

Students' Perceptions of the Role of the Nonverbal Dimension in Intercultural
Communication:
A Mixed Study in Foreign Language Programs across Various Universities of Colombia

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Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés - Francés

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Abstract

Foreign language programs tend to leave aside nonverbal communication (NVC) which could cause intercultural conflict or misunderstanding in interaction. It has been agreed that communication is multimodal (Kress, 2010; Álvarez Valencia, 2016) and that the nonverbal dimension has been absent from teacher education (Poyatos, 1994, 2002). From an intercultural perspective, a lack of awareness of NVC (gesture, proxemics, paralanguage) may lead to conflict or misunderstanding (Matsumoto et al., 2013). This study aims to establish the role of the nonverbal dimension in the comprehension of conflict or misunderstanding in intercultural communication of pre-service language teachers in Colombia. This explanatory study adopted a mixed method design and drew on data collected through a survey (n=204), and interviews with 10 pre-service teachers. The results indicate that, although the pre-service teachers report a limited presence of nonverbal elements of communication in their major, they consider this aspect important in (intercultural) communication. Besides, participants report NVC as an important aspect in order to avoid communication breakdowns. The results point at the pressing need to actively integrate the nonverbal dimension at the pedagogical and curricular levels in teacher education programs in order to avoid misunderstanding or conflict.

Key words: non-verbal communication, misunderstandings, conflicts, foreign languages.

Resumen

Los programas de idiomas extranjeros tienden a dejar de lado la comunicación no verbal (CNV), lo que podría causar conflictos o malentendidos interculturales en la interacción. Se ha acordado que la comunicación es multimodal (Kress, 2010; Álvarez Valencia, 2016) y que la dimensión no verbal ha estado ausente en la formación docente (Poyatos, 1994, 2002). Desde una perspectiva intercultural, la falta de conciencia de la CNV (gestos, proxémica, paralenguaje) puede llevar a conflictos o malentendidos (Matsumoto et al., 2013). Este estudio tiene como objetivo establecer el papel de la dimensión no verbal en la comprensión de conflictos o malentendidos en la comunicación intercultural de futuros profesores de idiomas en Colombia. Este estudio explicativo adoptó un diseño de método mixto y se basó en datos recopilados a través de una encuesta (n=204) y entrevistas con 10 futuros profesores. Los resultados indican que, aunque los futuros docentes informan una presencia limitada de elementos no verbales de comunicación en sus estudios, consideran este aspecto importante en la comunicación (intercultural). Además, los participantes señalan que la CNV es un aspecto importante para evitar brechas en la comunicación. Los resultados señalan la necesidad apremiante de integrar activamente la dimensión no verbal en los niveles pedagógicos y curriculares de los programas de formación docente para evitar malentendidos o conflictos.

Palabras clave: comunicación no verbal, malentendidos, conflictos, lenguas extranjeras.

Introduction

The rapid evolution of communication technologies and globalization has compelled numerous governments to formulate communicative strategies within the educational framework at the pedagogical level, with the aim of enhancing international relations (Baker, 2022; Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2013). In the case of Colombia, the Ministry of Education (MEN) has proposed some alternatives like the use of English as a second language to ameliorate Colombia's competitiveness facing the global market (Gómez Sará, 2017, Quintana-Arias, & Bello-Serna, 2020). Nevertheless, some of the proposed policies for language teaching do not fit the sociocultural context of our country (Álvarez Valencia & Ramírez, 2021; Quintero-Arias & Bello-Serna, 2020;). In this sense, the creation of linguistic policies such as the National Bilingual Program following the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL) are expected to offer school students the possibility to reach level B1 when finishing high school. However, it is common for students in these institutions to complete their education without achieving the English communicative competence levels outlined in national education policies (Cárdenas & Miranda, 2014;Gómez, 2017; Gutiérrez-Duque & Mayora-Pernía, 2021).

These effects echo in language learning in other contexts. Particularly, in higher education, the inclusion of an intercultural agenda has stressed a series of challenges previously overlooked. Some issues such as stereotyping and social misrepresentations (Patiño et al., 2021), the lack of spaces to develop intercultural skills (Fernández, 2017), the scarce presence of critical abilities and the scant relevance attributed to the multimodal agenda (Fernández, 2019) stand out. In what concerns language teacher formation, this situation requires immediate consideration due to the importance of addressing the diverse

modes of communication (Kress, 2010; Van Leeuwen, 2005) and the multidimensional nature of learning languages (Álvarez Valencia, 2018).

In this sense, professional programs such as the bachelor degree of Foreign Languages at Universidad del Valle aim to prepare students to become integral and autonomous professionals and teachers of English and French. The University also expects to provide language teachers who can serve as mediators at linguistic and cultural levels with a social vision of languages and cultures. Involving pedagogical and professional knowledge, didactic, intercultural and communicative skills are also part of the foreign language program's priorities.

Although the curricular structure of some language teacher formation programs in Colombia are aware of the non-verbal elements of communication, what is observed is that, in general, those programs do not necessarily include this element in their courses. Instead, their emphasis has been verbocentrist, which focused on the linguistic and functional dimensions of communication. This approach has also been contested by other authors who have stressed the multidimensional nature of interactions and the need to address the several components and modes of communication (Álvarez Valencia, 2018, 2021; Kress, 2006; Poyatos, 2002; Van Leeuwen, 2005).

As students of a teacher formation program, we have identified that the few times our professors mentioned aspects of the nonverbal communication, it was in *Integrated Skills in English and French* (which are the courses related to language skills at the university) classes where teachers mentioned the relation between the levels of proximity and the way some gestures or manners may vary in each country. We must say that, in general, courses had a lack of a curricular, theoretical and pragmatic inclusion of the NVD. Hence, the need to include what the NVD implies would help teachers and students to understand other ways of communication apart from the traditional verbocentric ones.

Therefore, this work aims at establishing the role of the NVD in the comprehension of misunderstanding in intercultural interactions. Our study adopts a multimodal perspective of communication (Kress, 2006; Van Leeuwen, 2006) and follows the principles of intercultural language teaching (Byram et al. 2002; Kramsch, 1998; Liddicoat, 2008). Particularly, we embrace Poyato's (2002) tripartite system of communication (language, paralanguage, kinesic) complemented with some of Byram's IC (2002) components such as factual and procedural knowledge about other cultures. Besides, language learning is conceived as an act of cultural integration, interpretation and engagement within a dynamic, multidimensional and chronotropic view of culture (Alvarez, 2021).

Thus, our research adopted a mixed methods approach and case study design. The participants were last year students from language teaching formation programs of different universities in Colombia. In total, 280 students answered a survey about their perceptions on NVD and from that population a sample of eleven students were selected to participate in an interview (six women, five men) in order to reach a deeper understanding of their ideas, conceptions and experiences regarding the NVD and the nature of intercultural conflict and miscommunication.

Qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods were used based on a quantitative survey and a semi-structured interview conducted with a sample of students across various language programs in Colombia. This study aims to broaden the understanding of the impact of nonverbal communication on the interpretation of conflicts and misunderstandings in intercultural communication. It examines the beliefs and perspectives of final-year undergraduate English language students on this matter. Furthermore, it encourages individuals enrolled in teacher education programs to contemplate the insights provided by the study's participants on comprehending conflict and misunderstanding in intercultural communication.

Justification

There are varied forms to approach language teaching. Nevertheless, teachers keep focusing exclusively on a verbocentric view of language teaching ignoring the larger scope and complex dimensions that language entails (Álvarez, 2021). That biased view forgets that people appeal to non verbal semiotic resources in order to make meaning. Precisely, those manifestations change across cultures and these are usually forgotten in the EFL and ELT classrooms. Therefore, addressing the phenomenon of the role of the non-verbal dimension in language teacher formation has the potential to contribute in different aspects to the present issue. First, it deepens into subjects concerning intercultural communication and the NVD area addressed in previous studies. In addition, this study could encourage ELT teachers and institutions to include the NVD in the classroom routine in the curriculum, and it has the potential to open the gate to future discussions about the integration of the NVD in what concerns language teaching, multimodal communication and intercultural communication in language teaching formation.

To start, even though there are some studies concerning the NVC (such as Matsumoto, 2018 on miscommunication during intercultural encounters or Nemati, 2019 on students attitude towards NVD and privacy) scarce attempts have been made to shed light on the blurry landscape of the NVC and its role in language teacher formation. It is relevant, therefore, to enhance preceding research to widen knowledge about the patterns of communication that go beyond the verbocentric ones and that deserve to be considered in the classroom.

We hope that, with our research, the NVD might be taken into account in the ELT area as a crucial subject that could help teachers and learners in the process of meaning making in second language acquisition. We expect that our study will raise awareness of this dimension in the curriculum of institutions, which could ultimately lead to increased visibility, development, and exploration of NVC at a pedagogical and curricular level. By doing so, we hope to promote the integration of NVC into ELT programs.

Furthermore, little has been said about the integration among the NVD, intercultural communication and ELT programs. We expect that this study contributes to the discussion on how this consolidation might contribute to successful intercultural communication and the minimizing conflicts or misunderstandings. As Tzanne (2000, as cited in House et al., 2003) has highlighted, conflicts and misunderstandings can impede communicative encounters by make them unsuccessful, difficult or even impossible. It becomes necessary to think about alternative ways to approach NVD and to respond to the students' needs to learn about the non verbal realm in language learning in order to avoid interruptions, non understanding, misunderstanding or conflict that could affect the act of communication.

Our study also contributes in a personal way in different contexts. As researchers, this study taught us about research methodologies and how to gather data in order for its future discussion with the aim of comprehending the NVD importance in second language programs and putting it into practice. Moreover, as students, it made us realize about the void that exists in our bachelors degree program and that deserves to be filled in order to have a more complete learning experience. And as teachers, it helped us to be prepared to raise awareness on the NVD in academic contexts and in intercultural encounters, and to understand other multimodal ways of communication valid in language courses.

Research problem

Foreign language teaching programs have focused their attention on verbocentric aspects of language. According to Poyatos (1992) preservice teachers have been trained to instruct students to become merely linguistic users of foreign languages, so this loop does not let us enjoy the multidimensional nature of languages and their unlimited affordances based on their multiplicity of modes of communication. For him, students are missing listening, moving and visual decoding to be ready to confront a fully equipped speaker that understands all manifestations of communicative phenomena. We, as students and pre-service teachers, have been able to confirm this statement because only after starting this research, we learned about the non-verbal indicators that could provide us with a better understanding of messages during intercultural interactions.

Looking back throughout our education at Universidad del Valle, we noticed that teachers focus more on communicative aspects of language, prioritizing skills like listening, speaking, reading and writing, and that there is an absence in our formation regarding the nonverbal dimension. The few times teachers mentioned it, it was always in relation to the way foreigners perceive Colombians' way of giving affection. We are missing the potential it has at the moment of meaning making in some manifestations such as, gestures, body posture, gaze, and space management, which has been studied along with the role of speakers' cultural background in the interpretation of utterances (Poyatos, 2002).

We believe that it is very likely that in other universities of Colombia there is also an absence of training in the non-verbal dimension in the teaching of foreign languages. We find this worrying considering that according to Poyatos (1962) misunderstandings and conflicts in intercultural interactions happen not only because of a lack of background in the culture, but also because of a lack of interpretation of non-verbal elements. The result can be broken, limited and inefficient communication, meaning that both pre-service teachers and their students will not have a full understanding of the target language.

Therefore, this study describes the perceptions of final-year undergraduate students in Colombia regarding the role of nonverbal communication in generating conflict or misunderstanding in intercultural communication and it identifies the types of intercultural conflicts or misunderstandings associated with the nonverbal dimension that are present in the anecdotes narrated by final-year language education students in Colombia.

Objectives

General Objective

1. Establish the role of the nonverbal dimension in understanding conflict or misunderstanding in intercultural communication among final-year language education students in Colombian universities.

Specific Objectives

1. Describe the perceptions of final-year language education students in Colombia regarding the role of nonverbal communication in generating conflict or misunderstanding in intercultural communication.
2. Identify the types of intercultural conflicts or misunderstandings associated with the nonverbal dimension that are present in the anecdotes narrated by final-year language education students in Colombia.

Theoretical framework

Since our research aims to delve into pre-service language teachers' perceptions on the role of nonverbal communication in intercultural encounters and to identify the types of misunderstandings and conflicts in intercultural communication, this section covers three primary areas: nonverbal communication, misunderstanding and conflict and teacher education. The first part of this section addresses NVC from a multimodal perspective. The second part focuses on the phenomena of misunderstandings and conflicts in intercultural communication. The final axis explores the area of teaching education.

Multimodality and Nonverbal communication

According to Jewitt, Bezemer and O'Halloran, (2016), the definition of multimodality differs greatly, both among and within various academic fields and research practices where the term is frequently used. They define multimodality as the diverse range of communication modalities available to us for the purpose of creating meaning. Moreover, Kress and Van Leeuwen, (2001); and Álvarez Valencia, (2016), refer to multimodality from a semiotic perspective as the area that studies the creation, emergence, shaping and reproduction of semiotic resources which are created in social interaction.

Kress (2000) defines multimodality as the field responsible for examining the origin, generation, replication, and modification of semiotic resources. He argues that language teachers often focus solely on the words themselves as the primary way of conveying meaning. But nowadays, to fully understand a text, we need to consider other ways of communicating, the semiotic resources.

