Review Article

Intercultural Communication in English: Language, Culture, and Miscommunication

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ABSTRACT

This narrative review brings together the latest studies regarding how language, culture, and difficulties in understanding each other interact in intercultural communication that uses English as the global medium. Drawing on models such as Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), cultural dimension theories, and negotiation frameworks, the review identifies three major insights: (1) intercultural communication is shaped by fluid cultural identities rather than fixed national norms; (2) English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) promotes mutual intelligibility and identity negotiation, challenging native-speaker–centric paradigms; and (3) miscommunication often arises from cultural assumptions, unequal power dynamics, and limited intercultural awareness but can be mitigated through adaptive strategies and targeted pedagogies. Across educational, professional, and industry settings including aviation, hospitality, and multicultural workplaces, the findings emphasize the need for flexible, context-responsive intercultural competence. Ultimately, the review argues that effective intercultural communication in English requires embracing cultural fluidity and fostering reflexive, inclusive practices that support meaningful understanding across global contexts.

1. INTRODUCTION

Intercultural communication is the communication among individuals from various cultures who use the same language. In English language contexts, it primarily indicates those interactions where English is employed and there is a cross-cultural relationship with individuals from various backgrounds (Douglas & Rosvold, 2018; Baker, 2015a). As a global lingua franca, English (ELF) plays an important role in the world of education, employment and social conversations, making the field quite important (Croucher *et al.*, 2015). Language and culture are mutually constitutive for shaping human relationships. Language is a symbolic system for conveying messages (Hua, 2015) but also embodies the values, norms, and identities of its speakers (Foncha & Sivasubramaniam, 2014). Thus, successful intercultural communication requires not only speaking the same language but knowledge of culture, and cultural awareness (Aririguzoh, 2022). Nevertheless, the present-day literature is still widely spread, dispersed and, in most cases, abstract, which hinders the comprehension of the interactions among language, culture and miscommunication in practical, real-world scenarios. Such a gap brings forth a pressing demand for a synthesized, harmonious account of the existing thinking.

In an age of globalization and greater academic mobility, the need for intercultural communication in English is increasing. Many students and professionals are now participating in English-medium contexts (especially EAP courses) and intercultural communicative competence is critical in this situation. Understanding cultural difference promotes effective pathways to learning and enables students to assimilate into academic communities (Douglas & Rosvold, 2018). Globalization also requires a movement of people from different cultures across borders, so understanding and dealing with cultural differences is vital for communicating with people and organizations (Aririguzoh, 2022). In a review of the literature dealing with intercultural communication, it was suggested that the field of intercultural communication should also broaden to include historical data that can inform us and shape the future of communication (Croucher *et al.*, 2015). The central aim of this narrative review is to bring together diverse theoretical, pedagogical, and industry-based perspectives to explain how language, culture, and miscommunication intersect in contemporary English-mediated interactions to address these gaps. The review is therefore a direct response to the issue of fragmented understanding in the field.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Historical development of intercultural communication research

In the last few decades, the scholarly debate on intercultural communication has changed markedly from theorizing inquiry to problem-based inquiry with a practical orientation (Croucher *et al.*, 2015). Initially, research focused on national cultures with their relative stability, and simply enumerated differences that distinguished intercultural contact. Culture was treated as a fixed element associated with a nation-state in earlier methods. The more current research uses culture as something perpetually shifting and applies the viewpoint to

practical concerns, mainly regarding how to address differences in diverse contexts (Baker, 2015a; Hua, 2015).

Over the decades, applied linguistics has shifted from abstract theories to actual answers concerning concerns in real communication. A similar trend can be observed in intercultural communication, which acknowledges that efficient interaction depends on flexible approaches suited for various and changing circumstances (Croucher *et al.*, 2015). Consider the field of aviation English for Specific Purposes (ESP), where safety and efficiency are directly influenced by intercultural competence (Hazrati, 2015). Moreover, in recent years, English language education has been transformed by introducing critical perspectives that disavowed stereotypes and oversimplified models of culture, as they made communication more reflective and thoughtful (Baker, 2015a).

