



English Teachers' Views of Critical Interculturality Before and During a Series of Workshops Involving CALL¹

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Abstract

This article presents partial findings from a doctoral research study that explored English teachers' understandings of critical interculturality (CI) in the context of Colombian public schools. The study was guided by Participatory Action Research (PAR) and designed around a series of workshops (WS) that incorporated Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) as a pedagogical mediation. The research question addressed in this paper is: *What views do English teachers hold of critical interculturality before, during, and after a series of workshops involving CALL?* However, this article addresses only the before- and during-workshop components. Data sources for the broader study include teacher journals, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, observations, and institutional documents, defined as the didactic and pedagogical materials produced and used by teachers during the workshop and implementation stages. However, since the present article reports partial findings, only interviews and journals are analyzed here. The analysis reveals that teachers' views of CI shifted across the three stages: initially limited or paradoxical, later challenged and redefined during CALL-mediated activities, and finally showing more CI awareness and pedagogical incorporation after the WS. These findings suggest that PAR and workshops on CI and CALL encourage valuable reflection on CI through CALL tools, creating opportunities for English teachers to reframe their pedagogical practices toward intercultural aims.

Keywords: CALL, critical interculturality, ELT, participatory action research, professional development, teacher understandings

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Las percepciones de docentes de inglés sobre la interculturalidad crítica antes y durante una serie de talleres que integran aprendizaje de idiomas mediado por computador

Resumen

Este artículo presenta hallazgos parciales de una investigación doctoral que exploró las comprensiones de los docentes de inglés sobre la interculturalidad crítica (IC) en el contexto de escuelas públicas en Colombia. El estudio utilizó la Investigación-Acción Participativa (IAP) y talleres centrados en el aprendizaje de lenguas asistido por computador (CALL, por sus siglas en inglés) como mediación pedagógica. La pregunta de investigación abordada en este artículo es: *¿Qué visiones tienen los docentes de inglés sobre la interculturalidad crítica antes, durante y después de una serie de talleres que involucran CALL?* No obstante, este artículo presenta únicamente las fases “antes” y “durante” los talleres. Las fuentes de datos del estudio incluyen diarios de docentes, entrevistas semiestructuradas, grupos focales, observaciones y documentos institucionales, entendidos como los materiales didácticos y pedagógicos producidos y utilizados por los docentes durante los talleres y la etapa de implementación. Sin embargo, dado que este artículo presenta hallazgos parciales, aquí solo se analizan datos de entrevistas y diarios. El análisis muestra que las visiones de los docentes sobre la IC se transformaron a lo largo de las etapas de los talleres: inicialmente limitadas o paradójicas, luego cuestionadas y redefinidas durante las actividades mediadas por CALL con una mayor conciencia de la IC e incorporación pedagógica en los talleres. Estos resultados sugieren que la IAP y los procesos de formación docente mediados por CALL pueden fomentar una reflexión significativa sobre la IC, generando oportunidades para que los docentes de inglés reconfiguren sus prácticas pedagógicas hacia fines de IC.

Palabras clave: CALL, interculturalidad crítica, enseñanza del inglés, investigación-acción participativa, formación profesional, perspectivas docentes

Introduction

The teaching of English in Colombian public schools has largely been framed within communicative and instrumental perspectives that prioritize the development of linguistic skills and the fulfillment of standardized objectives established by national policies ([Ministerio de Educación Nacional \[MEN\], 2006](#); [MEN, 1999](#)). While these approaches have provided guidelines for curriculum design and teacher practices, they tend to construct language as a neutral and technical tool for communication, often overlooking the socio-political dimensions that shape language use in unequal contexts. As a result, issues related to power, knowledge, and identity remain insufficiently addressed in English Language Teaching (ELT), limiting opportunities for students and teachers to critically engage with the cultural and ideological implications of learning and using English in contemporary times ([Walsh, 2010](#)).

In recent years, the notion of critical interculturality (CI) has emerged in Latin American scholarship as a transformative approach to education, one that challenges colonial legacies and promotes new ways of being, thinking, and learning ([Tubino, 2005](#); [Walsh, 2010](#)). In the Colombian context—marked by historical inequalities, cultural diversity, and ongoing tensions related to inclusion and recognition—the limitations of these instrumental approaches become particularly problematic, as they risk reproducing dominant perspectives while marginalizing local knowledges and experiences. From this perspective, there is a need to move beyond instrumental approaches to ELT and adopt frameworks that enable more critical engagements with language, culture, and difference.

Within ELT, CI expands beyond relational-functional understandings of interculturality, often reduced to cultural facts, celebrations, or tolerance discourses, and instead emphasizes the political and epistemic dimensions of encounters across difference ([Granados-Beltrán, 2016](#); [Restrepo & Rojas, 2010](#)). However, despite its theoretical relevance, empirical research addressing CI in school³ contexts in Colombia remain limited. Although Colombian ELT scholarship has increasingly addressed interculturality, teacher education, and the decolonial critique of language teaching, much of this work has been developed in higher education or teacher education contexts. Studies such as [Arismendi-Gómez \(2022\)](#) and [Ortiz Medina et al. \(2022\)](#), for instance, offer valuable insights into intercultural and decolonial perspectives in language teacher education; however, their focus differs from the school-level public education context addressed in this article ([Potes-Morales, 2025](#)).

Similarly, Colombian studies involving computer-assisted language learning (CALL) have contributed to understanding digital mediation, learner autonomy, language-skill development, and intercultural encounters in ELT ([Álvarez-Valencia & Fernández-Benavides, 2019](#); [Ardila et al., 2012](#); [Cohen & Calderón Aponte, 2021](#); [Cuasialpud Canchala, 2010](#); [Galvis, 2012](#); [Herrera Mosquera, 2017](#); [Viáfara, 2011](#)). Nevertheless, these studies have generally emphasized communicative or technological dimensions rather than examining the development of CI as an explicit pedagogical orientation in school-level ELT. Therefore, the gap is not the complete absence of studies on interculturality or CALL in Colombia, but the limited empirical attention given to how in-service English teachers in public schools develop their views of CI through CALL-supported professional development processes ([Potes-Morales, 2025](#)).

Parallel to these debates, the integration of technology into ELT has gained strength under the framework of CALL. Traditionally focused on the development of linguistic competence ([Beatty, 2010](#); [Chapelle & Jamieson, 2008](#)), CALL has also been recognized for its potential to mediate reflective and intercultural learning experiences, including opportunities for critical engagement with cultural perspectives and social realities through digital interaction ([Álvarez-Valencia & Fernández-Benavides, 2019](#); [Cohen & Calderón Aponte, 2021](#); [Liaw, 2006](#)). Nonetheless, as highlighted by Potes-Morales (2025), the intersection between CI and CALL remains underexplored in Colombian scholarship, with a near absence of studies conducted in schools and with teachers as co-participants.

3 Hereafter, the terms “school” and “school level” refer to primary and secondary education.

Beyond the research gap, there is also a practical need to create pedagogical spaces where English teachers can critically reflect on how interculturality is approached in their classrooms and how digital tools may support more contextualized and socially responsive practices. In many school settings, opportunities for pedagogical development related to CI and CALL remain limited or continue to privilege instrumental uses of language and technology. This situation makes it necessary to explore collaborative processes through which teachers can problematize their practices and construct alternative pedagogical understandings.

