/her students and use the richest source of cultural information available in any classroom, the individuals in it. This awareness, the potential of learners to provide cultural information, is essential in multicultural settings. Culture should no longer be ignored in our contexts, any context is necessarily a cultural context and most of the times a multicultural one, it is our duty as FL teachers to prepare ourselves to bring to light the huge potential our own students have to create culturally rich settings in which the different cultural backgrounds that meet feel welcomed, represented and learners become intercultural speakers and consequently, better citizens in the modern globalized world.

Limitations

The limitations of this study emerge mainly from aspects related to the nature of the material and its in-progress state, the research methodology chosen to approach the material and the impact this study may have.

First, the analysis of ECO Kids presented a challenge for being mainly audio material. When there are discussions about TEFL material the first idea that comes to mind is textbooks. In fact, most of the previous research made about material relates to printed resources. Even though some of the material analyses that preceded this study dealt with audio parts in material (conversations and listening activities in physical units or digital platforms), the core of ECO Kids was audio. Though earlier research in the TEFL field was helpful to set the research design, due to the particular nature of the series, it was difficult to find in former studies techniques that could set a path on how to prepare the sample for analysis.

Of course, this became a significant complication, since prior to the analysis, it became necessary to organize the sample in a form that could take account of the several elements included in the podcasts. Besides, it meant a considerable amount of extra work. This extra work has an added obstacle coming from the translanguaging strategy used in the series.

Translanguaging rendered useless the help of most transcription software because this usually deals with monolingual input, one language at a time. For this reason, though software did help to accelerate the procedure, most of the transcription process had to be carefully done by the researcher.

In the end, though the transcription process was thorough, and the results were satisfactory, it is impossible to completely capture the richness of audio material. Though the scripts that were subject to analysis reflect the essence of ECO kids, there are still elements that slipped from the work of the researcher.

Another limitation of this study arises from ECO Kids state. It was mentioned before ECO Kids is a material that for the last two years has been experiencing growth. Its unfinished and in-progress state gives the series promise and potential, since the opportunity to fulfill its initial objective remains doable. However, this state also caused difficulties at the time of delimiting the sample. The selection of the sample had to consider that ECO Kids lacks elements that are part of most FL material (Scope and sequence, page to page Teacher's Guides, substantial workbooks for students) and focus on what there is. Also, since ECO Kids is a work in-progress, the future of the series is still unknown, and the changes made to the series can affect the future validity of this study.

Nonetheless, this research project presents a portrait of ECO Kids as it is, in its current state. The techniques implemented to observe the object of study went from specific items to form a

general landscape of the material, a broad and general scope was preferred over analysis of specific items. However, in the observation process, some elements that called the attention of the researcher were left out. A different methodological approach to the material would have provided important insights about several elements that were not considered in the a priori approach this study opted for. Besides, since the object of study was the material itself, elements emerging from actual teaching practice were not considered. Those elements, however, constitute opportunities for future research projects, that might focus on observing the material in use or analyzing underlying items that were disregarded by the present study.

Further Research

Throughout the observation of the material in question, it was possible to observe several elements that despite the meticulous application of the research instruments escaped a deeper analysis. Most of these elements were not concerned with the focus of the present analysis so they were disregarded. However, they might provide powerful insights into the underlying points of view and interests of the creators of the material that transpired through the whole series.

As presented before, this material is the product of an alliance between the MEN and the BC, within the frame of the NBP whose officials have selected the adoption of the CEFR as the standard for bilingual education in Colombia. Future research should take the ideas of Escobar (2013) Ayala and Alvarez (2005) and Guerrero (2008), and some of the elements described this study as a starting point to observe in more detail the definition of bilingualism that is held in the podcasts, to prove or disprove the hypothesis that institutions like the BC promote the ideas that English is the only way to achieve bilingualism and that it is the only lingua franca. Though some elements slipped the analysis above, it is at least upsetting that in ECO Kids, English was

used as a lingua franca by members of the same community (Colombians talked to Colombians in English within the podcast, Latin-Americans presented their ideas to Latin-Americans in English). Though the show used translanguaging and Spanish was continuously used, elicitations about the richness, the usefulness and the beauty of the language were hoarded entirely by English.