2.2. English as a lingua franca (ELF) in intercultural communication

English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) simply refers to English used as a vehicle for communication across speakers of different native languages (Baker, 2015a). As it has developed, it has transformed communication on the international stage by destabilizing native-speaker norms and conventional understanding of communicative competence, and has led both to broader opportunities for engagement across education, business, and online (Baker & Sangiamchit, 2019; Hua, 2015). Although ELF simply serves as an instrument for communication in multiple contexts, it also impacts learners and their sense of identity or perspective as they engage with the language more independently of the native-speaker reliance and expectation (Ke & Cahyani, 2014; Tran & Duong, 2018).

Empirical studies have shown a departure from a more traditional view of English. Research studies from Taiwanese students suggest that even if English is still viewed as some kind of ideal, ELF practices show a change toward valuing mutual intelligibility rather than strict adherence to the grammar of the English language (Ke & Cahyani, 2014). Similarly, in studies of intercultural couples, ELF was also associated with creative or inventive ways in an interaction that include the concepts of trust, rapport and belonging and identity (Pietikäinen, 2016). In an online framework the authors explain that ELF fluctuated based on the negotiation of the nature of linguistic and cultural boundaries (Baker & Sangiamchit, 2019). Therefore, we can see that ELF is central to the intercultural communication of today.

2.3. Theoretical models of intercultural communication
2.3.1. Intercultural communicative competence (ICC)

Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) refers to the skills required to communicate effectively and adequately across cultures (Douglas & Rosvold, 2018; Hua, 2015). For English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), ICC involves not only language proficiency but also cultural knowledge, sensitivity, and the ability to negotiate meaning in multilingual academic and social settings (Baker, 2015a; Douglas & Rosvold, 2018).

Article review notes a shift from ethnocentric conceptualizations of ICC, a view of the other mediated by one's own culture, to ethno-relative conceptualizations that value difference and

respect the other (Douglas & Rosvold, 2018). As a result of this evolution, we stress the need for alertness on the part of the teacher as well as the student which would encourage educational processes based on intercultural reflection and adaptation rather than more rigid acculturation models.

Based on the results, the development of ICC is directly correlated with academic success due to the ability to navigate cultural expectations and classroom practices and negotiate identity (Foncha & Sivasubramaniam, 2014; Tran & Duong, 2018). Many pedagogical models have proven effective in improving learners' intercultural sensitivity and communicative capabilities. Notably, instructional designs that these models informed have been validated in Vietnamese EFL contexts (Tran & Duong, 2018). Although ICC (Intercultural Communicative Competence) is becoming more widely accepted in language classrooms, it is still not easy to translate this theory into practice. This is particularly true of the complex relationships between people in the diverse contexts of ELF (English as a Lingua Franca). The difficulty requires more flexible and context-responsive teaching approach (Baker, 2015b).

2.3.2. Hofstede's cultural dimensions and their application
The most dominant model in the field of intercultural communication is Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory, which describes cultures through value dimensions such as individualism–collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity–femininity (Douglas & Rosvold, 2018). This framework is quite helpful when there are differences in culture and these affect the way people communicate. (Hua, 2015) Hofstede's dimensions could explain how culturally based conventions and communications between air traffic controllers and pilots in a specialized field like Aviation English might lead to misunderstandings and safety mishaps. Because the aviation industry uses standardized English, differences from cultural norms can lead to problems. For instance, differences in directness, attitudes towards hierarchy and toleration of uncertainty may alter the meaning of verbal exchanges, which can result in mistake making in high stakes contexts (Hazrati, 2015). This clearly establishes the significance of carefully instilling intercultural communicative competence into training plans in high-stakes fields (Croucher et al., 2015).

2.3.3. Negotiation and identity in intercultural engagement
Negotiation is regarded as going beyond simple transactions: it is a process of interaction in intercultural communication, especially in ELF contexts (Baker, 2015a; Hua, 2015). Negotiation involves the ongoing, continuous negotiation of perspectives, identities and meanings, responding to the unpredictability and variability of intercultural encounters. To date, the literature suggests that negotiations create opportunities for individuals to utilize creativity in order to construct their ethnic identities and act without conforming to foreseen expectations, exemplifying the dynamic, contextual and emergent nature of intercultural encounters (Hua, 2015). In instances of cultural diversity, negotiation of identities is particularly relevant, as in university contexts. Educational studies drawing on

critical discourse analysis demonstrate that students and staff collaboratively negotiate identity in their interaction, mediated by spatiality and migration trajectories that can create specific intercultural spaces (Foncha & Sivasubramaniam 2014). Dialogic perspectives of language learning recognize how learners 'ideologically become'; that is, learners negotiate their identities, relative to others as they practice communicative language learning, indicating the importance of negotiation in pedagogy (Harvey, 2016).