It is in response to this gap that the present doctoral research was designed. Framed within Participatory Action Research (PAR), the study sought to engage English teachers from public schools in Cali in a collaborative process of reflection and transformation through a series of workshops (WS) involving CALL. These WS were conceived as dialogical spaces where teachers could articulate, question, and redefine their understandings of CI in relation to their pedagogical practices.

This article reports partial findings from the doctoral study, addressing the before- and during-workshop components of Research Question 1 (RQ1): What views do English teachers hold of critical interculturality before, during, and after a series of workshops involving CALL? The wording of the doctoral RQ1 is retained to identify the broader research framework. The analysis draws on semi-structured interviews and selected teacher journal entries concerning views before and during the workshops. Post-workshop findings, including those informed by focus groups, are outside the scope of this report. This delimitation allows a focused discussion of the selected findings within the journal's manuscript-length requirements. Classroom observations and institutional documents, understood as the didactic and pedagogical materials developed and used by teachers during the workshop and implementation stages, are also excluded from the analysis presented here.

The significance of presenting these findings lies in the opportunity to highlight how teachers' views of CI were articulated before and reconsidered during the WS about CI and CALL. By focusing on their voices, the study contributes to a better understanding of the conditions under which CI can be fostered in ELT, as well as to ongoing discussions about teacher professional development in Colombia. In this way, the article not only addresses a gap in empirical research but also builds on the need, identified by [Potes-Morales \(2025\)](#), to advance proposals that combine technology and CI to transform ELT in the Colombian public-school context.

The article is structured as follows: the next section presents the theoretical framework that supports the study, followed by the methodological design. The analysis and discussion then detail partial findings related to RQ1, examining teachers' views of CI before and during the workshops. Finally, the conclusions highlight the implications of these findings for English language teaching, teacher education, and future research.

Theoretical Framework

Critical Interculturality in Latin American Education

In the Latin American context, interculturality has been widely adopted in policy discourses, often as a response to increasing cultural and linguistic diversity. However, as [Walsh \(2010\)](#) warns, much of this adoption has reduced interculturality to functional or relational approaches. Relational interculturality emphasizes contact and dialogue between cultures but often neglects the power asymmetries and colonial legacies that structure those encounters. Functional interculturality tends to frame diversity as an element to be tolerated or managed, aligning with neoliberal agendas that prioritize inclusion without questioning the deeper social, political, and epistemic inequalities at play ([Tubino, 2005](#)).

By contrast, CI positions itself as a counter-hegemonic project. [Walsh \(2010\)](#) defines CI as a tool, process, and project rooted in the struggles of marginalized groups, aimed at transforming structural inequities

in knowledge, power, and being. CI moves beyond the incorporation of cultural “difference” into existing educational structures and instead seeks to reconfigure those structures themselves. This transformative orientation requires educators not only to recognize diversity but also to interrogate and dismantle colonial legacies that continue to permeate educational systems across Latin America.

From this perspective, CI is inseparable from decoloniality because it does not understand intercultural relations as neutral encounters among cultures, but as historically situated relations shaped by asymmetries of power, knowledge, language, and identity. [Walsh \(2010, 2023\)](#) argues that CI is not merely a discourse of inclusion, tolerance, or cultural exchange, but an ethical, political, and pedagogical project aimed at questioning and transforming the colonial structures that continue to organize social relations in Latin America. In this sense, approaching interculturality from a decolonial perspective is particularly relevant in Colombian ELT, where English has often been associated with global competitiveness, standardized proficiency, and access to dominant forms of knowledge, while local languages, identities, histories, and epistemologies tend to remain peripheral. A decolonial understanding of CI therefore allows ELT to move beyond the celebration of cultural difference and toward the problematization of how coloniality operates in language policies, materials, classroom practices, and teachers' own assumptions. This study adopted CI as a framework for examining how English teachers could question these relations and reimagine ELT as a space for dialogue, recognition of local knowledges, and pedagogical transformation.

[Granados-Beltrán \(2016\)](#) presents CI as a path for pre-service ELT teachers to question dominant epistemologies and imagine more democratic forms of language education. Similarly, [Restrepo and Rojas \(2010\)](#) describe the *inflexión decolonial* as a necessary shift that connects intercultural education with broader struggles against epistemic and political domination. From this perspective, CI is not only an addition to existing curricula but a radical reorientation of pedagogical goals and practices.

Critical Interculturality and English Language Teaching in Colombia

In Colombian ELT, interculturality is usually reduced to basic aspects of target-language cultures and presented through standard textbooks ([Henao Mejía et al., 2019](#); [Núñez-Pardo, 2020](#)). These representations reproduce stereotypical and exoticized images of culture, while silencing local epistemologies and perpetuating colonial views of English as a language of progress and modernity.

Several Colombian scholars have called for a reconfiguration of ELT along CI lines. [Granados-Beltrán \(2018\)](#) emphasized the need for critical research in undergraduate ELT programs that challenges the hegemony of imported pedagogical models. Later, [Granados-Beltrán \(2022\)](#) proposed criteria for disrupting colonial tensions in language teacher education, highlighting the importance of pluriversality and the recognition of Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and rural knowledge systems. [Gutiérrez \(2022\)](#) adds that pre-service teachers must be trained to continuously question their worldviews, positioning interculturality and critical literacies at the core of language education.

These critiques reveal how CI is inherently tied to teacher agency and curriculum design. Teachers who adopt CI are invited to rethink their roles not as mere transmitters of linguistic content but as mediators of epistemic, social, and cultural dialogues. As [Potes-Morales \(2025\)](#) notes in his review of a decade of Colombian ELT research, although theoretical reflections on CI are increasing, empirical studies at the school level with teachers as participants remain scarce. This situation creates an urgent need for projects that document how teachers themselves conceptualize and negotiate CI in their professional practices.

CALL as Pedagogical Mediation

CALL refers to the integration of digital tools into language learning processes, encompassing a wide range of technologies such as computers, smartphones, tablets, and online platforms (Beatty, 2010; Chapelle & Jamieson, 2008). Traditionally, CALL has been implemented to strengthen linguistic competence—grammar, vocabulary, listening, speaking—and to expand opportunities for practice beyond the classroom.

However, CALL also carries the potential to mediate intercultural learning experiences. Liaw (2006) demonstrated how e-learning environments can promote intercultural competence by exposing learners to diverse cultural perspectives. Similarly, Álvarez-Valencia and Fernández-Benavides (2019) found that social networking sites for language learning can foster intercultural encounters, though often without critical depth. These studies indicate that CALL enables interaction, collaboration, and dialogue beyond functional objectives.

Colombian research on CALL has typically adhered to traditional approaches, mainly addressing communicative competence or language skills. According to Potes-Morales (2025), studies rarely consider CI or decolonial perspectives. As a result, CALL in Colombia has remained focused on technology and has paid little attention to the wider political and intercultural aspects of language education.

The intersection of CI and CALL therefore represents a largely unexplored frontier. Combining these two perspectives could reposition CALL not merely as a set of technological resources but as a pedagogical mediation for critical reflection. Through carefully designed CALL-based workshops, teachers can be invited to reflect on their own assumptions, confront intercultural paradoxes, and envision new pedagogical practices aligned with CI.