Another aspect that could be subject to further research is the power relationships among the members of the show. It was mentioned that in most interactions the main cast and sporadic characters interacted as equals, but there are situations in the show that invite a closer look at them. For example, it was mentioned before, most of the exploration in ECO kids was carried out by foreign characters. He sometimes held a certain authority over the local characters or showed capabilities other characters did not show.

Since the elements here presented are visible through discourse, future studies should consider approaching specifics in the show through the critical discourse analysis method. This can be done also using a theoretical framework that departs from local ideologies a not foreign originated. Though the present study considered local authors and their contributions, most of these were additions or reformations to theories born in the global north. It would be important to take an approach to the material implemented today in many schools in the country through the lens of a decolonial approach.

Nonetheless, in spite of the impossibility of the research design of this study to comprehend the complexity of some elements in the sample, the instruments that emerged from this study constitute a great opportunity for future studies that aim to seek cultural content in TEFL material and potential to develop ICC. The combination of a numerical instrument and a more descriptive one proved to be successful as instruments complement one another. And the

checklist designed for the analysis of the material provided powerful insights about this that often lack the proper support and stay as mere opinions. The quantitative data coming from the checklists provided strength to the arguments developed in this analysis and are thorough and comprehensible of the aspects in the material that this study aimed to explore.

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APPENDIX A

Example of the transcription process and coding frames

As mentioned before, transcripts of every episode resembled the form of a screenplay script. They have a character's identification in capital letters. They also have time marks for every minute. The transcripts also contain marks of the sections of the show in capital letters. Sections were typically not repeated from episode to episode. Utterances were numbered to facilitate the tabulation resulting from the coding frames.

Typically, the interventions of the characters of the show didn't overlap. Their single interventions were broken into several utterances when a full stop appeared, meaning a change of tone, topic, or addressing a different person in a dialogue. Whenever the characters showed specific emotions it was registered in brackets next to the dialogue where the emotion was shown. When they shouted, their utterances were registered in capital letters. Affective sounds, sound effects, music and ambient sounds were registered as separate utterances. No especial codification was required to register the contents of the episodes.

The example here presented corresponds to the first five minutes of Episode 5: Indy and the Arhuaca mochila. Episodes were typically 20 to 21 minutes long. It is marked with the coding frames resulting from the application of checklists. The colors used correspond to the items in this instrument (See Appendix B).

Utterances were colored according to the judgement and understanding of the researcher and discussed with the advisor. Colors were applied to only a portion of the utterance, not necessarily to its whole. When an entire minute was considered to fit into the description of an item in the checklists, the minute mark was colored. No other special considerations were taken regarding the coding frame process.

Transcript Episode 5 (Minutes 0 to 5)

0:00

BEGINNING INTRO

1 IRENE: Hello, hello. Probando, probando (sounds of tapping on microphone). ¡Todo Colombia me escucha! ¡Guau! ¡Qué increíble!

2 (Colombian music starts to play in the background. Kids speaking out loud) Hi, hola. WhatsApp, quihubo. How are you? ¿Cómo estás?

3 NARRATOR: Acá comienza...

4 (Kids speaking out loud) Eco Kids!

5 NARRATOR: ...English for Colombia. Te invitamos a que nos acompañes en esta aventura recorriendo nuestro país.

6 MAXI: Desde el Amazonas hasta los Andes.

7 RAMÓN: Desde el caribe, hasta el Caquetá.

8 IRENE: Desde los Llanos, hasta el Pacífico.

9 (Kids speaking out loud) From Colombia to the world!