2.4. Language–culture dynamics
2.4.1. Culture as a fluid construct
New studies are opposed to essentialist frameworks which define culture as fixed in relation to nation-states or static categories (Hua, 2015; Croucher et al., 2015). In reviewing the literature, scholars identified the strong connections among language, culture, and intercultural communication; they also called for frameworks that move away from static orientations toward culture to include discourse, practices, and ideology (Buelt & Chuang, 2025). Thus, culture is now understood as dynamic and fluid, emerged out of context and generative processes of negotiation and change. This framework recognizes dynamic ongoing cultural interaction and encourages a break away from static or simplistic orientations of culture by framing teaching practices that respect intercultural differences and the dynamic nature of cultural practices.

Culture is context-dependent and dynamic, leading to individuals invoking various cultural orientations including global, local, and hybrid identities (Baker, 2015a). Social Networking Sites (SNS), as an instance of culture at work, continuingly reconfigure cultural boundaries through intercultural and multilingual encounters (Baker & Sangiamchit, 2019). This reconfiguration has varying consequences for language teaching in terms of curricula and classrooms that promote flexible and critical engagement with culture, instead of reinforcing stereotypes (Baker, 2015b).

2.4.2. Language as cultural expression
Language not only serves as the conduit for disseminating knowledge but is also a significant way in which cultural identity is expressed and shaped (Hua, 2015). Variations in language use and backchannel feedback also reflect communicative culture and communicative taste, since these variations influence the speakers' beliefs and attitudes (Cutrone, 2014).

Research across languages has shown Japanese and American English to have differences in both usage and functions of backchannel, and not recognizing the differences may lead to miscommunication (Cutrone, 2014). These findings may point to the relevance of teaching reading skills in EFL contexts to foster greater participation on the part of learners during intercultural communication with L1 speakers. In addition, learners' orientations to English and cultural meanings associated, may impact motivation, identity, and engagement. Moreover, experiences with ELF communication can reorient these circumstances, formatting an orientation toward utility and intercultural relevance, as opposed to fidelity of pronunciation to L1, for example (Ke & Cahyani, 2014). Dialogic dimensions of language learning illustrate language use as a

vehicle to identity construction and cultural understanding (Harvey, 2016).

2.4.3. Language use and cultural awareness

Cultural competence is crucial in preventing miscommunication in intercultural communication, as it enables individuals to negotiate divergent values, norms and communicative practices more productively (Hua, 2015; Douglas & Rosvold, 2018). Teachers and learners both must become sensitive to cultural differences as a first step towards mutual understanding.

In the EAP setting, the development of intercultural communicative competence requires the cultivation of ethnorelativism and mutual understanding in the classroom, as opposed to narrow acculturation models and ethnocentric prejudices (Douglas & Rosvold, 2018). Studies on teacher perceptions with respect to cultural content in ELT materials showcase the need for the inclusion of various cultural perspectives even though not to the extent of overemphasizing Anglophone cultures and from across the globe, promoting glocalization (or a blend of global and local culture) (Monfared et al., 2016). Yet, many educational materials continue to lack cultural diversity, and subsequently limit learners' exposure to plural and dynamic cultural realties (Baker, 2015b). It is important to close these gaps in order to achieve genuine intercultural competence.

2.5. Miscommunication in intercultural contexts
2.5.1. Causes of miscommunication

Misunderstandings in intercultural communication are often attributed to ethnocentrism, ethnorelativism, low levels of acculturation, and differences in language proficiency levels (Croucher et al., 2015; Hua, 2015). Ethnocentrism, the belief that one's own culture is the standard, stifles the capacity for empathic understanding and free communication (Hua, 2015). Similarly, those at different acculturation stages may face expectations of cultural mismatch that are not met and end up being discrepancies in styles of interpreters (Douglas & Rosvold, 2018).