Research Gap and Contribution

The literature reviewed highlights two gaps in Colombian ELT research:

1. Scarcity of empirical studies on CI at the school level. While higher education contexts have seen growing engagement with CI, schools remain underexplored. [Potes-Morales \(2025\)](#) showed that fewer than 10% of national empirical studies on CI and CALL involve schoolteachers, underscoring their marginal presence in research production ([Potes-Morales, 2025, pp.130-132](#)).
2. Absence of systematic connections between CI and CALL. Although CALL research has expanded significantly in Colombia, it continues to privilege communicative competence and technological tools over critical or decolonial perspectives. Very few studies explicitly attempt to integrate CI into CALL practices, especially in school contexts ([Potes-Morales, 2025](#)).

The broader doctoral study addresses both gaps by engaging English teachers from Colombian public schools in a PAR process grounded in reflection on CI and CALL through interviews, workshops, focus groups, pedagogical journals, and classroom implementation. This approach positions teachers as co-researchers who actively construct and reconstruct their understandings of CI. Within that broader design, the present article contributes empirical evidence specifically on teachers' views before and during the workshops, rather than reporting findings from all three stages.

Furthermore, by situating CALL within a framework of CI, the study reframes technology not as a neutral tool but as a catalyst for critical reflection and transformation in ELT. In doing so, it advances the call made by Colombian scholars ([Granados-Beltrán, 2016, 2018, 2022](#); [Gutiérrez, 2022](#); [Usma Wilches et al., 2018](#)) for decolonial pedagogies that challenge hegemonic models and incorporate local knowledges.

Methodology

Research Approach

This study was framed within PAR, an approach that combines investigation with collaborative action and reflection. PAR seeks to generate knowledge while simultaneously transforming practices, positioning participants not as passive subjects of study but as co-researchers ([Fals Borda, 1985](#); [Walsh, 2010](#)). The choice of PAR aligns with the study's theoretical orientation toward CI, as both emphasize transformation, dialogical interaction, and the questioning of dominant structures of knowledge and power. This design was particularly appropriate in Cali's public-school context, where English teachers face institutional, curricular, and

technological constraints, but also possess situated pedagogical knowledge about their students, schools, and communities. In the broader doctoral study, English teachers from public schools in Cali engaged in cycles of planning, professional development, intervention, and reflection before, during, and after a series of workshops involving CALL. In this sense, the workshops were not conceived as top-down training sessions, but as dialogic spaces where teachers reflected on CI and CALL, discussed classroom realities, and designed context-sensitive didactic sequences. This methodological choice was coherent with the decolonial orientation of the study because it sought to value teachers' local experiences and professional knowledge rather than impose externally produced models of interculturality or CALL integration. As a Colombian English teacher-researcher working with public-school teachers, I assumed a facilitator role where I introduced theoretical perspectives and supported discussion, but teachers retained agency over the design and implementation of their didactic units.

Context and Participants

The inquiry was conducted in Santiago de Cali, located in the southwest of Colombia. Cali's geographical position and socio-political history have shaped it into a culturally complex city, where peasants, displaced populations, and Indigenous peoples have settled in search of opportunities. Many inhabitants trace their origins to regions severely affected by violence, drug trafficking, and corruption, one of the recent cases of these phenomena is reported in [El País \(2022\)](#). This reality has turned Cali into an ethnically and culturally diverse metropolis, but also one marked by inequality. In education, public schools in Valle del Cauca consistently perform below private schools on standardized tests ([Laboratorio de Economía de la Educación, 2022](#)). The divide is especially visible in English as a Foreign Language (EFL), where students from wealthier families achieve higher results. These conditions highlight the need for pedagogical approaches that are critical, socially aware, and responsive to local realities.

Within this context, the study engaged eight middle and high school English teachers as participants. This number was deemed sufficient to provide rich qualitative insights while maintaining manageability and accounting for possible attrition. Of the initial participants, two withdrew for personal reasons; however, this did not affect the study, as a minimum of six teachers had been projected since the planning phase of the research. Teachers were selected through purposeful sampling ([Creswell & Creswell, 2018](#)), using three criteria: a) being secondary school English teachers in Cali's public system, addressing the identified gap in empirical ELT research at this level; b) possessing basic computing skills (office software, internet navigation, email, Google suite), necessary to bridge the gap between CI development and the use of CALL tools; c) holding an English proficiency level of B1 or above, matching the level expected of secondary school graduates.

Recruitment was conducted through the "*Red de Maestros de Lenguas Extranjeras de Cali*", of which the researcher is a member. Teachers received an exploratory questionnaire, after which potential participants were approached directly at their schools to establish rapport, explain the study's objectives and ethical considerations, and secure informed consent. Once teachers agreed, the same information was shared with school principals to obtain institutional authorization and access to facilities.

The participants thus entered the study not only as data sources but as co-researchers, actively engaged in the design, implementation, and reflection stages of the PAR cycles.

Data Sources

The broader study draws on multiple sources of qualitative data, which together provide a comprehensive view of how teachers engaged with CI throughout the PAR process. These include: a) Teacher journals, written reflections produced by participants before, during, and after the workshops; b) Semi-structured interviews, conducted individually with teachers to explore their evolving conceptions of CI; c) Focus groups, collective discussions where teachers dialogued and negotiated their understandings in relation to CALL activities; d) Observations, records of classroom implementation; e) Institutional documents, understood

as the didactic materials designed and used by the teachers during the workshops and during the implementation stage of the study. These include lesson plans, activity designs, and adapted curricular materials produced by the participants. This description does not imply that all sources or temporal stages of the doctoral study are analyzed in this article, it identifies the full study's data sources.

It is important to clarify that the present article reports partial findings related to RQ1 and is limited to teachers' views before and during the workshops. For these two components, the analytic corpus comprises semi-structured interviews exploring teachers' prior understandings of ELT, culture, CI, and CALL, together with selected journal entries documenting WS reflections. Sources are delimited by the stage addressed in the account, rather than by instrument type alone. Post-workshop accounts and data from focus groups, classroom observations, and institutional documents are not reported here.

PAR Cycles and Workshops

As shown in [Figure 1](#), the study consisted of two research cycles. The first cycle involved seven stages: a) Planning, b) Diagnosis, c) Professional Development, d) Reflection, e) Intervention, f) Reflection, and g) Evaluation. The second cycle was reduced to four stages: a) Planning, b) Second Intervention, c) Reflection, and d) Evaluation. [Figure 1](#) presents the full research design; the article's findings are limited to the before- and during-workshop stages.