10 IRENE: Yo soy Irene. Wow! We're here!

11 MAXI: Yo soy Maxi, ¡Upaje!

12 RAMÓN: Y yo Ramón, oh yeah! Welcome to ECO kids!

13 IRENE: ¡Bienvenidos!

14 MAN'S VOICE: Ministerio de Educación Nacional: La educación es de todos.

15 British Council: Conectando al Reino Unido con Colombia.

16 (Colombian music stops)

1:07

1 (Gaita music and wave sounds in the background)

2 IRENE: Hi, ECO kids. How are you today?

3 RAMÓN: Hi. I am fine. Are you ready for this new program?

4 MAXI: Oh, yeah! Listos para esta nueva y emocionante transmisión.

5 RAMÓN: ¡Irene! ¡Qué linda tu mochila! Where did you get it?

6 MAXI: Sí, Irene, ¿dónde la conseguiste?

7 IRENE: Yes. It is unique and very special. It was a present from my friends.

8 MAXI: ¿Un regalo de tus amigos? ¿y ellos hacen mochilas?

9 IRENE: No, Maxi. Me la trajeron de la Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, cuando fueron a ciudad perdida. Se la compraron a unos arhuacos. And guess what: Indie fell in love with it too. Le encantó. Hace unos días lo invité a una paleta de fresa en el parque.

10 MAXI: (With difficulty) A strawberry popsicle! Yes! (Ding) ¡Lo pude pronunciar!

11 IRENE: Me la vio colgada, se enamoró de la mochila y se montó en un avión.

2:00

1 RAMÓN: Irene, pero por qué dices que Indy se montó en un avión.

2 IRENE: Es que él quería taaanto esa mochila que hasta me insinuó que se la regalará. Umm, pero, yo no fui capaz de hacerlo. No me sentí preparada para tanta generosidad. Así que se fue en busca de una exactamente igual. Nada más y nada menos, que a la Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta.

3 RAMÓN: Pero cómo no enamorarse de esta belleza de mochila. I really like the color, the shapes, the design... it's beautiful!

4 MAXI: Yes, I agree with Ramón.

5 RAMÓN: I have an idea, let's call him. Averigüemos si la pudo conseguir.

6 MAXI: ¡Eso me suena un storytelling! Perfecto para nuestra próxima sección.

7 STORYTELLING SECTION INTRO PLAYS

8 (Suena música folclórica colombiana de gaita)

9 Let's share! Nuestras vivencias. Let's share!

3:00

1 Nuestros momentos. Let's share! Nuestras historias. Let's share! Our lives

2 (Phone dialing)

3 IRENE: Ay (frustrated) Indy no contesta. Me siento mal. Mmm...de todos modos el aprovecharía más mi mochila.

4 (Phone dialing)

5 RAMÓN: Don't worry. He will find it.

6 INDY: Hi?

7 IRENE: Indy, where are you now?

8 INDY: Hi, Irene. You wouldn't believe where I am. I'm at La Sierra Nevada. In an indigenous house, an Iku. una familia de arhuacos me dejó pasar la noche aquí en su casa. Se llama Iku. They're really nice people.

9 RAMÓN: Indie, what are the arhuacos like?

10 INDY: They are peaceful people that care deeply about nature.

11 (Ding)

12 ELSA: Niños, niñas. Indy nos está contando cómo son algunos indígenas que viven en La Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta.

4:00

1 Él dijo, son personas pacíficas a quienes les importa mucho la naturaleza. ¡Escuchemos otra vez!

(Ding)

2 They are peaceful people who care deeply about nature. They are also creative and talented.

3 (Indigenous flute music playing)

4 IRENE: Sí, Indy. Yo había leído que los arhuacos son personas talentosas y creativas, ¡pues mira mi mochila es una muestra de eso!

5 INDY: (Annoyed/ dissapointed) Ay, Irene. No me hables de la mochila. Llevo tres días preguntando una exacta a la tuya y nada, I have not been able to find it yet.

6 RAMÓN: I have a question. Who are the Arhuacos? I am not sure.

7 MAXI: Well, I know on thing about them. Yo sé que los arhuacos son una etnia indígena que vive en el territorio de la Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta.