Poor language skills and cultural ignorance both contribute to poor communication (Gazan, 2007), preventing interpretation of messages in meaningful ways, and contribute to communication breakdown between participants (Mangrio & Sjögren Forss, 2017). Miscommunication can also emerge from concrete situational factors, including the communicative context, the identities of the communicators, and time delay in response (Douglas & Rosvold, 2018). Furthermore, if messages are encoded and transmitted through cultures, they may be weakly encoded and therefore more likely misinterpreted by the receiver, who may not grasp the behaviors of the culture being transmitted (Airinguzoh, 2022).

2.5.2. Effects of miscommunication

Intercultural miscommunication can have wide-ranging consequences and can become deeply entwined with relationships, professional settings, and experiences with services (Croucher et al., 2015; Hua, 2015). In predominantly private ELF interactions, a miscommunication may result in unintentional disruption of closeness and mutual understanding; however, these events can be counterbalanced by a shared experience of knowledge and the application of cognitive strategies to negotiate meaning (Pietikäinen, 2016).

In professional contexts; especially within aviation, there are highly relevant and domain specific examples of communication strategies, which can also vary by culture, bearing negotiable impact to safely and efficiently carry out aviation services (Hazrati, 2015). The hospitality context is a substituted example where service environments typically present frequent multi-national encounters requiring service staff and managers to negotiate and navigate multiple customer expectations and possible miscommunication.

Cultural awareness and sensitivity are crucial contributing factors in organizations being able to provide service and distinguish themselves within the service marketplace (Grobelna, 2015). Importantly, miscommunication and intercultural encounters not only result in incidental misjudgments, miscommunication can be a factor in explaining how we come to know, visualize and act towards people, impacting identity constructions, relationships with others, as well as the wider climate and inclusiveness within organizations (Foncha & Sivasubramaniam, 2014).

2.5.3. Strategies for prevention and management

Satisfactory management of intercultural misunderstanding depends on strategies of clarification, extralinguistic cues and negotiation (Hua, 2015; Croucher et al., 2015). Learners use tools such as clarification requests and feedback to predict a potential misunderstanding and use the cooperation to collaboratively construct meaning (Hua, 2015). Research on intercultural couples has demonstrated that they often develop creative strategies – such as pointing, miming, as well as deictics – to navigate through communication obstacles (Pietikäinen, 2016). In addition to those strategies, is the importance of media literacy and cultural literacy, as these skills enable people to decode and frame messages contextually for different audiences (Aririguzoh, 2022). Pedagogical models such as the Intercultural Communicative Language Teaching (ICLT), for example, demonstrate how focused instruction can also train learners in the communicative strategies that are necessary for reducing miscommunication in EFL contexts (Tran & Duong, 2018).

2.6. Pedagogical approaches in english learning
2.6.1. Integration of ICC in english for academic purposes (EAP)

Given the increasing cultural diversity of students and the necessity for effective academic interaction in the multicultural environment (Douglas & Rosvold, 2018; Aririguzoh, 2022), incorporating Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) into English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses is necessary. Once ICC becomes integrated and implemented into instructional models, it helps to cultivate ethnorelativism- that is understanding and cooperating with one another, rather than practicing ethnocentrism (Douglas & Rosvold, 2018). In particular, studies reported that the ICC framework is effectively implemented in various approaches, such as Intercultural Communicative Language Teaching (ICLT) (Tran & Duong,

2018). Additionally, behaviors, like enacting and integrating intercultural learning into an EAP curriculum demonstrate that ICC helps students transition academically, engage in campus activities, and feel a sense of belonging (Landry, 2023). Although awareness of ICC through the incorporation of intercultural learning experiences in EAP educational settings is increasing, challenges still exist in reconciling traditional academic norms with intercultural flexibility and preparing teachers to do so effectively (Baker, 2015b).