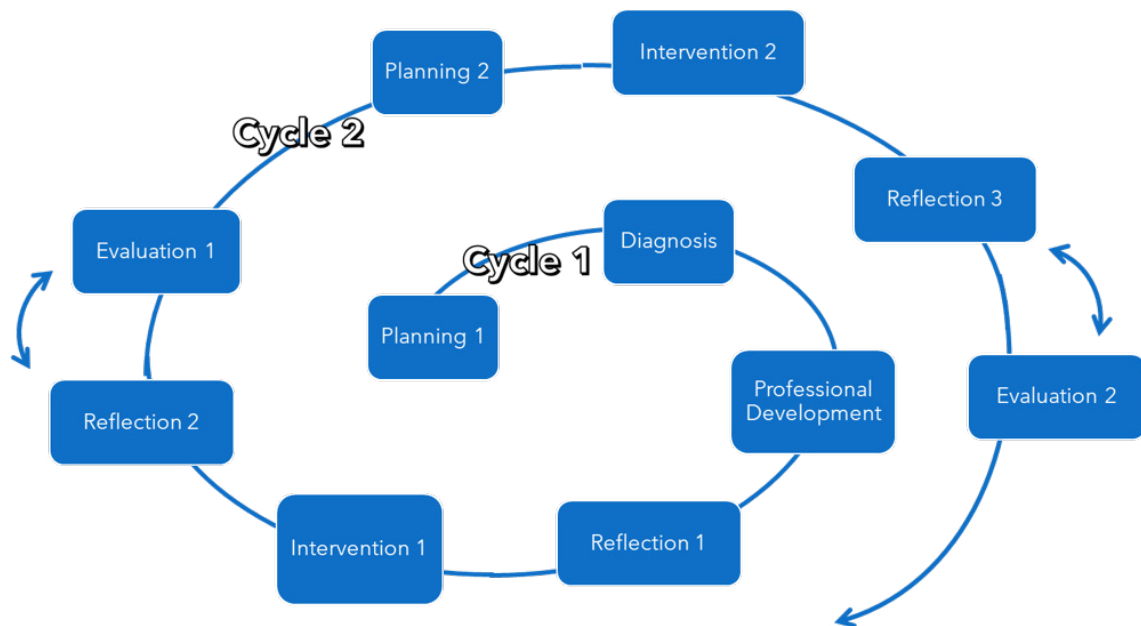
It is important to note that the Diagnosis and the Professional Development (Cycle 1: stages b and c) were carried out only during the first cycle. However, the insights and results generated in those stages informed the design and implementation of the subsequent stages in Cycle 2.

The two cycles were conceived as iterative and dialogical, allowing teachers to revisit and refine their understandings of CI at multiple points. There were four WS, which integrated CI orientation, collective discussions, reflective writing, and CALL theory and activities. The first two WS focused on CI in ELT by engaging teachers in discussions about culture, interculturality, power, inequality, local realities, and the limits of relational or functional understandings of interculturality. These discussions were grounded in the theoretical distinction between relational, functional, and critical interculturality ([Tubino, 2005](#); [Walsh, 2010](#)), as well as in Colombian ELT scholarship that calls for more decolonial and context-sensitive approaches to language teaching ([Granados-Beltrán, 2016, 2022](#)). The last two workshops addressed CALL from a pedagogical rather than merely technical perspective, inviting teachers to examine how available digital tools could mediate critical questioning, student participation, and the design of context-responsive activities. Across the WS, teachers read and discussed theoretical and pedagogical materials, reflected in journals, examined classroom possibilities, and began to design didactic sequences that connected English learning with local issues and CI aims. In this way, each cycle not only generated data but also contributed to teachers' professional growth and to the progressive reconfiguration of their views on CI.

Analytic Strategy

Data were analyzed through thematic analysis (TA), following [Braun and Clarke's \(2006, 2022\)](#) view of themes as patterned meanings related to the research question. For this article, the corpus was limited to semi-structured interviews and teacher journals, which were selected because they directly addressed teachers' views of CI before, during, and after the workshops. The analysis followed an iterative process. First, interviews and journals were organized, repeatedly read, and imported into ATLAS.ti. Second, meaningful segments were coded inductively by identifying recurrent words, ideas, tensions, and assumptions in participants' accounts. Third, a deductive lens was incorporated through concepts from the theoretical framework, particularly relational interculturality, functional interculturality, critical interculturality, CALL, and decoloniality. These theory-informed codes helped examine how teachers' views aligned with, diverged from, or complicated the conceptual framework. Finally, codes were grouped, refined, and interpreted

Figure 1. *Participatory Action Research (PAR) Cycles*



Source: Author.

as themes that captured shifts in teachers' understandings within the two stages reported here. Analytic memos were used throughout the process to document coding decisions, emerging interpretations, and relationships among codes and themes. This procedure supported traceability and reflexivity in the development of the findings.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical principles of confidentiality, informed consent, and collaborative responsibility. Teachers were assured that their participation was voluntary and that their identities would remain anonymous using pseudonyms. In line with PAR principles, findings were not extracted solely for academic purposes but shared with participants as part of an ongoing process of professional reflection. This reciprocity ensured that the research not only generated knowledge but also contributed to the participants' professional development.

Scope of the Article

As stated, this article presents partial findings responding to RQ1. While the doctoral project incorporates focus groups, observations, and institutional documents, the analysis in this paper is limited to interviews and teacher journals in the before and during stages. This delimitation reflects both the iterative nature of PAR and the need to present results progressively, allowing for more focused discussion of how teachers' views of CI evolved through their participation in WS on CI and CALL.

To facilitate access for readers who do not read Spanish, English translations of all 22 excerpts quoted in this article are provided in a separate supplementary document, accessible through the QR code in [Figure 2](#). The translations retain the article's excerpt numbering, participant codes, and dates, allowing readers to consult them alongside the original Spanish excerpts and their analysis.

Figure 2. QR Code for English Translations of the Article's Excerpts



Source: Author

Analysis and Discussion of Results

This section presents partial findings for RQ1: *What views do English teachers hold of critical interculturality before, during, and after a series of workshops involving CALL?* Specifically, two stages: before and during the WS. Interview excerpts and selected teacher journal entries illustrate initial understandings and workshop-period reflections. The analysis foregrounds representative accounts that support the article's central claims; it does not report the post-workshop component of the doctoral research question.

Excerpt codes identify the data source, participant pseudonym, and date of data collection or journal entry. "Int." denotes a semi-structured interview, and "Jour." denotes a teacher journal; dates follow the MM.DD.YYYY format. For example, "Int.Bruno.08.23.2024" identifies an interview with Bruno conducted on August 23, 2024.

Before the Workshops: Broad Conceptual Range

Teachers entered the pedagogical WS with diverse and sometimes contradictory understandings of CI. In this regard, three patterns were identified: the Stay-safe Zone, Conceptual Paradoxes, and Emergent Critical Intercultural Awareness. Below is a broad summary of these findings.

Stay-safe Zone

The following excerpts illustrate how some teachers positioned interculturality within what this study identifies as the Stay-safe Zone. For example, Bruno stated:

Excerpt 1. hay unos temas que son *avoidable* como la religión porque ahí siempre va a haber diferencias... Si usted quiere tener la paz con alguien no hable de política y no hable de religión, ni hable tampoco de cuestiones sexuales... Ah No! hablemos más bien de cocina (Int.Bruno.08.23.2024)

Bruno Pérez's reflection shows a pedagogical strategy of maintaining classroom harmony through avoidance. By explicitly advising against discussions of politics, religion, or sexuality, he constructs a boundary around what is considered "safe" content in English teaching. The alternative cultural customs suggested by Bruno when he says "*hablemos más bien de cocina*" belong to a superficial view of culture: visible and depoliticized aspects of daily life, which corresponds to what [Walsh \(2010\)](#) calls relational interculturality (RI).

Gabriela Fernández's passage provides a revealing example of how the stay-safe stance emerges in more subtle ways. Excerpt 2 elucidates Gabriela's precaution.

Excerpt 2. Por ejemplo con esa parte de género, yo siento que a veces uno como profe también está a veces como un poco cohibido de cómo lo abor das ... que puede ser que un papá no lo tome a bien ... para mí es problema. (Int. Gabriela.08.23.2024)

Gabriela's reflection illustrates how discussions around gender are perceived as pedagogically sensitive due to anticipated parental or institutional reactions. Her hesitation reveals a "Stay-safe Zone" in which potentially controversial topics are self-regulated in order to preserve classroom harmony and avoid conflict. From a CI perspective, this tension reflects how broader social and institutional pressures may limit opportunities for engaging with issues of power, identity, and inequality in ELT (Walsh, 2010). At the same time, Gabriela's awareness of these constraints suggests an emerging recognition that interculturality involves more than neutral cultural exchange, extending into politically and socially situated discussions. Gabriela's willingness to address complex issues contrasts with Bruno's case, showing that the *Stay-safe Zone* can also operate as a precautionary self-censorship rooted in institutional and social pressures, as seen in her experience.