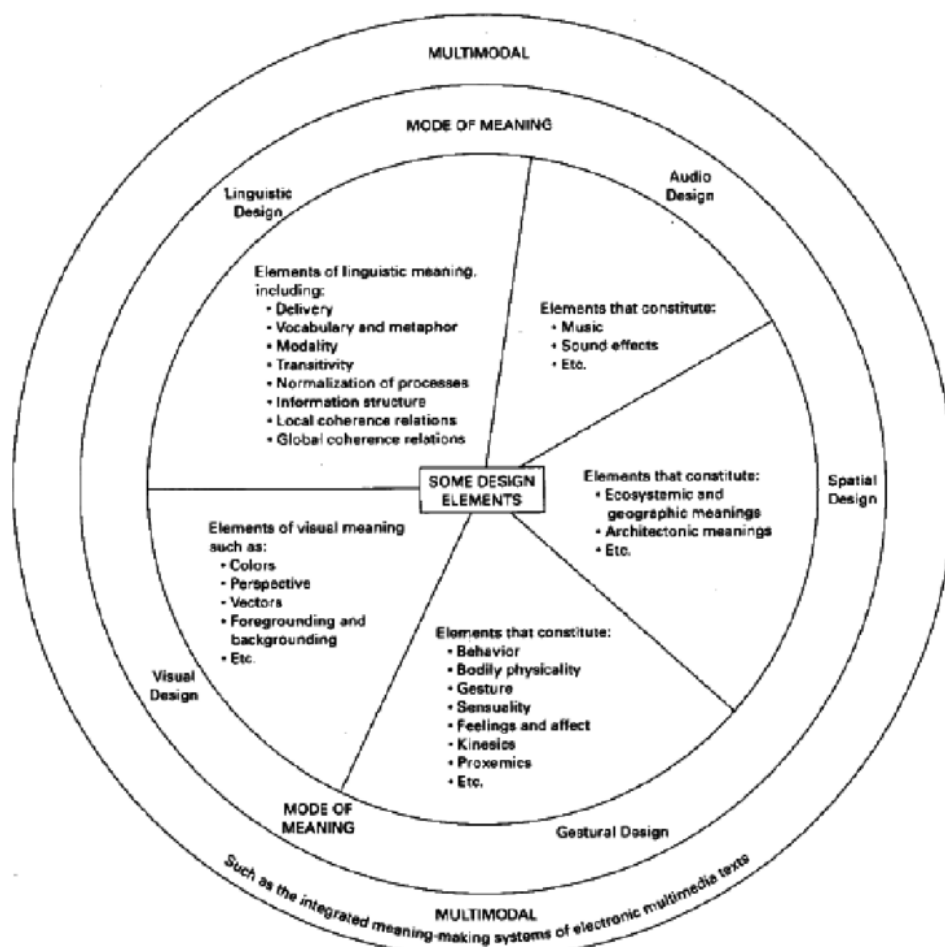
Here, we adopt Álvarez Valencia's (2016) concept of multimodality which is grounded on the field of social semiotics. A key concept in this approach is semiotic

resources, which are the actions, materials, and artifacts we use to communicate or make meaning. These semiotic resources can be manifested through physiological (such as facial expressions and gestures) or technological means -such as writing or using a computer- (Van Leeuwen, 2005; Álvarez Valencia, 2016, 2018, 2021). Semiotic resources are dynamic and socially emergent. They can be organized into modes of communication or modes of meaning, which are different ways of communicating through combinations of semiotic resources (Álvarez Valencia, 2016). Moreover, Alvarez (2021) refers to these resources as cultural semiotic resources, as they are created, embodied, performed, and transformed during communication interactions.

The New London Group (1996) posits that meaning can be created using combinations of semiotic resources, these combinations form modes of communication. Modes of communication are the ways in which people can infer and express meaning in communication. They propose five different modes of communication: linguistic, audio, spatial, gestural, and visual modes.

Figure 1.

Design elements of different modes of meaning



The New London Group, 1996.

In the context of language teaching, despite the potential for the multimodal approach to reshape curriculum, learning, and pedagogy, its study and pedagogical affordances have been scant (Álvarez, 2016, 2018). Kress (2010), Van Leeuwen, (2005) and Jewitt, (2006) argue that this approach enriches our understanding of communication and has significant implications for language and its role in different contexts. They emphasize the need to incorporate the multimodal approach of communication into language education and to explore its potential for enhancing language learning and teaching practices.

Hickson et al. (2013) and Matsumoto et al. (2013) share a consensus on the definition of nonverbal communication, which encompasses all behaviors and aspects of communication that do not involve verbal language (either written or spoken), such as body language, facial expressions, tone of voice, and other forms of expression. These authors sustain that NVC often appears in combination with verbal communication, as these two dimensions work together to create a more complete and nuanced message.

Furthermore, Argyle (1972) gives three communicative roles to the NVC: communicating inter-personal attitudes and emotions. The fundamental purpose of this function is to facilitate the negotiation of interpersonal attitudes, with the verbal channel primarily serving as a means for conveying informational content. Supporting verbal communication, wherein NVC is utilized to augment meaning through the use of bodily gestures. And replacing speech, which pertains to situations where speech is not viable, necessitating the establishment of alternative communication methods, such as NVC. The multifaceted nature of NVC, as described by Argyle (1972), highlights its capacity to not only support verbal communication, but also to replace speech in situations where it is not possible or practical. Thus, awareness and understanding of NVC can significantly enhance communication effectiveness in a wide range of contexts.

According to Argyle's (1972) framework, NVC can be manifested through eight distinct channels. These include:

- Facial expressions, whose main function is to express emotional states and attitudes
- Eye contact, which indicates interest or attention. It is a signal for the person being looked at and as a channel for the person doing the looking.
- Voice, it refers to the spoken word. It can reveal information from the person who speaks or it also serves to request information about its interlocutor.

- Gestures, the ones that sometimes complete verbal messages. When verbal communication due to environmental, phonological, emotional or cognitive conditions is impossible, gestures are the main source to obtain meaning
- Posture, which can communicate a person's level of comfort, confidence, mood or formality.
- Touch, which includes physical contact and it is related to sex or aggression as in some cultures touching can be synonym of harassment. Actions such as handshakes, hugs, or pats on the back, can signal warmth, support, or dominance.
- Spatial Behaviour, which refers to the physical distance between communicators or objects and can convey intimacy, aggression, or dominance.
- Appearance, which includes clothing, hairstyle, and other visual cues that can communicate social status, personality, or cultural affiliation.

All these channels of communication work together to create a shared understanding between communicators, allowing effective real-time communication and the exchange of information. Through them it is possible to know about the interlocutors' identity or personality.

In the same vein, Poyatos (2002) contends that foreign language learning in the classroom does not reflect the reality of actual language use, which often involves more than verbal aspects. In light of this, he suggests a three-part communication system, which includes:

- *Language*. It refers to the spoken or written words that we use during communication.

- *Paralanguage*. It is the collection of sounds that do not belong to the linguistic realm.
- *Kinesics*: This one includes conscious and unconscious gestures, mannerisms, and postures, which can be visual, audible, tactile, or kinesthetic. These can be used alone or in combination with words.