2.6.2. Teaching through ELF Perspectives

ELF perspectives allow pedagogy to better reflect real-world uses of English. There is now so much diversity and variation in the way people use English worldwide (Baker, 2015a; Douglas & Rosvold, 2018). By making the use of language more transparent, this option raises awareness of emergent language practices and learners' complex cultural identities (Hua, 2015). Lou (2023) introduces the concept of "liquid interculturality". This understanding frames culture as flexible and negotiated through practice. In this way, reflexivity and socially responsible pedagogy can come into play. In this shift, ELF-centred pedagogies focus on developing intercultural communicative competence by teaching learners to negotiate, reflect and adapt rather than conform to native-speaker norms (Cavalheiro, 2015).

It is important to take learners' beliefs and attitudes towards English, as conditioned in traditional ELT paradigms, in order to create more realistic and inclusive learning environments (Ke & Cahyani, 2014). Pedagogical frameworks through which transcultural and emergent practices emerge show how English is a living, adaptive resource for negotiating meaning across cultures (Baker, 2015a). We hope that by using English for intercultural engagement, learners will not assimilate to a particular fixed cultural model (Baker & Sangiamchit, 2019).

2.6.3. Cultural content in ELT materials

ELT materials' cultural focus deeply shapes the ways that students think about culture and how they develop communicative competence (Douglas & Rosvold, 2018; Baker, 2015b). Studies conducted within the Inner, Outer, and Expanding circles of English highlight the importance of balanced cultural representation and support glocalization (i.e., connecting local and global perspectives), which is relevant and engaged learning (Monfared *et al.*, 2016). To support diverse and pluralistic perspectives, effective ELT resources should foster the ability for learners to link their cultural experiences to an experience of interculture. The process may develop the process of cultural awareness and cultural competence through an understanding of culture that is fluid, multilayered, and not fixed (Baker, 2015b).

2.7. Identity in intercultural communication
2.7.1. Identity negotiation in education

Interculturality, especially in multicultural classrooms, represents a fluid and contextually situated understanding of identity (Hua, 2015; Douglas & Rosvold, 2018). Migration implies social relocation, which means that people will constantly negotiate and reconceptualize their identities in new cultures and social contexts (Harvey, 2016). Longitudinal projects that involved critical discourse analysis demonstrated how learners of a second language (L2) and institutional actors work together to co-produce identities through communicative acts. These identities are connected to broader societal trajectories and power relations, and provide insight into how or why misunderstandings occur, or how or why they may be lessened (Foncha & Sivasubramaniam, 2014). Understanding how this happens is essential to developing pedagogical spaces comprised of learners' identities (Croucher *et al.*, 2015).

2.7.2. Intercultural couples and ELF talk

Interacting with intercultural couples who communicate using English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) provides a distinct perspective to unpack identity negotiation at the microsocial level and how couples managed miscommunication (Hua, 2015; Baker & Sangiamchit, 2019). These couples co-construct their communicative resource to access their and their partner's resources to communicate in interaction and to identify with ethnicity.

Further, familiar stages used by couples in the interaction shaped how they communicated. Partners utilized a variety of communicative resources, such as deixis, acting, and onomatopoeia, and extralinguistic resources and strategies to mitigate, preclude and avoid misunderstanding (Pietikäinen, 2016). Overall, these communicative resources underscore how social relations and pragmatic resources, including flexibility and responsiveness, are crucial to successful intercultural communication (Baker, 2015a).

2.7.3. Ideological becoming in language learning

Within intercultural contexts, learning a language entails more than merely acquiring vocabulary and grammar, it also reshapes and transforms how learners come to understand their own identity through interaction with others (Hua, 2015; Douglas & Rosvold, 2018). This is referred to as "ideological becoming" to encapsulate that identity emerges simultaneously with interaction and reflection (Harvey, 2016).

This incorporates a communication-based conceptualization of education, while at the same time, enacting ways to design practices that foster a sense of collective authorship and co-construction of meaning with students (Harvey, 2016). This argument within the article connects the designing of pedagogies that otherwise integrate intercultural competence with that of language learning, which helps the students to dissociate from notions of static thinking of culture and into more dynamic ways of developing one's identity (Baker, 2015b).