8 INDY: Correct, Maxi! (Ininteligible) and Kogi also live there.

9 RAMÓN: ¿Y los wayuu de dónde son?

10 IRENE: De la guajira!

11 MAXI: Y del Cauca, los paez y los totoró.

12 RAMÓN: I wonder if all these groups have different handicrafts.

5:00

1 INDY: Indigenous population have different beliefs and traditions, that they reference in the things they make. So, each ethnic group has its own handicraft.

2 MAXI: Hand...hand...

3 IRENE: Recuerda, Maxi. Despacio. Han-di-crafts: Manualidades o artesanías.

4 MAXI: Han-di-crafts, great!

5 RAMÓN: ¿Indie, y alguna esperanza de encontrar la mochila que quieres?

6 INDY: I have my doubts. I've seen many: some small, some big.

7 MAXI: Y entre esas mochilas pequeñas y grandes ¿no has visto la tuya?

8 INDY: Not yet. I've also seen mochilas that have different drawings, shapes and designs.

9 IRENE: Sí, las mochilas tiene dibujos, formas geométricas y diseños que representan algunos animales importantes, y también los ciclos de vida.

10 RAMÓN: That is interesting!

11 INDY: Sí, mochilas in different colors. Such as black and gray.

12 RAMÓN: ¿Mochilas de color negro y gris?

13 INDY: Yes.

APPENDIX B

Example of checklists application and tabulation process

The checklists here presented correspond to the ones applied to the eight episodes of the sample. However, to serve the purposes of the example, they only contain the data of the first five minutes of the transcription of episode 5 in Appendix A. After the header containing the information of episode and section, checklists had, from left to right: a column with an item (if necessary, descriptors accompanied the item to help the researcher remember what the item searched), and columns to mark the presence or absence of the elements the item searched. Sections 1 and 2 had extra columns as they searched for specific items of own culture (OC) or foreign culture (FC).

The next column was used to register the utterances that the researcher considered fit the item in the first column. All the codes describing the positions of the related utterances in the transcripts were registered there. Last column had a total count of these utterances. When it was necessary information about OC and FC was registered as well. The total of utterances was then registered in a spreadsheet that allowed the contrast of information of the complete sample.

Checklist Episode 5 (Minute 0 to 5)

| ECO Kids - Episode 5 | | | | | | |
|--|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|-------------------|----------|
| Section 1: Culture views | | | | | | |
| ITEM | OC | | FC | | UTTERANCES | T |
| | YES | NO | YES | NO | | |
| Does it include elements related to the predominant perception of culture? The most typical characteristics of a community (Atkinson, 1999). Popular aspects of a culture. | | X | | X | | 0 |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|---|--|---|
| Does it include elements that challenge the predominant perception of a culture? | | X | | X | | 0 |
| Does it include elements related to a traditional view of culture? That considers it geographically situated, as the product of a nation/region (Atkinson, 1999). Stereotypical view of geographically situated communities. | | X | | X | | 0 |
| Does it include elements that challenge a traditional view of culture? | | X | | X | | 0 |
| Does it include elements related to a static vision of culture? Unchanging and homogenous among all members of a social group (Arias, Gómez and Vera, 2015). | | X | | X | | 0 |
| Does it include elements that challenge a static vision of culture? | | X | | X | | 0 |
| Does it include elements related to culture as a representation of the dominant group of a community? With a tendency to ignore manifestations of other groups. (Byram, 1997). | | X | | X | | 0 |
| Does it include elements related to culture as a representation of several groups? Other than the dominant group of a community. | | X | | X | | 0 |

| ECO Kids - Episode 5 | | | | | | |
|---|-----|----|-----|----|---|----------------|
| Section 2: Surface Culture | | | | | | |
| ITEM | OC | | FC | | UTTERANCES | T |
| | YES | NO | YES | NO | | |
| Does it include elements related to literature? | | X | | X | | 0 |
| Does it include elements related to arts? Music, plastic arts, films and dance | | x | | X | | 0 |
| Does it include elements related to traditional arts? Typical music, typical plastic arts, typical dances | x | | | X | OC: M1U5, M1U6, M1U7, M1U8, M1U9, M1U11, M1U13, M1U14, M3U12, M5U1, M5U5, M5U6, M5U7, M5U8, M5U9, M5U10, M5U11, M5U12 | 18 OC 18 |