According to Poyatos (1992), from the aforementioned components of communication, paralanguage and kinesics make part of the NVD. In his proposal, there are ten realizations of this system (including the linguistic dimension and its diverse combinations), whereby individuals can use these modes of communication either as a set of supporting elements or independently during their interactions with others. These realizations are:

1. *Verbal language*: Some utterances, such as greetings spoken in a neutral tone, that do not require any additional marks or cues to be fully understood.
“Hello” or “good-bye” are examples of this realization.
2. *Verbal language - paralanguage*: messages that are softly qualified by paralanguage marks, but it is still the language part that conveys the meaning.
Like when changing intonation in the expression “*I didn’t know*” (an exaggeration in intonation could mean that the listener already knew its interlocutor wanted to be sarcastic about it)
3. *Verbal language-kinesics*: Certain words may be accompanied by kinesic illustrators that serve to complement the message being conveyed, but do not significantly alter its meaning. E.g. When saying “*more or less*” and adding a swinging movement of the hand, the kinesic illustrator contributes to the expression of the message, but the meaning remains largely unchanged without it.

4. *Verbal language-paralanguage-kinesics*. The simultaneous presence of paralanguage, kinesics, and words is indicative of the speaker's proficiency, exemplifying what is known as the "native repertoire. Expressions such as, "Oh la la" in French are often an example of this realization, as the speaker may use eye movements and a rising intonation to convey a desired meaning.
5. *Paralanguage*. It corresponds to the segmental or narial nonverbal utterances that accompanied kinesic behavior. An example of this realization can be found in the Spanish sound "jum" which produces a specific sound to convey a doubtful meaning.
6. *Paralanguage-verbal language*. This realization suggests that the meaning of a verbal message is clear by the paralinguistic qualifier. The paralinguistic part of the message carries more importance. E.g. The usage of irony in short phrases or the word "sí" in Spanish pronounced with low pitch can denote a cynical affirmation.
7. *Paralanguage-kinesics*. Based on each culture's repertoire of gestures, this realization corresponds to the alternance of linguistic elements and gestures to convey meaning. For example the common gesture colombians use to point out things with their mouths while raising intonation and pronouncing an "mmm" sound.
8. *Kinesics*. It refers to emblems (nonverbal behavior that can be taught because they are universal) like a "thumbs-up" sign meaning "OK" for many cultures. Deictics (nonverbal behavior that vary from communities) such as the "V" sign meaning "peace" for Americans but meaning you are insulting someone if done in the UK. Externalizers (reactions) like a surprise face gesture to convey astonishment. Self-adaptors (movements of our own body, raising a

leg or touching one's hair to flirt), body-adaptors (how far or how close we are to an object) and object adaptors (when touching objects, especially furniture in order to use them to complete one's message or to show one's mood, e.g. when sitting loosely on a chair).

9. *Kinesics-verbal language*. Some expressions require interlocutors to visually observe the accompanying gestures or representations, as without them it may be difficult to fully comprehend the intended meaning. Like nodding when one accepts something or shrugging when one shows disinterest. In these two examples the interlocutors necessarily have to look at the person to understand the complete message.

10. *Kinesics-paralanguage*. Messages in which paralinguistic elements are not the main part to obtain meaning as their meaning can still be effectively communicated without them. E.g. moving one's head side to side while humming to say "no".

Argyle (1972) and Poyatos, (1992, 2002) classified NVC differently. Argyle (1972) divides nonverbal cues into six channels: facial expression, eye contact, voice, gestures, posture, touch, spatial behavior, and appearance. Conversely, Poyatos (1992) proposes the triple structure of communication: language, paralanguage and kinesics. However, both authors acknowledge the intricate and meaningful role of nonverbal communication in social interaction.

Furthermore, as communication is multimodal and people might interact with people from different cultural backgrounds inside and outside the classroom; misunderstandings or conflicts can arise. NV cues can vary across cultures and what already has a established meaning in one's culture can have a completely different one in a foreign culture. Besides,

ambiguity and incongruence can also happen if there is no awareness of the importance of NVC in intercultural communication. In the following section we will discuss misunderstandings and conflicts in intercultural communication.

Misunderstanding and Conflict

Liddicoat (2009) argues that culture impacts communication at different levels (see figure 2 below). From an intercultural standpoint, Liddicoat (2009) explains that communication is comprehended as a social practice, rather than a mere transfer of information between individuals. Language, in this sense, is employed to foster and maintain social relationships, as opposed to being solely utilized for the purpose of conveying information.

Figure 2

Points of articulation between culture and language in communication

Culture Most apparent					Language most apparent	
world knowledge	spoken/ written genres	pragmatic norms	norms of interaction		norms of linguistic form	
↓	↓	↓	↓		↓	
culture as context	culture in general text structure	culture in the meaning of utterances	culture in the positioning of units of language		culture in linguistic and paralinguistic structures	

Liddicoat, 2009.

Liddicoat (2009) portrays in this figure the multiple points of intersection between language and culture in communication, spanning from the global level of common world knowledge that creates a framework for communication and interpretation, down to the individual level of specific language forms.

According to Hall (1959, 1981) and Zhu Hua (2011), intercultural communication occurs when individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds interact with one another. Moreover, Álvarez (2021) refers to intercultural communication from a multimodal pedagogic perspective as the process of meaning making which means the procedure of creating, exchanging, or negotiating meaning between individuals who belong to different social groups and possess varied identity affiliations.. Liddicoat (2009) argues that such encounters might lead to communication breakdowns. For Byram et al. (2002), intercultural communication should be characterized by mutual respect for individuals and recognition of their equal human rights, which serve as the democratic foundation for social interaction.

Jackson (2004) revises different definitions of Intercultural communication such as Müller-Jacquier (2004) who describes intercultural communication as the diverse methods of language and communication used by individuals from various cultural backgrounds when conversing face-to-face. Jandt (2007), states that intercultural communication “generally refers to face-to-face interactions among people of diverse cultures (p. 36).” Some of these definitions leave aside the possibility of virtual interactions like online-related ones. However, digital communication has been explored from the field of intercultural communication in language teaching (Clark & Gruba, 2010; Fernández, 2017; Kramsch & Ware, 2005; Potolia et al., 2011).

Later on, Samovar et al. (2010) give a more detailed definition, they refer to the exchange of ideas between individuals whose cultural perceptions and symbol systems are different enough to influence the way they communicate with each other. In turn, Jack and Phipps (2005), stress that intercultural communication is a set of actions in which individuals participate that involves dialogic and tangible interactions between members of different cultural groups.

Lustig and Koester (2013) address the importance of nonverbal messages in intercultural communication. They argue that NVC behaviors are unique to each culture and are not consciously recognized because members of a particular culture learned them from a very young age and people who do not belong to that culture have to learn them in order to understand and interpret messages. Therefore, the rules and norms of nonverbal communication in intercultural communication are deeply ingrained and often unconscious.