2.8. Cross-cultural competence and sustainable development
2.8.1. Global cross-cultural competencies

As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, cross-culturally competent citizenship is necessary to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (OECD, 2021; Aririguzoh, 2022). The foundational attitude of values and respect for diversity based on cultural differences enable effective collaboration and more considerable social cohesion and are essential elements

of advocacy for sustainable development (Croucher *et al*, 2015). As individuals improve their intercultural communication capabilities, they manage cultural differences to support sustainability and create community (Aririguzoh, 2022).

2.8.2. Media literacy in cross-cultural communication
Presently, cross-cultural communication largely relies on media literacy, as individuals communicate using multiple communication channels and formats (Hua, 2015; Aririguzoh, 2022). Media literacy helps communicators adapt and negotiate the communication process in culturally sensitive modes that may help reduce misunderstanding or miscommunication (Croucher *et al.*, 2015).

Increasing the effectiveness of communication involves cultivating culture-literate communicators who understand the socio-cultural contexts of both sender and receivers, resulting in the establishment of a clement and sustainable communication environment (Aririguzoh, 2022). This also reflects the infusion of cultural knowledge with technology in worldwide contexts (Douglas & Rosvold, 2018).

2.8.3. Challenges and opportunities in globalized settings
Because of globalization, intercultural communication offers promise and peril. Globalization supports the exchange of culture, which can simultaneously reinforce previous stereotypes and lead to miscommunication. Typically, these dilemmas develop when communicators disregard cultural context or take a too-strong stance based solely on their own view of others (Croucher *et al.*, 2015; Hua, 2015). It is important also to note that advancements in digital technologies and social media creates opportunities for individuals to blend languages and cultural practices that formally trouble traditional limits and thus opens up new possibilities for communication (Baker & Sangiamchit, 2019). The shift in entangled cultural practices has significantly altered the field of intercultural communication in general, as a result, it has influenced both theoretical discussions and actual pedagogy (Aririguzoh, 2022).

2.9. Sector-specific challenges in intercultural communication
2.9.1. Aviation english and safety communication
The aviation industry places a special emphasis on intercultural communication. ICAO outlines a standard - technical and plain English must be used to communicate between a pilot and a controller to avoid risk (Alderson, 2009). Even so, the ways that people from different cultures deliver and interpret communication can complicate issues, and if this communication is not well managed, safety can be compromised (Hazrati, 2015). Studies highlight the need to integrate intercultural communicative competence into aviation English teaching, accounting for cultural dimensions that influence communication behaviors. When these issues are addressed, the result is not only greater safety in operations but also better intercultural communication among aviation professionals (Hazrati, 2015).

2.9.2. Hospitality industry service encounters
Cultural diversity is prevalent among employees and guests

in the hospitality industry, making the hospitality sector an exemplary context for research and practice in intercultural communication (Grobelna, 2015). As a field, the hospitality sector presents an ideal context for the practicing of intercultural communication as it is important for the training of managing service encounters to meet the expectations of guests with different cultural backgrounds, and addressing the needs of multicultural staff in the workplace (Croucher *et al.*, 2015; Grobelna, 2015).

Studies indicate that cultural awareness, sensitivity, and understanding are important success factors for hospitality organizations. Organizations can develop these skills with education and training to further enhance their competitive advantage and performance (Grobelna, 2015). This indicates that intercultural communication is not merely a theoretical concept; it has true value in practice.

2.9.3. Team creativity in diverse workplaces
Cultural diversity fosters innovation and creativity through the exchange of different viewpoints. However, cultural differences still exist, and these may restrict open communication and the development of ideas (Croucher *et al.*, 2015; Douglas & Rosvold, 2018). Eastern Asia has some forms of leadership, such as benevolent paternalism, that may have the potential to ameliorate these challenges because they allow for a collaborative and open environment.

Evidence in the Chinese organizational context has shown how leaders' behaviors, which are informed by cultural considerations, inhibit the challenges in communication and creativity that can arise from diversity (Lu *et al.*, 2017). This examination adds context to the understanding of intercultural communication barriers and how teams can overcome it.