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|---|---|----------------|
| Does it include elements related to religion? | | X | | X | | 0 |
| Does it include elements related to geography? | X | | | X | OC: M0U6, M0U7, M0U8, M1U9, M2U2, M3U8, M3U9, M4U7, M4U8, M4U9, M4U10, M4U12 | 12 OC 12 |
| Does it include elements related to gastronomy/cuisine? | | X | | X | | 0 |
| Does it include elements related to festivals? | | X | | X | | 0 |
| Does it include elements related to touristic destinations? | | X | | X | | 0 |
| Does it include elements related to people's history? | | X | | X | | 0 |
| Does it include elements related to traditions? | | X | | X | | 0 |
| Does it include elements related to dressing style? | X | | | X | OC: M1U5, M1U6, M1U7, M1U8, M1U9, M1U11, M1U13, M1U14, M3U12, M5U1, M5U5, M5U6, M5U7, M5U8, M5U9, M5U10, M5U11, M5U12 | 9 OC 9 |
| Does it include elements related to customs? | | X | | X | | 0 |
| Does it include elements related to celebrities? | | X | | X | | 0 |
| Does it include elements related to superficial experiences of a culture? As if learners were tourists of the culture. (Gómez, 2018) | | X | | X | | 0 |

| ECO Kids - Episode 5 | | | | | | |
|--|-----|----|-----|----|------------|---|
| Section 3: Deep Culture | | | | | | |
| ITEM | OC | | FC | | UTTERANCES | T |
| | YES | NO | YES | NO | | |
| Does it include elements related to attitudes? | | X | | X | | 0 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|----|----|---|---|---|----------------|
| Does it include elements related to beliefs and assumptions? | X | | | X | OC: M5U1, M5U9 | 2 OC 2 |
| Does it include elements related to perceptions? | | X | | X | | 0 |
| Does it include elements related to the way people see the world? | X | | | X | M3U10, M3U12 | 2 OC: 2 |
| Does it include elements related to the value system? | X | | | X | M3U10, M3U11, M3U12, M4U1, M4U2, M12U4 | 6 OC 6 |
| Does it include elements related to the English in use? Where language is used in a naturalistic environment, not as having an instructional focus but for the purpose of communication. | NA | NA | X | | M0U2, M0U210, M0U12, M1U2, M1U3, M1U5, M1U7, M1U9, M2U3, M2U4, M2U9, M2U1, M2U5, M2U9, M3U1, M3U1, M3U5, M3U6, M3U7, M3U8, M3U9, M3U10, M4U2, M4U5, M4U6, M4U8, M4U12, M5U6, M5U7, M5U10, M5U13 | 31 FC 87 |
| Does it include elements related to norms? | | X | | X | | 0 |
| Does it include elements related to social relationships? | | X | | X | | 0 |
| Does it include elements related to discourse organization? | | X | | X | | 0 |
| Does it include elements related to the use of physical space and body language? | | X | | X | | 0 |