In this study, we embrace Álvarez's (2021) definition of intercultural communication. He explains that IC involves the creation, exchange, or negotiation of meaning between members of different social groups who identify with various aspects of their identity, such as environmental, linguistic, national, racial, ethnic, sexual, gender, religious, institutional, political, physical, and social differences. This view takes into account the individuals' socialization processes that shape their identity affiliations. The conventional interpretation of intercultural communication, which concentrates on interactions between people of different national and linguistic origins, is surpassed by this definition (Álvarez, 2021).

Two important concepts arise in this area. Misunderstanding and conflict. These concepts have been defined from different areas by various scholars over the years. We now examine some of these definitions focused on the field of communication.

Coupland et al. (1991) suggest that the term "miscommunication" has been inaccurately used to refer to any challenge or difficulty in communication. They argue that researchers often overlook communication problems because they tend to concentrate on the positive aspects of communication. Matsumoto (2018) agrees with this term and she adds that this term includes misunderstanding and non understanding.

Humphrey-Jones (1986) describes misunderstanding as a situation when a communication attempt fails due to a disparity between the intended meaning of the speaker and the perceived meaning of the hearer. This occurs when what the speaker aims to convey

is not in line with what the listener understands. Weigand (1999) asserts that misunderstandings happen when the recipient of a message does not accurately comprehend what the speaker aimed to convey, this results in a form of understanding that is either partially or completely different from the speaker's intended message.

Bremer (1996) and Bremer et al. (1996) conclude that miscommunication is generally utilized as a broad term that encompasses both non understanding and misunderstanding. Non understanding refers to a situation in which the listener realizes that they cannot make sense of part or all of an utterance. In contrast, misunderstanding occurs when the listener arrives at an interpretation that makes sense to them, but it differs from the intended meaning of the speaker.

We align to this definition because it provides a broader and more inclusive perspective of miscommunication, encompassing both non-understanding and misunderstanding. The distinction between non-understanding and misunderstanding is crucial because it allows for a more precise identification of the root causes of communication breakdowns. Additionally, this definition acknowledges that misunderstandings can occur even when the listener arrives at an interpretation that makes sense to them, which is an important consideration in intercultural communication where different cultural backgrounds and communication styles can lead to different interpretations (Clarck & Gruba, 2010; Kramsch & Ware, 2005)

Some authors mention misunderstanding and its relationship with NVC. According to Knapp et al. (2012) and Ntuli (2012), lack of knowledge or understanding about a particular culture can make people less attuned to the cues that convey meaning in certain behaviors, which may result in misunderstandings. Similarly, Quinn (1999) suggests that using or interpreting emblems (the use of hands to express a cultural meaning) outside of one's culture can lead to misunderstandings or communication breakdowns. This occurs when individuals

attempt to assign meanings to emblems based on their own culture instead of the culture in which the emblems originated (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). E.g. moving one's head to the right and the left directions meaning "no" in Colombia and many occidental countries. for Indians can signify "yes".

Various scholars have explored the term misunderstanding, but few have addressed what people do in order to overcome this situation. Therefore, scarce literature is found about this subject matter. Bernstein, (2016) based on Schegloff et al. (1977) and Hirst et al. (1994) mentions some sequences people go through when having misunderstandings in communication. First, the misunderstanding is noticed by one of the speakers. Then, the interlocutor asks for clarification by asking a question that lets the other participant know that the message was not clear. clarification request. Finally, there is a repair that usually consists of someone repeating or clarifying what he/she just said.

Due to scarcity of resources about how misunderstanding is dealt with, we have agreed on the terms "clarification-request-repair" proposed by Bernstein (2016) and we have included "avoidance" as strategies to solve misunderstandings in intercultural communication. Avoidance here is understood as the willingness to ignore there is a misunderstanding.

Bennett (1979) as cited in Bührig and Thijs (2006) proposes the "empathy strategy" in order to deal with intercultural misunderstanding. This strategy consists in acknowledging that people are different and to be willing to change one's perspective to a different one. He also describes this strategy in six steps that develop empathy.

- Assuming difference, which refers to accepting that everybody is different.
- Knowing self, refers to the recognition of one's identity.
- Suspending self, means to expand one's identity with the other.

- Allowing guided imagination, refers to the ability to look someone else's reality by using imagination.
- Allowing emphatic experience, means to openly feel what others are feeling.
- Re-establishing self, means implementing empathy by understanding the other person.

According to Matsumoto (2018a), in English as a lingua franca classrooms, misunderstandings are typically resolved through active involvement of all participants, rather than assigning responsibility to one party. ELF interlocutors engage in strategies such as checking, monitoring, and clarifying meanings to achieve mutual understanding. Besides, Matsumoto (2018a) also explains that laughter can serve as an indicator of misunderstanding and a strategy to deal with it. Particularly in the cases in which students cannot make sense of an utterance or when they cannot make themselves understand laughter appears as a mark of misunderstanding. The teacher notices the problem and repair it.

Regarding the concept of conflict, Richmond and McCroskey (2010) describe it as a more intense version of a personalized disagreement. They argue that when a disagreement becomes personalized, it can result in verbal aggression and ultimately lead to a conflictual interaction. Pološki Vokić and Sonton (2010) affirm that conflict is an interactive process that arises from incompatibility, disagreement, or dissonance within or between social entities, such as individuals, groups, or organizations. This process can be seen as a behavioral and linguistic expression of negatively affective dissent.

To Putnam and Poole (1987) conflict is the result of interdependent individuals who perceive opposition in goals, aims, and values, and recognize that the other party may interfere with their realization. Moreover, Putnam (2013) recollects different definitions of conflict. For example, Mortensen (1974) states that conflicts are “an expressed struggle over incompatible interests in the distribution of limited re-sources” (p 93). Adler et al. (2013)

define conflict as a struggle between at least two people who have different goals.

Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001) expand the definition to intercultural conflict. They describe it as a situation where at least two parties from different cultural backgrounds experience emotional frustration due to a perceived clash of values, norms, goals, face orientations, scarce resources, processes, or outcomes during an interactive situation.

Based on these definitions of conflict, we agreed on Ting-toomey and Oetzel's (2001) definition of conflict and we understand it as a situation that happens with at least two participants that interact (Adler et al. 2013). This situation is noticeable and can be expressed through physical and linguistic behaviors and linguistic channels (Pološki Vokić & Sonton 2010)

Satdler (2019) proposes two levels of conflict that are usually interconnected: macro and micro. She describes the macro level as those that emerge from political issues that arise due to socio-political factors or perceived injustices. These conflicts may involve social exclusion, ethnic reconciliations, cultural claims to rights and belonging, historical racial injustices, and even feelings of intercultural hatred. Overall, macro-level conflicts tend to be complex and multifaceted, requiring an understanding of the various underlying factors that contribute to their development.