2.10. Methodological approaches in intercultural communication research
2.10.1. Qualitative and ethnographic methods
Strategies like interviews, participant observation, and discourse analysis are often used in intercultural communication research (Croucher *et al.*, 2015). These ethnographic and qualitative methods allow for a deeper understanding of communicative behavior in naturalistic settings, which is often taken for granted in one-off or multi-party encounters. By examining intercultural communication in case studies of different cohorts such as students involved in academic mobility programs and young couples who use English as a Lingua Franca (EFL), we can derive useful data regarding interactional strategies, identity negotiation, and dealing with cultural tensions (Foncha & Sivasubramaniam, 2014).

In addition, grounded theory approaches would build on the explanatory models to capture lived experience in emergent communication (Pietikäinen, 2016). Likewise, research on international student adaptation has pointed to intercultural communication competence as a major conceptual factor that influences academic and social adaptation (OECD, 2021; Douglas & Rosvold, 2018).

2.10.2. Longitudinal and multi-method designs
Longitudinal studies enrich qualitative designs by capturing

change in communication competence and identity development over time, which allows for a more holistic exploration of intercultural processes (Croucher *et al.*, 2015). Multiple data sources within these studies can help to strengthen validity and triangulate findings (Croucher *et al.*, 2015).

Critical discourse analysis frameworks applied in longitudinal studies will help elicit power mechanisms and social constructions of intercultural communication (Foncha & Sivasubramaniam, 2014). Further, systematic reviews of literature spanning two decades provide an alternative base for development of models that consider development and changing educational and social contexts (Douglas & Rosvold, 2018).

2.10.3. Challenges in data collection and interpretation

Conducting research in intercultural communication poses a number of challenges, particularly in capturing the fluid and multidimensional qualities of both culture and language and the use of identifiable approaches that reflect their meaning-making process of culture and language (Hua, 2015; Croucher *et al.*, 2015). Researchers are constantly faced with the tension between the essentialist approach to categorizing culture and language and a more complex view that recognizes the fluidity and variability of cultural and language practices, as well as the complex dynamics involving hybridity (Baker, 2015a).

There are also ethical considerations: we have an obligation to honor what it means to represent or portray someone or something, free from stereotyping, representing others in context, and being sensitive as a researcher. Balanced representations rely on methodological rigor and reflexivity, and are crucial in intercultural research, particularly research that involves marginalized or diverse populations (Baker, 2015a; Croucher *et al.*, 2015). As there is a continuing need for understanding of culture and intercultural communication in context, the development of diverse, context-based research designs will continue to be a development for our field (Monfared *et al.*, 2016).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Literature search strategy

The resources utilized in the current research were collected from trustworthy academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, Taylor & Francis Online, and Google Scholar. The search was conducted using the following keywords: intercultural communication, English as a lingua franca (ELF), intercultural communicative competence (ICC), language and culture, and miscommunication. These keyword combinations were used separately as well as in different forms to present a comprehensive review with focus. The first search brought forth 51 studies that were then filtered per relevance and duplicates, leading to 24 studies being considered for the final analysis. The researcher sorted the concepts into thematic categories by automatically pinpointing recurring ideas and patterns among these studies; thus, the thematic organization mirrored the key trends and literature findings.

3.2. Selection and inclusion criteria

The publications were selected for their relevance to all three

key issues:

i. The culture and language interplay in English-mediated communication,

ii. English lingua franca's role in intercultural communication, and

iii. Intercultural miscommunication in international contexts, which includes its sources, effects, and management approaches.

Most sources were from peer-reviewed journals, academic books, and technical reports published between 2000 and 2023. Selected studies focused on education, professional, and industrial settings, including aviation and hospitality. Seminal pieces were included when works from before 2000 were brought into the key issues' discussion that needed prior historical context or theory.

3.3. Data extraction and synthesis

Each reviewed source was carefully analyzed to determine the prominent themes, concepts, and outcomes. The researcher grouped the concepts into thematic categories such as intercultural communicative competence, ELF practices, negotiation and identity, language-culture relations, pedagogical constructs, and strategies to mitigate miscommunication. The review advances beyond reporting statistics; this review outlines conceptual innovations, methodological emphases, and areas where gaps yet exist in the literature.