On another front, Paul Rodríguez frames the *Stay-safe Zone* stance more in terms of professional caution and resource choices. Paul describes a broader tendency to rely on prescriptive or neutral materials and to treat sensitive topics superficially. In this way, his testimony illustrates how the *Stay-safe Zone* may manifest not only as silence on certain issues but also as an intentional narrowing of pedagogical resources and strategies to prevent conflict. The following excerpt shows Paul's view.

Paul acknowledges relying on ready-made online materials rather than seeking authentic or critical resources.

Excerpt 3. acudo a lo que ya está ahí, digamos en la red y en páginas, pues de inglés y tal (Int.Paul.08.26.2024)

Paul's statement reflects a reliance on pre-designed online materials commonly associated with functional or instrumental uses of ELT and CALL. By "*acudir a lo que ya está ahí*," he positions digital resources primarily as accessible and safe pedagogical support rather than as opportunities for critical engagement with cultural or social issues. This stance aligns with the "Stay-safe Zone" identified in previous participants, where teachers privilege neutral or standardized content to avoid conflict or controversy. From a CI perspective, such practices may unintentionally reproduce depoliticized representations of culture and language learning, limiting the possibilities for questioning dominant discourses or incorporating local realities into ELT (Granados-Beltrán, 2016; Walsh, 2010).

Alicia is another participant who expresses a perspective consistent with a *stay-safe* approach.

Excerpt 4. Honestamente no era un tema que me hubiera interesado de manera particular, ya que es algo que realmente se trabaja de manera superficial y esporádica, pero ahora que estoy teniendo contacto con esta investigación, me surge el interés por obtener conocimientos sobre las teorías y prácticas de la interculturalidad crítica. (Jour.Alicia.09.02.2024)

In her entry, Alicia reveals a stay-safe posture. She acknowledges that interculturality was not an important concern for her prior to the WS. The way she describes it as "*superficial y esporádica*" indicates that she has encountered interculturality only at a surface level, which reflects a traditional, risk-averse approach that avoids deeper engagement with power, inequality, or conflict. At the same time, she demonstrates genuine interest ("*me surge el interés*") in learning about CI, which led to further application, as analyzed in the following stages of the study.

The *Stay-safe Zone* reflected in the contributions of these participants reflects a protective approach for the ELT class where the teacher prioritizes a conventional stance in terms of classroom harmony and institutional acceptance over deeper, critical engagement with diversity, power, and inequality. This mirrors broader tensions in Colombian ELT contexts: teachers often feel constrained by parental expectations, institutional scrutiny, and curricular pressures, pushing them toward safer, depoliticized practices.

A Conceptual Paradox

Participants also dealt with tensions that emerged in their understandings of CI and its place within school ELT contexts. In this regard, Paul Rodríguez expressed:

Excerpt 5. Habría que tener un trabajo cuidadoso allí, cuidadoso en el sentido de obviamente no ser ofensivo pero que también lo que a ellos le brinde ese material, sea enriquecedor... que los muchachos reflexionen [sobre] la corrupción, el racismo. (Int.Paul.08.26.2024)

Paul's statement illustrates a conceptual paradox in his initial view of CI. On the one hand, he recognizes the pedagogical value of using materials that encourage students to reflect on social issues such as corruption and racism. This suggests an emerging awareness that ELT can move beyond linguistic practice and engage students with local and structural realities. On the other hand, his repeated emphasis on being "careful" and "not offensive" shows that this critical intention remains mediated by a concern for neutrality and classroom acceptability. From [Walsh's \(2010\)](#) perspective, this tension reflects the boundary between functional interculturality, which acknowledges diversity and conflict but contains them within safe forms of coexistence, and CI, which requires confronting the power relations that produce inequality. Paul's view therefore does not indicate an absence of critical awareness, but an unresolved negotiation between critical pedagogical aims and the institutional or interpersonal risks of addressing sensitive issues in school ELT.

María Aros showed some awareness of a critical approach by promoting love toward local realities, but she blended CI with global citizenship, indicating uncertainty between neoliberal ideas and Walsh's (2010) focus on local decolonial perspectives. The excerpt below illustrates her conceptual paradox.

Excerpt 6. Con base en esta directriz ... crear lo que se llama una ciudadanía global ... implica ... la capacidad de entender ... respetar ... para que no haya un conflicto ... y amar su propia cultura que creo que es lo más importante ... Anteriormente ... [*existían*] libros de inglés donde hablaban de ciudades que los pelados ni siquiera conocían (Int. María.08.27.2024)

María's view of interculturality combines CI with aspects of global citizenship, emphasizing borderless respect and tackling prejudice and power dynamics. This reflects aspirations aligned with critical approaches while remaining situated within a broader intercultural communicative competence (ICC) stance. Furthermore, she simultaneously emphasizes that the most important outcome is for students to love their own culture ("*amar su propia cultura*") anchoring her vision in a view of cultural identity. This juxtaposition exposes a conceptual paradox. María appears to blur the line between neoliberal discourses of global citizenship (which prioritize adaptability, cosmopolitanism, and communicative skills for global mobility) and [Walsh's \(2010\)](#) localized, decolonial perspective, which emphasizes interculturality as resistance to inequality and colonial legacies. By valuing both borderless global interaction and the preeminence of local cultural loyalty, her discourse embodies a tension between two conceptually different frameworks.

The statements below show Bruno's *Conceptual Paradox* in the conception of CI in ELT.

Excerpt 7. Entonces me decían "ay usted habla como si fuera un cassette" (...) eso es lo que nosotros hablamos como standard English y la idea pues que la interculturalidad no vaya con la cuestión de la estandarización (...) Uno como le va a enseñar a un pelado "She don't understand" o "She ain' got la reason" (...) en el mundo real va a encontrar esos pequeños adefesios. (Int.Bruno.08.23.2024)

In this contribution, Bruno acknowledges the tension between interculturality and standardization ("*la idea... que la interculturalidad no vaya con la cuestión de la estandarización*"). Bruno's reflection shows an awareness of how interculturality must resist static, monolithic versions of English. Nevertheless, he also reaffirms the authority of standard English and argues that students cannot be taught non-standard forms like "She don't understand" because they are "*adefesios*." His thought illustrates a prioritization of prescriptive accuracy over situated and authentic language use. On the other hand, he embodies a paradox by valuing interculturality as a space where diversity of language practices could be acknowledged while

simultaneously rejecting students' exposure to critical, sensitive issues in teaching, as proposed by CI authors such as [Walsh \(2010\)](#) and [Granados-Beltrán \(2016\)](#). Bruno's view reinforces a single form of correctness that collides with CI.