On the other hand, the micro level conflicts are primarily concerned with interpersonal and interactional conflicts between individuals, as opposed to conflicts that involve political or governmental institutions. These types of conflict can escalate and become a macro conflict.

Jackson (2014) classifies conflict in intracultural, interpersonal, intergroup, organizational, intercultural, interracial, interethnic, international, interreligious, intergenerational, gender and multiplex conflict situations. We address here the intracultural conflict, the interpersonal conflict and the intercultural conflict due to the relevance for our

research. Intracultural conflict can be defined as a dispute that arises between individuals who share the same cultural and linguistic background. Interpersonal conflict refers to a disagreement or dispute between two or more individuals, regardless of whether they share a similar linguistic and cultural background. Finally, using Ting-Toomey's (2001) definition, intercultural conflict can be defined as the feeling of emotional dissatisfaction due to the perceived mismatch of values, norms, face orientations, goals, limited resources, procedures, and/or consequences between at least two parties from distinct cultural backgrounds in an interactive context.

Some scholars (Blake, 1964; Hall, 1969; Wilmot & Hocker, 2010) have identified different forms in which people deal with conflict. These conflict styles do not make reference to intercultural conflict.

Blake and Mouton (1964) and Hall (1969) propose five categories of conflict styles. The competing style: when people carry more about their own goal rather than the other's. The accommodating style: when the person sacrifices his/her own goals. The avoiding style: behaviors are ignored and not given much importance. The collaborating style: parties work together to look for a solution to the situation. The compromising style: in which there is a give and take. Leading parties to not reach their goals.

Wilmot and Hocker (2010) identified five distinct styles of conflict resolution. Even though the author does not go deep into them we can infer that: avoidance (is when parties in a conversation fail to achieve their goals), accommodation (one party relents in a conversation), competition (one party benefits), passive aggression (when a speaker shows hostility), direct aggression (confrontation), compromise (parties negotiate meaning but it fails to meet interlocutors' original goals), and collaboration (parties work together to achieve a common goal).

Moreover, Hammer (2004, 2005) proposes five intercultural conflict resolution styles: the discussion style, in which the dialogue and emotions help to the resolution of conflict. The engagement style, which follows a more direct and confrontational approach in order to demonstrate sincerity to resolve the conflict. The accommodation style is characterized by the use of emotional restraint, silences and avoidance. Sometimes people who use this style of conflict might use third parties in order to solve the conflict. The dynamic style refers to the strong verbal or nonverbal usage of feelings to express disagreements.

We align with Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2013) classification of conflict. They propose three ways to approach conflict : avoiding, competing and cooperating. Among each category we observe facework strategies, conflict expressions, and conflict rhythms.

Figure 3

Conflict Styles, Facework Strategies, and Conflict Expressions of Three Conflict Style Approaches

<i>Avoiding</i>	<i>Competing</i>	<i>Cooperating</i>
Pretend	Defend position	Apologizing
Give in/yield	Emotional expression	Remain calm
Involve third party/outflank	Aggression	Give respect
Maintain harmony	Coercing	Problem solve
Passive aggression (involves competitive elements)	Deceiving	Private discussion
Withdraw	Ingratiating	Ritualistic facework
Delay	Direct facework	Indirect facework
	Dominating	Compromising
		Integrating

Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2013).

Avoiding suggests the usage of passiveness to solve the conflict. Some people who adopt this method might opt to disengage from the scenario or decline to participate in any conversation. Competing indicates that the person expresses his/her opinions by taking a stand in active conversation. Some people use aggressive tactics to win an argument or get

what they want. And Cooperating, suggests the mutual cooperation of the parties in order to solve the conflict. People who use this method may concentrate on comprehending the other person's point of view and seeking areas of agreement. (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2013)

In the first approach. We find: pretend, it includes acting as if the problem is not there or is not significant. Give in/yield, according to Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2013), Yielding means giving up on the issues or giving in. Outflank is when a third party is involved to solve the conflict. Maintain harmony, suggests to maintain a positive relationship with the other person, even if the conflict isn't resolved. Passive aggression, refers to using subtle actions against the other party. Withdrawing requires separating oneself physically or emotionally from the conflict. And delay, refers to waiting for a later and more suitable time to discuss the conflict. Deceiving, refers to when false messages are used to manage the conflict.

In the second approach, there are: defend position, which involves holding a firm position on an issue. Emotional expression, entails expressing emotions about the conflict without necessarily tackling the root cause. Aggression, involves using forceful or intimidating tactics to avoid conflict. Coercing means forcing the other party to change. Deceiving is when false messages are used to manage the conflict. Integrating, involves using flattery or praise to win favor or approval from other parties. Direct facework, refers to groups of communication behaviors that are employed to maintain one's self-image while also supporting, challenging, or threatening the image of the other person. And dominating, involves using one's power or influence over the other person.

Finally, in the third approach: apologizing, involves acknowledging one's mistake and expressing regret for one's behavior. Remain calm, refers to maintaining composure and avoiding defensiveness or heightened emotions during a conflict in order to solve it peacefully. Private discussion involves having a private conversation to communicate openly and build trust with the other person. Ritualistic facework, demands utilizing cultural or

social norms to manage conflict and maintain relationships. Compromising, people who use this strategy may be willing to make concessions to achieve a resolution that satisfies both parties. Integrating, means finding a creative solution to the conflict that satisfies both parties through brainstorming and thinking outside the box. Giving respect, concerns a situation where individuals show consideration for the other person's perspective and feelings, even if they disagree. And problem-solving, means working together with the other person through collaboration in order to find a mutually acceptable solution to a conflict.

Misunderstandings and conflicts are natural situations that can occur in intercultural encounters. As foreign language teachers, we constantly interact with different cultures. Due to the importance of this matters within our research, in the next section, we adresse teaching education.

Teaching Education

We would like to start by discussing the topic of teachers' education from its historical progress. The first universities were founded on the knowledge of wise people who shared their ideas to those who wanted to listen to them and open spaces for debate and generate knowledge (Altbach, 2004). For many years, teaching was perpetuated by transmitting knowledge through texts and the teacher's mastery. However, in the 21st century, teachers are expected to be effective and critical practitioners (Singh et al., 2020; Kumaravadivelu, 2008). It is crucial for teachers to possess two types of fundamental knowledge: content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. The former refers to a teacher's expertise in the subject matter, while the latter encompasses practical strategies for teaching and learning.

Teaching education is generally seen as the process by which individuals acquire the necessary knowledge, and competencies to become effective educators. This implies formal preparation through programs or courses designed for aspiring teachers involving the

pedagogical, psychological, and subject-specific skills (Crandall, 2000). Here, we will focus on language teaching education (LTE), which is the area that concerns us.