| ECO Kids - Episode 5 | | | | |
|--|-----|----|------------|--|
| Section 4: Orientation of the cultural content | | | UTTERANCES | |
| ITEM | YES | NO | T | |
| Does it include elements related to a congratulatory approach to culture? Only praising the positive aspects of a culture. | | X | 0 | |
| Does it include elements related to a non-congratulatory approach to culture? | | X | 0 | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|----|
| Providing impartial information about aspects of a culture. | | | | |
| Does it include elements that may promote the deification of the target culture or foreign native speaker? The FL culture or speaker are always right or superior. | | X | | 0 |
| Does it include elements that may challenge the deification of the target culture or foreign native speaker? | | X | | 0 |
| Does it include elements that may promote a stereotypical vision of a certain culture? Promoting an oversimplified of culture, linking a whole culture to a single element or overgeneralizing. | X | | M0U11 | 1 |
| Does it include elements that may challenge a stereotypical vision of a certain culture. | | X | | 0 |
| Does it include elements related to a static view of culture? Homogeneous and unchanging. | | X | | 0 |
| Does it include elements related to a transformative and evolving view of culture? As a dynamic entity in a continuous process of transmission-modification. | | X | | 0 |
| Does it include elements that can be related to a superficial integration of culture? | | X | | 0 |
| Does it include elements that may promote the discovery/exploration of the own culture? | X | | M0U5, M0U6, M0U7, M0U8, M0U9, M1U5, M1U6, M1U7, M1U8, M1U9, M1U10, M1U11, M2U2, M2U3, M2U4, M2U5, M2U9, M3U1, M3U8, M3U9, M3U10, M3U12, M4U2, M4U2, M4U4, M4U5, M4U6, M4U7, M4U8, M4U9, M4U10, M4U11, M4U12, M5U1, M5U5, M5U6, M5U7, M5U8, M5U9, M5U10, M5U11, M5U12, M5U13 | 43 |
| Does it include elements related to discovery/exploration of the other culture? | | X | | 0 |

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| Does it include elements that may promote a decontextualization of a culture? | | X | | 0 |
| Does it include elements that may challenge a decontextualization of a culture? | | X | | 0 |
| Does it include elements that may promote reflecting on the own culture: Allowing the learners to reflect and/or share their own experiences, understandings, and insights. | X | | M1U9, M2U2, M3U8, M3U9, M3U10, M3U12, M4U4, M406, M407, M408, M409, M4010, M4011, M4012, M5U1, M5U8, M5U9 | 9 |
| Does it include elements that may promote reflecting on culture of the other? | | X | | 0 |
| Does it include elements related to language reflecting culture? Where explicit explanations of expressions are presented to address cultural aspects. | | x | | |
| Does it include elements related to valuing cultures? | X | | M3U8, M3U10, M3U12, M4U2, M4U4, M7U1, M8U10, M9U2, M11U9, M18U1, M18U2 | 9 |
| Does it include elements related to applying cultural knowledge in verbal and nonverbal communication? | | X | | 0 |
| Does it include elements that may promote developing empathy towards other cultures? Fighting discrimination. | | X | | 0 |
| Does it include elements related to making sense of behaviors and attitudes different to the ones present in the own culture? | X | | M5U1, M5U9 | 2 |