Emergent Critical Intercultural Awareness

Although tensions and contradictions remained present in participants' accounts, some reflections also suggested emerging critical understandings of interculturality. The following excerpt from Gabriela Fernández illustrates this tendency:

Excerpt 8. Creo que a veces puede estar muy permeado por los prejuicios... en la medida en la que uno... tenga un diálogo más horizontal... igualdad de oportunidades... ver que no siempre hay una única verdad... depende de la visión que tú tienes de la vida. (Int.Gabriela.08.23.2024)

In this contribution, Gabriela explicitly problematizes prejudice and advocates for a horizontal dialogue foregrounding equity and epistemic plurality. This perspective shows a critical stance beyond conventional cultural representation where Gabriela frames interculturality as a practice of restructuring relations of power. Her emphasis on multiple truths and reflective practice corresponds to a CI orientation that challenges dominant knowledges and legitimizes learners situated perspectives, aligning with decolonial aims rather than merely functional intercultural coexistence ([Walsh, 2010](#)).

Excerpt 9. Ese concepto está tan manoseado [todo es] 'peace and love'... la interculturalidad no me va a garantizar que siempre las relaciones sean pacíficas ... es muy difícil que dos culturas permanezcan sin conflicto el más fuerte se va a querer imponer ante el más débil ... ese término es ambiguo. (Int.Gabriela.08.23.2024)

In excerpt 9, Gabriela rejects the "peace-and-love" reductionist view of interculturality and addresses conflict, struggle, and domination. By naming asymmetry and the historical existence of conflict, she treats interculturality as politically situated rather than just a neutral exchange. This view resonates with [Walsh's \(2010\)](#) critique of relational and functional interculturality (RI and FI, respectively), which tend to emphasize contact, tolerance, or coexistence without necessarily addressing the power relations that structure such encounters. This orientation is essential to CI because it highlights relations of power and refuses static facades that obscure structural injustice, directing pedagogy toward *Critical Intercultural Awareness* rather than mere tolerance.

On another point, Paul's reflection below expresses the view that education should cultivate independent thinking and civic agency, a CI view of political participation and resistance to indifference.

Excerpt 10. Ser crítico, es ser capaz de pensar por uno mismo... desde la escuela los muchachos empiecen a pensar ... formar obreros, empleados, no gente que piense ... No queremos ciudadanos que acepten [todo] de sus gobernantes... sino que sean capaces de alzar su voz cuando es necesario. (Int.Paul.08.26.2024)

Paul articulates a vision of education that fosters autonomy, critique, and participation. By contrasting the training of workers with the formation of citizens who can "raise their voices," he locates interculturality within a wider struggle for democratic participation and social justice. This supports CI by redefining teaching as the formation of critical, empowered citizens rather than passive individuals. In this sense, Paul's view is aligned with [Walsh's \(2010\)](#) understanding of CI as a pedagogical and political project aimed at questioning dominant structures, and with Freirean notions of education as a practice of critical consciousness and transformation (Freire, 1987). While Paul's overall interview is nuanced, this passage clearly reflects strong Critical Intercultural Awareness focused on empowerment rather than mere tolerance.

Finally, in a retrospective journal entry, Hillary described her pre-WS understanding of interculturality as recognizing the presence of different cultures without integrating students' knowledges, while a foreign culture remained predominant in her teaching (Jour.Hillary.09.11.2024).

During the Workshops: Expanding Awareness through CALL

This section presents teachers' reflections during the WS, focusing first on the consolidation of CI concepts and then on how CALL tools were connected to critical intercultural aims. A sample of the findings is presented below.

Consolidation of CI Concepts

Teachers' journal reflections during the WS show how participants revisited and reformulated their understandings of interculturality in relation to CI. The following excerpts illustrate some of the ways these understandings evolved throughout the WS process.

Excerpt 11. Me quedó claro que la Interculturalidad Crítica va mucho más allá... no debe verse solo como un intercambio de costumbres ... sino como una herramienta para cuestionar estructuras de poder y desigualdad en nuestra sociedad. (Jour.Gabriela.09.11.2024)

Gabriela reframed interculturality from cultural exchange to a critical tool for questioning inequality. Unlike her pre-workshop hesitation to address sensitive issues, here she expresses clarity and conviction. Her stance aligns with [Walsh's \(2010\)](#) decolonial perspective.

Excerpt 12. Esto me hizo pensar en cómo, aunque en mis clases ya discutimos temas culturales de Cali... todavía puedo dar un paso más y ayudar a mis estudiantes a reflexionar sobre las relaciones de poder y las desigualdades que existen en nuestro contexto. (Jour.Gabriela.09.11.2024)

Here Gabriela grounds CI in her local context, moving from descriptive discussions of Afro and Indigenous heritage toward a more critical examination of structural inequalities in Cali. Her reflection suggests an emerging awareness that interculturality involves not only recognizing diversity but also questioning the social and power relations that shape local realities. This progression reflects a shift from RI toward a more critical and transformative orientation aligned with [Walsh's \(2010\)](#) understanding of CI as a pedagogical project concerned with inequality, power, and social justice.

Excerpt 13. Uno de ellos es la idea de que la interculturalidad no solo se trata de conocer costumbres y tradiciones... sino de entender las estructuras de poder que han definido históricamente las relaciones entre culturas. (Jour. Bruno.09.11.2024)

Bruno acknowledges interculturality as a lens for analyzing power. Compared to his earlier avoidance of controversial issues, this excerpt signals conceptual evolution. However, he is still negotiating how to enact these ideas in class.

Excerpt 14. veo que la interculturalidad crítica va mucho más allá... invita a analizar las desigualdades y estructuras de poder que han definido esas culturas. (Jour.Alicia.09.11.2024)

Alicia contrasts her earlier functional view of interculturality ([Tubino, 2005](#)) with a more critical understanding ([Walsh, 2010](#)). She advances beyond grammar-centric teaching, acknowledging English learning as an opportunity to examine inequality. Nevertheless, she remains aware of the requirements imposed by examination-oriented curricula.

Excerpt 15. la interculturalidad no se trata solo de enseñar aspectos culturales visibles... ahora entiendo que [esta] cuestiona las estructuras de poder que han determinado la relación entre las diferentes culturas. (Jour.Paul.09.11.2024)

Paul contrasts his initial emphasis on visible or superficial cultural elements with a more critical understanding of interculturality as a process that questions structures of power and inequality. This shift suggests a growing awareness of the political and epistemic dimensions of CI, moving beyond celebratory or descriptive approaches to culture. In this sense, his reflection echoes [Walsh's \(2010\)](#) distinction between

FI and CI, particularly in recognizing that intercultural relations are historically shaped by asymmetries of power. Although Paul's reflections continue to reveal caution regarding curricular and institutional constraints, this excerpt evidences a clearer movement toward a critical interpretation of interculturality.

Excerpt 16. Los conceptos claves para mí son la interculturalidad, la descolonización, y la praxis... en donde se encuentra el potencial suficiente para dar el giro histórico hacia la interculturalidad crítica. (Jour.Hillary.09.11.2024)

Hillary situates CI within a broader decolonial framework by linking interculturality, decolonization, and praxis as interconnected processes of educational and social transformation. Her reflection suggests a deeper theoretical engagement with CI, particularly in understanding it not merely as cultural interaction, but as a historical and political project aimed at challenging colonial forms of knowledge and power. This view closely aligns with [Walsh's \(2010\)](#) conception of CI as a decolonial praxis oriented toward social transformation and the construction of alternative ways of thinking, relating, and educating.

In turn, María Aros embraces CI as a political-pedagogical project. The excerpt below shows her view.