Historically, language teaching education programs have typically been situated within departments of applied linguistics, being LTE the primary focal point of the field. In the previous ten years, the theories and practices used by schools when teaching the different subjects they offer, has significantly influenced the education of both pre-service and in-service language teachers. This influence has become stronger and has played a major role in shaping the direction of language teacher education (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford 1997; Crandall 1995, 1996). Crandall (2000) calls LTE a microcosm of teacher education; an analogy that sees LTE as a tiny universe of specific knowledge from teacher education. He also captures four of the trends encountered in language teacher education that derive from theory and practice used at schools in subjects different from languages. Here we mentioned each trend.

“First, there is a shift from transmission, product-oriented theories to constructivist, process-oriented theories of learning, teaching, and teacher learning.” (Crandall, 2000, p. 35). Teaching methods were focused on transmitting knowledge from teachers to students, with teachers expected to follow established practices (Richards, 1990; Widdowson, 1997). This approach did not consider the active role of teachers in constructing meaning or their decision-making processes (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). However, there has been a move towards constructivist theories, which emphasizes on the active participation of teachers. In this perspective, teachers are seen as a valuable source of knowledge. There is increasing attention to understanding teacher cognition (how teachers think and understand their teaching), the role of reflection in teacher development, and the importance of teacher inquiry and research in teacher education and development programs (Crandall 1994; Freeman & Johnson, 1998)

“Second, there is a growing sense that language teacher education programs have failed to prepare teachers for the realities of the classroom.” (Crandall, J, 2000, p. 35). Trend two, suggests that language teacher education programs have not adequately prepared teachers for the realities they face in the classroom (Lave 1988). As a result, efforts are made to transform teaching by focusing on the specific cognitive processes and practical skills of teachers in real classroom settings. Crandall (2000) presents the idea to bridge the gap between theory and practice by creating meaningful connections throughout the teachers education programs, aiming to ensure that teachers are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed for their teaching contexts

In consequence, it is to recognize that there are significant differences in learners, programs, curricula, materials, policies, and socio-cultural environments that teachers are likely to encounter throughout their careers and emphasize the importance of collaborative partnerships between different stakeholders in education to enhance teaching and learning experiences (Crandall 1994; Darling-Hammond 1994).

“Third, there is a growing recognition that teachers’ prior learning experiences play a powerful role in shaping their views of effective teaching and learning and their teaching practices.” (Crandall, 2000, p. 35). This trend highlights the impact of teachers' previous learning experiences on their views and practices in teaching. Some authors (Freeman & Richards 1996; Johnson & Johnson, 1994; Richards & Lockhart 1994) point out that these preconceived notions are resistant to change. Exposing the importance of creating awareness of prior learning experiences, and providing practical interactions and reflection opportunities throughout the program is a key. Freeman (1996) suggests that teachers can transition from their initial teaching philosophy to a more informed approach. He calls this Inter-teaching and consists of implementing self-reflection, understanding of language learning and effective teaching processes.

The fourth and last trend, suggests that teaching should be considered a profession that requires constant updating like medicine or law (Crandall, 2000). Teachers should have the opportunity to contribute to educational theories and have control over their professional development, rather than just attending short training programs. It is important for teachers to engage in activities like observing other teachers, conducting research, and participating in ongoing training that lasts for a longer time. In this way, teachers can continue to improve their skills and knowledge (Crandall, 1994; 1996; Darling-Hammond, 1994).

Dissolving, breaking and improving these trends in the individual development of in-service and pre-service teachers would imply a very positive change for LTE. Another view that contributes to the improvement of LTE is Richards' (1990) proposal, he asserts that effective teaching relies on the application of relevant theories, the creation of thoughtful instructional designs and strategies for language learning, and the study of current classroom dynamics.

Furthermore, Kumaravadivelu's (2008) postmethod concept proposes that teachers should be allowed to plan and find their 'own' way of teaching. Not following artificial, foreign and imposed instructions, which are usually far from their own context. There is a set of principles about this pedagogy and the ideal characteristics and roles that learners, teachers and teacher educators would have in the postmethod (Kumaravadivelu, 2001; 2006).

Kumaravadivelu' (2001) first postmethod principle is called pedagogy of particularity, which implies the pursuit of particular objectives in a specific context with concrete future horizons and where harmony among specific groups of participants is expected. The second, is the pedagogy of practicality which is seen as the bridge that connects theory and practice to each other, and its function is to endow researchers and teachers equal roles and power in decision-making. The latter is the pedagogy of possibility, that helps all language practitioners to reach the level of reflection on issues of race, class, power and domination,

and encourages them to question the status quo and try to improve the current situation through negotiation and cooperation.

Following this vein, the role of teachers in the context of postmethod pedagogy is crucial. They are expected to embody autonomy, which Kumaravadivelu (2001) identifies as the heart of postmethod pedagogy. Postmethod encourages teachers to rely on their existing knowledge and cultivate a reflective approach to their teaching. Reflection, as discussed by Bartlett (1990), goes beyond mere thought and encompasses an examination of day-to-day classroom practices and the institutional framework. It requires a significant shift in thinking and an examination of personal teaching beliefs. Action research is an example of an important tool within the reflective process since it involves taking practical action to address classroom issues. Teachers can conduct action research in their own classrooms through the cycle suggested by Richards and Farrell (2005). It includes identifying a problem or issue, gathering relevant information, designing a strategy, implementing the strategy, and observing its effects.

Ultimately, postmethod teachers are encouraged to embrace autonomy, engage in reflective practices, and employ action research to enhance their teaching and gain insights into their own professional growth.

Without communication there would be no language, and without language there would hardly be education. That is why we consider the concept of communicative competence proposed by Hymes (1967) an important key in language teaching. He presents it in the form of an acronym of the word SPEAKING and consists of a group of factors that contribute to effective communication. The meaning of each letter is the following:

- "S" stands for setting and scene, encompassing the physical, social, and cultural context.
- "P" represents participants, considering their roles, relationships, and social status.

- "E" denotes ends, referring to the goals and intentions of the communication.
- "A" represents act sequence, addressing the structure and organization of communication.
- "K" stands for key, involving the tone, style, and cultural norms shaping communication.
- "I" represents instrumentalities, the linguistic and non-linguistic resources used.
- "N" denotes norms, referring to the social and cultural rules governing communication.
- "G" stands for genre, encompassing specific communicative events or types.

Together, these components provide a comprehensive framework for understanding and analyzing communication in diverse cultural and social contexts. These eight elements must answer the following questions: where and when, who and to whom, for what, what, how, in what way, beliefs, and what type of discourse.

Finally, as teachers interact constantly with their students and they might belong to different cultures it is important to mention intercultural competence (IC) proposed by Byram (1997; 2021). Byram (2021) presents a framework for planning instruction and evaluation rather than a model of learning. The intercultural competency paradigm emphasizes critical cultural awareness as the main educational component, alongside knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The goal is to develop an intercultural speaker who can engage with others, accept different worldviews, mediate between them, and be aware of differences in judgment. Byram's model (2021) includes several key aspects:

- Attitudes of openness and curiosity (*savoir être*): A speaker should adapt these attitudes to avoid judgment or skepticism towards the meanings, beliefs, or actions of interlocutors from various sociocultural groups.