3.4. Rationale for narrative review

Because English as an intercultural communication is a multidisciplinary domain engaging different dimensions of linguistics, education, cultural studies, and professional practice, this study has taken a narrative review approach. Its broad scope makes systematic reviews not ideal, because it would exclude important theoretical and conceptual contributions. A narrative approach provides an integrative, critically engaged overview of the field, which highlights commonalities and differing perspectives, and also identifies future directions for research.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The review of literature reveals key patterns and insights concerning the relationship between language, culture, and intercultural communication in English. Since English is being more and more used as a global lingua franca, the development of ICC has become so important in educational, professional, and social settings (Hazrati, 2015). Academics call for transcending ethnocentric paradigms and embracing fluid ethnorelative views that make sense of diversity and variability in culture (Baker, 2015b; Douglas & Rosvold, 2018). Recent reviews also remind us that language and culture and intercultural communication are inextricably connected and require frameworks to attend to discourse, practice, and ideology rather than to static cultural taxonomies such as have been relied upon in the past (Buelt & Chuang, 2025).

Some of the themes emerging from this literature include bridging theoretical models to negotiation and identity, language and culture in negotiation, causes and management of miscommunication, and pedagogical and industry-based

implications (Hua, 2015; Foncha & Sivasubramaniam, 2014). Pedagogies informed by ELF undermine the supremacy of native-speaker norms by acknowledging emergent communicative practices, and terms such as "fluid interculturality" that view culture as dynamic and negotiable constitute the backdrop for the above processes (Lou, 2023). To do so, ELF-oriented practice and pedagogical initiatives are consistent with the idea of ICC when they present learners with resources to help them adapt, negotiate and become interculturally aware (Cavalheiro, 2015). In the EAP context, integrative intercultural learning outcomes have also been shown to be crucial, not only in facilitating academic transitions but also for enhancing student interactions within heterogeneous campus communities (Landry, 2023).

The international dimension of intercultural communication is further justified by its correlation with the sustainable development objectives (Aririguzoh, 2022; OECD, 2021). Yet, research gaps remain. And even though significant progress has been made, the influence of cultural identity and the associated communicative strategies need to be subjected to further study in various communicative environments along with more emphasis on longitudinal, and context-bound studies that will generate insight into the development of intercultural competence, and communication mishaps (Douglas & Rosvold, 2018; Croucher *et al.*, 2015).

Pedagogical frameworks also need to be continuously developed and tested in practice to facilitate the implementation of both ICC and ELF perspectives (Tran & Duong, 2018). International perspectives of educational exchange confirm the multidimensionality of ICC and its role in equipping individuals to function in culturally diverse surroundings (Fantini, 2018). At the same time, the heterogeneous nature of English as a second language in an increasingly globalized world, makes it clear that flexible structures and models are needed that can meet the different requirements of learners and users of English around the world (Mangrio & Sjögren Forss, 2017).

In conclusion, advancing research and practice in intercultural communication requires interdisciplinary, context-sensitive approaches that honor cultural complexity while supporting dialogue, collaboration, and mutual understanding through English.

5. CONCLUSION

The narrative review presents a situation where English is used for intercultural communication, and it is not a simple matter, as language, culture, and identity are all involved in a dynamic way. This review underscores three main things: (1) culture has a high degree of variability and is very dependent on the situation, which means that one has to go beyond the use of stereotypes based on nationalities; (2) English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) helps not only in mutual understanding but also in the negotiation of identity, thus going against the norms that are centered around native speakers; and (3) misunderstandings are often due to different cultural backgrounds, power imbalances, and lack of awareness in intercultural relations. On the other hand, misunderstandings can be minimized by the use of adaptive strategies, negotiation, and reflective teaching. Theoretical models such as Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), cultural dimensions, and negotiation

theories are integrated in this study to show their application in the real world, particularly in education, professional settings, and industries like aviation, hospitality, and multicultural workplaces.

Further research steps consist of longitudinal, context-specific, and multi-method studies on ICC and ELF, especially on the issues of identity negotiation and miscommunication in digital and hybrid environments. It is suggested that policies promote the intercultural competence requirement for curricula and professional standards while adopting flexible, reflexive, and ELF-informed approaches with multi-culturally diverse materials in pedagogy to develop awareness, negotiation skills, and adaptive communication.

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