| ECO Kids - Episode 5 | | | | |
|---|-----|----|--|----|
| Section 5: ICC | | | UTTERANCES | T |
| <i>Savoirs (knowledge):</i> | YES | NO | | |
| 1. Includes knowledge and examples about cultures. Conceptual framework of the own culture, the foreign culture, and others and their products: cultural manifestations. | X | | M0U6, M0U7, M0U8, M1U5, M1U6, M1U7, M1U8, M1U9, M1U11, M1U13, M1U14, M2U2, M3U8, M3U9, M3U10, M3U11, M3U12, M4U7, M4U1, M4U2, M4U8, M4U9, M4U10, M4U12, M3U12, M5U1, M5U5, M5U6, M5U7, M5U8, M5U9, M5U10, M5U11, M5U12 | 34 |
| 2. Includes knowledge and examples about social processes. Culture, identity, values. Characteristics of certain identities of social groups, how values affect behaviors. | X | | M3U10, M3U11, M3U12, M4U1, M4U2, M5U1, M5U9 | 7 |
| 3. Promotes an understanding of the manner in which culture itself works. | | X | | 0 |
| <i>Savoir être (intercultural attitudes):</i> | | | | |
| 1. Motivates to establish and maintain relationships with a foreign culture. | X | | M3U8, M3U9, M3U10, M4U4, M4U5, M4U6, M4U7, M4U8, M4U9, M4U10, M4U11, M4U12, M5U1, M5U2, M5U3, M5U4, M5U5, M5U6, M5U7, M5U8, M5U9, M5U10, M5U11, M5U12, M5U13 | 25 |
| 2. Promotes engaging with people from multiple cultural backgrounds as equals. | X | | M3U8, M3U9, M3U10, M4U4, M4U5, M4U6, M4U7, M4U8, M4U9, M4U10, M4U11, M4U12, M5U1, M5U2, M5U3, M5U4, M5U5, M5U6, M5U7, M5U8, M5U9, M5U10, M5U11, M5U12, M5U13 | 25 |
| 3. Promotes reflection on the role of the other. | | X | | 0 |
| 4. Promotes decentering. Relativizing values, beliefs, and behaviors. | | X | | 0 |
| <i>Savoir comprendre (skills of interpreting and relating):</i> | | | | |
| 1. Includes content that may promote the comparison elements of the own culture with another culture. Including examples of comparison, reflection, or invitations to compare or reflect. | | X | | 0 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|----|
| <p>2. Includes content that may allow the comparison of the functions of the own language with another.</p> | | X | | 0 |
| <p>Savoir apprendre/faire (Skills of discovery and interaction): Savoir communiquer</p> | | | | |
| <p>1. A. Provides language elements that might help to participate effectively of cultural exchanges. Including instructional content of the foreign language</p> | X | | <p>M0U2, M0U210, M0U12, M1U2, M1U3, M1U5, M1U7, M1U9, M2U3, M2U4, M2U9, M2U1, M2U5, M2U9, M3U1, M3U1, M3U5, M3U6, M3U7, M3U8, M3U9, M3U10, M4U2, M4U5, M4U6, M4U8, M4U12, M5U6, M5U7, M5U10, M5U13</p> <p>M5U2, M5U3, M5U4, M5U2, M16U16, M17U5, M17U7, M18U7, M18U8, M18U9,</p> | 41 |
| <p>1. B. Includes examples of effective intercultural exchanges.</p> | X | | <p>M3U8, M3U9, M3U10, M4U4, M4U5, M4U6, M4U7, M4U8, M4U9, M4U10, M4U11, M4U12, M5U1, M5U2, M5U3, M5U4, M5U5, M5U6, M5U7, M5U8, M5U9, M5U10, M5U11, M5U12, M5U13</p> | 25 |
| <p>1. C. Promotes the use of the foreign language as a means to participate in effective intercultural exchanges. Openly inviting to use a foreign language to communicate with individuals of different cultural backgrounds or explore foreign cultures</p> | | X | | |
| <p>2. Includes examples of exploration of knowledge about cultures In which interlocutors use a foreign language as a bridge to explore knowledge about cultures.</p> | X | | <p>M3U6, M3U7, M3U8, M3U9, M3U10, M4U5, M4U6, M4U7, M4U8, M4U9, M4U10, M4U11, M4U12, M5U1, M5U5, M5U6, M5U7, M5U8, M5U9, M5U10, M5U11, M5U12, M5U13,</p> | 23 |
| <p>3. Promotes an adaptative mindset to participate effectively in future cultural exchanges. There are examples of interlocutors facing and solving cultural mismatches.</p> | | X | | 0 |
| <p>Savoir s'engager (critical cultural awareness):</p> | | | | |

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|----|
| 1. Includes examples of interlocutors transforming in both ethnographers and informants of diverse cultures. | X | | M1U9, M3U8, M3U9, M4U4, M4U7, M4U8, M4U9, M4U10, M4U11, M5U1, M5U8, M5U9, M5U11, M5U13, M5U1 | 15 |
| 2. Includes of examples of interlocutors evaluating critically the products of diverse cultures. Reflecting on their own cultural values, beliefs, and perceptions | X | | M5U1, M5U9 | 2 |
| 3. Promotes transforming in both ethnographers and informants of diverse cultures. | | X | | 0 |
| 4. Promotes identifying the difference of their cultural values, beliefs, and perceptions with those of others. Analyzing "why do we do things in that way?" | | X | | 0 |
| 5. Allows to gain perspective, through comparison, of their own culture and the other. | | X | | 0 |