Excerpt 17. el concepto de desarrollar una interculturalidad crítica se toma desde la perspectiva de cuestionar el poder de quienes han impuesto... como herramienta pedagógica... para desarrollar y comprender la diferencia desde la legitimidad, dignidad, igualdad, equidad y respeto. (Jour.María.09.11.2024)

María's reflection shows a movement from a descriptive understanding of interculturality toward a decolonial framing that foregrounds power, justice, and the legitimacy of difference. By referring to CI as a pedagogical tool for questioning imposed forms of power, she begins to understand interculturality not simply as respect for diversity, but to interrogate unequal relations and promote dignity, equality, and equity. This view aligns with [Walsh's \(2010\)](#) conception of CI as an ethical, political, and pedagogical project aimed at transforming colonial structures in education. In María's case, this shift also suggests an emerging intention to translate CI into project-based pedagogical work, where students' local experiences and identities can become part of English learning.

Overall, these journal reflections suggest that the WS led participants to a more critical perspective on interculturality. Gabriela and Hillary embraced CI as decolonial and transformative, while Bruno and Paul shifted toward critical inquiry. Alicia and María adapted their teaching practices to exam-oriented or project-based formats. In this sense, this form of participatory professional development helped teachers reinterpret interculturality in terms of power and inequality, despite ongoing institutional demands.

Critical Interculturality through CALL Affordances

The following reflections illustrate how participants connected CALL tools and digital platforms with broader pedagogical and intercultural concerns throughout the WS.

Excerpt 18. Algo que me pareció muy valioso es el uso de herramientas de inteligencia artificial como Invideo y Pika... Considerando que mi secuencia didáctica gira en torno al análisis de cortometrajes como *The Immersion*, estas herramientas podrían ayudar a generar contenido visual complementario que motive la discusión en clase. (Jour. Bruno.10.02.2024)

For the first time, Bruno connects CALL tools with CI aims. By linking AI-based video creation tools with the analysis of critical short films like *The Immersion*, he begins to reframe technology not merely as support for linguistic practice, but as a mediator of reflection, discussion, and intercultural dialogue. This shift aligns with more critical understandings of CALL, where digital tools can facilitate the exploration of social realities, representation, and cultural perspectives rather than simply reinforcing technical language skills ([Álvarez-Valencia & Fernández-Benavides, 2019](#)). Bruno's reflection therefore suggests an emerging awareness of CALL as a pedagogical space for critical engagement in ELT.

Excerpt 19. También quiero aprovechar más las herramientas como Google Classroom, Wordwall y Educaplay... para que [los estudiantes] identifiquen qué discursos aparecen en los textos y cómo influyen en la percepción que tienen del mundo. (Jour.Alicia.09.18.2024)

Alicia reframes familiar digital platforms such as Google Classroom, Wordwall, and Educaplay as spaces for critical reflection and discourse analysis rather than solely for content delivery or language practice. By encouraging students to identify the discourses present in texts and examine how they shape their perceptions of the world, she positions CALL as a mediator for questioning representation, meaning, and power in ELT. This shift reflects a movement toward a more critical use of technology, aligned with CI perspectives that seek to problematize dominant narratives and foster students' critical awareness of social realities (Walsh, 2010).

The following reflections show how participants gradually redefined CALL as a space for critical reflection, dialogue, and intercultural engagement rather than solely for linguistic practice.

Excerpt 20. En este taller conocí más a fondo el concepto de Atomised CALL... herramientas como Nearpod y Learning Apps... no solo se enfocan en el contenido lingüístico, sino [también] en la reflexión crítica sobre temas culturales y sociales. (Jour.Paul.09.25.2024)

Excerpt 21. Las herramientas utilizadas en el taller me resultaban familiares... pude descubrir un uso más educativo... trabajo cooperativo con los estudiantes a través de Canva, YouTube... permite que el estudiante interactúe en la clase y si lo requiere vuelva a utilizarlo cuantas veces sea necesario... dando así lugar a la autonomía. (Jour.Hillary.09.25.2024)

Excerpt 22. sé que hay muchas herramientas nuevas, pero a veces me cuesta adaptarme a ellas... me gustaría seguir usando... YouTube, Instagram y Padlet... para que ellos puedan compartir sus ideas de forma más libre... analicen publicaciones o videos... y discutan en inglés qué tan representativas son de la realidad. (Jour.María.09.18.2024)

Across these reflections, participants increasingly reposition CALL from a primarily technical or instrumental resource toward a pedagogical mediator of critical intercultural engagement. Paul's encounter with Atomised CALL and tools such as Nearpod and Learning Apps illustrates a growing awareness that technology can support reflection on cultural and social issues rather than focus exclusively on linguistic content. Similarly, Hillary reframes familiar digital platforms as spaces that foster collaboration, learner autonomy, and intercultural interaction, moving beyond earlier conceptions of technology as merely supportive or supplementary. María, in turn, situates tools such as YouTube, Instagram, and Padlet within project-based activities that encourage students to question cultural representations and discuss how accurately these reflect social realities. Taken together, these reflections suggest a shift toward more critical understandings of CALL, where digital tools become spaces for dialogue, participation, and the interrogation of dominant discourses. This movement aligns with CI perspectives that view language education as a site for questioning representation, power, and meaning-making in socially situated contexts (Walsh, 2010), while also resonating with approaches to CALL that emphasize critical reflection and intercultural mediation rather than purely technical language practice (Álvarez-Valencia & Fernández-Benavides, 2019).

In the WS, teachers updated their definition of CALL, seeing it as both a motivational tool and a means for intercultural critique. Bruno and Paul viewed technology as a careful but meaningful way to innovate, while Gabriela and Hillary saw CALL as key to empowering voices and challenging dominance. Alicia and María demonstrated how CALL could be adapted to exam-driven and project-based environments. Together, these reflections highlight CALL as a practical affordance for embedding CI into English teaching, while also showing the negotiations required to balance critical aims with institutional demands. This finding extends previous Colombian studies that have examined CALL mainly in relation to digital mediation, autonomy, language-skill development, or intercultural encounters (Álvarez-Valencia & Fernández-Benavides, 2019; Ardila et al., 2012; Cohen & Calderón Aponte, 2021; Cuasialpud Canchala, 2010; Galvis, 2012; Herrera Mosquera, 2017; Viáfara, 2011), as well as studies on interculturality and decolonial perspectives in teacher education and higher education contexts (Arismendi-Gómez, 2022; Ortiz Medina et al., 2022). However,

unlike these studies, the present research focuses on in-service English teachers in public schools and examines how CALL can be reoriented toward CI through collaborative and reflective professional development processes. In this sense, the study contributes to the school-level gap identified by [Potes-Morales \(2025\)](#), particularly by documenting how teachers themselves began to reinterpret CALL as a mediating space for critical reflection, inclusion of local realities, and pedagogical transformation.

Discussion

The findings of this study illustrate how English teachers' views of CI evolved during the pedagogical WS. Data from interviews and journals reveal a trajectory from predominantly relational, functional, or paradoxical perspectives before the WS, toward more critical and decolonial orientations during them. Although the degree of transformation varied across participants, the trend was clear: the WS provided both conceptual grounding and practical openings to reframe interculturality as a political-pedagogical project. [Table 1](#) summarizes this evolution in teachers' views of CI, contrasting their stances before and during the workshops.

Table 1. *Summary of the evolution of teachers' views of CI before and during the pedagogical workshops.*

Teacher	Before the workshops	During the workshops
Bruno	Avoidance of sensitive topics; preference for safe cultural content (food, customs). Emphasis on standard English and exam routines.	Acknowledges CI as a tool for questioning inequality and power. Begins imagining critical questions embedded in reading/listening, though cautiously negotiated with curricular demands.
Gabriela	Willingness to discuss complex issues but restrained by fear of parental backlash. Advocated for horizontal dialogue but avoided sensitive topics.	Reframes CI as explicitly critical: questioning inequality, power, and representation. Grounds CI in local context (Cali's Afro/Indigenous heritage) and envisions English as a decolonial tool.
Alicia	Viewed interculturality as superficial and sporadic, mainly tolerance-based. Prioritized standardized-test preparation and grammar practice.	Redefines interculturality as confronting colonial legacies and inequality. Sees English teaching as a space for critical social analysis, while balancing exam obligations.
Paul	Relied on official/neutral materials. Associated interculturality with visible aspects of culture (food, traditions). Expressed caution and paradoxes.	Recognizes that interculturality requires interrogating power and representation. Begins to question curricular materials and imagines ways of embedding critical questions into reading and conversation tasks.
Hillary	Reduced interculturality to coexistence of diverse cultures without dialogic integration. Prioritized foreign cultural models.	Positions CI as inseparable from decolonization, education, and praxis. Critiques the hegemony of foreign culture in her teaching and calls for epistemic integration of local knowledges.
María	Confused interculturality with communicative competence and global citizenship. Emphasized loving one's own culture but avoided structural critique.	Embraces CI as a political-pedagogical framework for questioning power and coloniality. Reimagines project-based pedagogy to include critical reflection on representation and students' self-perceptions.

Source: Author's elaboration based on interview and journal data

This comparative view shows how teachers' perspectives shifted in three key dimensions. The first was a shift from avoidance to engagement with power. Teachers who initially avoided sensitive topics (e.g., Bruno, Gabriela, and Paul) came to recognize that neutrality is insufficient and that intercultural dialogue requires confronting inequality, representation, and the asymmetries of power that shape intercultural encounters, a central concern in [Walsh's \(2010\)](#) conception of CI.

The second was a shift from superficiality to critical depth. Participants such as Alicia and María, who initially described interculturality as sporadic or conflated it with communicative competence, progressively redefined it as a political-pedagogical project aligned with [Walsh's \(2010\)](#) notion of CI and with Colombian scholarship that advocates for more critical and decolonial approaches to ELT ([Granados-Beltrán, 2016, 2022](#); [Gutiérrez, 2022](#)).

The third was a shift from global discourses to local grounding. Teachers like Gabriela and María connected intercultural reflection to local realities (e.g., Cali's cultural heritage and students' projects), moving away from abstract or globalized discourses of citizenship toward more situated understandings of interculturality that recognize local knowledges, identities, and experiences as pedagogically relevant ([Restrepo & Rojas, 2010](#); [Walsh, 2010](#)).

The data also highlight tensions. For example, Bruno and Paul framed their adoption of CI cautiously, integrating it into familiar tasks without radically departing from exam-driven routines. Alicia, while adopting critical perspectives, continued to foreground standardized testing. These contradictions illustrate that professional development may foster conceptual change, but pedagogical enactment remains mediated by institutional, curricular, and assessment-related constraints commonly identified in Colombian public-school ELT contexts.

Overall, the workshops shifted teachers' views from seeing interculturality as simple exposure to cultural difference toward understanding it as a tool for critically addressing inequality, representation, and local realities. This suggests that combining PAR and CALL workshops can foster CI awareness in English teachers in Colombian public schools, while also extending discussions on the potential of CALL to mediate critical and intercultural reflection beyond predominantly instrumental approaches to language learning ([Álvarez-Valencia & Fernández-Benavides, 2019](#)).

Conclusions

This study examined English teachers' views of CI before and during WS involving CALL. Interview and journal data show a partial but notable shift in teachers' understandings of interculturality. Before the WS, most participants held functional or relational understandings of interculturality, consistent with what [Walsh \(2010\)](#) and [Tubino \(2005\)](#) describe as approaches centered on coexistence, tolerance, or superficial cultural exchange without necessarily questioning structural inequalities. Some participants adopted a Stay-safe Zone, avoiding sensitive topics such as politics, religion, or sexuality to maintain classroom harmony and align with institutional expectations. Others expressed conceptual paradoxes, simultaneously valuing local culture while privileging standardized English or global citizenship discourses. A smaller group hinted at emergent CI awareness, recognizing power relations and the politics of representation, although often without clear pedagogical strategies to translate these reflections into classroom practice.

During the WS, teachers redefined their views more explicitly in critical terms. They began to frame interculturality as a political-pedagogical tool for interrogating inequality, coloniality, and cultural representation. Participants moved from describing culture as neutral or safe content toward recognizing interculturality as a political-pedagogical project, consistent with [Walsh's \(2010\)](#) conception of CI and with Colombian scholarship advocating more critical and decolonial approaches to ELT ([Granados-Beltrán, 2016, 2022](#); [Gutiérrez, 2022](#)). CALL played a significant role in this redefinition: teachers identified how digital tools could scaffold participation, provide access to diverse cultural perspectives, and facilitate critical questioning within familiar curricular structures. In this sense, the findings extend previous Colombian CALL studies that have primarily emphasized communicative competence, digital mediation, or intercultural encounters ([Álvarez-Valencia & Fernández-Benavides, 2019](#)), by showing how technology can also mediate critical and decolonial reflection in school-level ELT. While some participants adopted these perspectives confidently, others negotiated them cautiously, balancing critical aspirations with exam-driven or institutional pressures.

The findings underscore three key insights. First, CI awareness can be fostered through PAR processes in which teachers are invited to reflect critically on their own practices, assumptions, and conceptual contradictions. Second, CALL is not only a functional aid for language learning but also an affordance for intercultural reflection, offering practical ways to embed critical questioning in resource-limited settings. Third, teacher transformation is a negotiated and gradual process: while discourse can shift relatively quickly,

pedagogical enactment requires navigating curricular obligations, assessment practices, and broader institutional cultures commonly present in Colombian public-school ELT contexts.

This study contributes to Colombian ELT research by documenting how CI perspectives emerge in public-school contexts when supported through dialogical and participatory WS. It also illustrates the value of combining PAR with CALL as complementary frameworks: PAR ensures that teachers' voices, tensions, and situated knowledges remain central to the process, while CALL provides tools that make intercultural dialogue, participation, and critical reflection more tangible in practice. In doing so, the study responds to calls by Colombian scholars for more decolonial and context-sensitive approaches to English language education (Granados-Beltrán, 2016, 2022; Usma Wilches et al., 2018).

The analysis presented here focused exclusively on data drawn from interviews and journals, capturing teachers' perspectives rather than actual classroom practices. Other instruments, such as focus groups, observations, and institutional documents, will be examined in subsequent phases of the doctoral project to explore how these evolving perspectives are translated into pedagogical enactment.

In conclusion, the WS enabled teachers to move from cautious, safe, or paradoxical views of interculturality toward more critical, decolonial, and contextually grounded orientations. While the process remains ongoing and contradictions persist, the findings show that English teachers in Colombian public schools can reimagine their classrooms as spaces for questioning inequality, affirming local identities, and critically engaging with global perspectives. Such transformations, though gradual, are vital for advancing an English language education that is not only linguistically rigorous but also socially, politically, and epistemically responsive to Colombian realities.

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