- Skills of interpreting and relating (savoir comprendre): The ability to explain customs or traditions from the target culture while connecting them to elements of one's own culture.
- Skills of discovery and interaction (savoir apprendre/faire) : The capacity to learn new cultural customs and knowledge and apply one's intercultural skills effectively in engagement and communication.
- Critical cultural awareness/political education (savoir s'engager): Encouraging critical evaluation of one's own and others' cultural practices, perspectives, and products.

In summary, Byram's (2021) model aims to cultivate intercultural competency through knowledge, attitudes, and skills to promote effective communication and understanding between individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.

In summary, these perspectives shed light on how teachers and students' backgrounds influence their teaching and learning process since these backgrounds are constantly present in the classroom and are perceived by both parties. Forming teachers to be prepared to confront situations of intercultural communication is important to enjoy a good educational process and to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts.

Literature review

Background research

The present section aims to establish the relationship among the three key areas of our study, namely nonverbal communication, intercultural communication, and misunderstanding and conflict. Extensive literature exists on these three areas across various fields including psychology (Spapé et al. 2019; Maher & King 2020), sociology (Wei, 2013; Hussein & Mahmood, 2019), business and economics (Goman, 2008; Primachev & Aleshina, 2021), and sciences (Holle et al. 2010; Macedonia, & Knosche, 2011), among others. Nonverbal communication, intercultural communication and misunderstanding and conflict in the domain of education are meaningful to teach and learn from different and one's culture. Nevertheless, this paper focuses on the field of language teaching education which is the area that focuses on the training of second language teachers and all the processes within involved. Despite our efforts to locate previous studies that concentrate on the role of NVC in pre-service teachers in language teaching education, the majority of them center on in-service teachers. In this literature review we present 16 articles that are related with the objectives of our research.

Nonverbal communication

In the area of language teaching education, some authors have stressed the potential benefits of NVC in language learning (Álvarez Valencia, 2022; Poyatos, 2002; Quinn, 1999). Among the themes addressed in this area we can list some such as the study of NV components on vocabulary development (Rémi & Smotrova, 2017; Kaplan-Rakowski, & Loranc-Paszylk, 2019), English class effectiveness (Ananda et al., 2020; Wang, 2015;

Sutiyatno, 2018), the relevance of gestures in the classroom (Dahl & Ludvigsen, 2014; Moradi & Ghaemi, 2014; Matsumoto & Mueller, 2016), the use of NVC to improve communicative practices (Nemati, 2019) and particularly for the interest of our study, articles that focus on English teaching practices (Matsumoto & Mueller, 2016; Özmen, 2010; Rémi & Smotrova, 2017; Smotrova & Lantolf, 2013). For this section, we have categorized the studies in NVC in English Language Teaching and NVC in the areas of language teaching and language teaching education.

NVC in English Language Teaching

Learning and teaching a language require being aware of the different forms people communicate. NVC is considerably important in English language teaching. Due to this value, we present studies that describe the role of NVC in language teaching and its impact on language learners.

Dahl and Ludvigsen (2014) conducted a study to explore the impact of gestures on listening comprehension by using video. Participants were seventh and eighth grade students, 28 native English speakers from the United States and 48 foreign language students of English from Norway. To collect data a drawing task and a questionnaire from a video were needed. Coding and transcribing were used to analyze data. The results indicated that while gestures were not particularly relevant for native speakers, non-native learners were able to demonstrate recall and comprehension of English information similar to that of native speakers through drawings. Therefore, this research suggests that NVC manifestations, such as gestures, can have a positive effect on second language learning.

Similarly, Ananda et al. (2020) examined the nonverbal behavior of an English teacher from the United States and the potential impact of teacher's NVC on 31 high school students in an Indonesian classroom. This study was based on Schmitz's (2012) theory in which NVC is a process that involves generating meaning through actions rather than words. In this qualitative study, data was collected using observation, interviews, and questionnaires. The results revealed that the teacher used three types of NVC while teaching: kinesics, (gesture, emblems and illustrators, head movements, posture, eye contact, and facial expression), proxemics, (distance with the students), and vocalics (pitch, rate, verbal fillers, and volume). The students reported feeling happy and motivated to learn, indicating that NVC in language classes can contribute to students' motivation in a second learning environment.

In the same vein, Wang (2015) explored the role of nonverbal behaviors in the teacher-student relationship in one English class in China. This paper is based on Multimodal Analysis and Systemic Functional Linguistics, which means that any utilization of language can serve to interpret certain aspects of meanings concurrently (Halliday, 2001). The only participant of this study was an English teacher from China. The research utilized case study and observation techniques to collect data via a classroom English teaching video. The findings of this research reveal the significant role of nonverbal communication in classroom pedagogy and student-teacher interaction. According to this article, teacher's nonverbal communication (nodding, head shaking, pointing at an artifact, and pointing at a person.) can make the classroom feel welcoming, motivate students to participate, and enhance their cognitive abilities. Therefore, teachers should also be conscious of their nonverbal communication since this helps students encourage their own learning process.

Another research that explored the effectiveness of NVC in English classes is Sutiyo (2018). This quantitative study involved 76 second-year students of informatic

department from a University in Indonesia. Data was collected through a questionnaire and one English language achievement exam. Results showed that connecting verbal (speech, vocabulary) and nonverbal communication (gestures, facial expressions, body movement, eye contact) yielded a significant positive effect on students' English comprehension and motivation. This study proves again the importance of paying attention to NVC in the classroom and the importance of highlighting it in class.

Overall, these studies provide evidence for the relevance of NVC in language teaching education, as it can positively impact students' motivation and learning outcomes. Despite the significant contributions of the previous research, these aforementioned studies did not involve pre-service teachers. Therefore, hereunder some studies we could find involving pre-service teachers.

NVC in English Language Teaching at University level

Future teachers of English language should be aware of NVC and its importance inside and outside the classroom, and before and after finishing their formation programs. For this reason, we address articles related to NVC in ELT with pre-service teachers.

Özmen (2010) studied the potential of acting courses to improve nonverbal behaviors and help pre-service teachers in Turkey to find their identity. 10 male and 34 female ELT pre-service teachers enrolled in a creative drama course participated in this research. In this mixed-method study the author conducted interviews and asked the participants to write journals, reflections and essays on their own practice as teachers. Results indicate that participating in an acting course can be beneficial for pre-service teachers in terms of improving their nonverbal communication skills (body movement) and professional identities (awareness in certain skills and attitudes, control of communication process, autonomy on use

of personal resources, self-confidence and self-esteem) . This study followed the idea that teachers' programs should pay more attention to nonverbal aspects in order to promote teacher's effective teaching practices

Smotrova and Lantolf (2013) carried out a study about the function of gesture in lexically-focused L2 instructional conversations which are the ones are derived in the classroom after some explanations of a topic. Two nonnative English teachers and 14 EFL students in Ukraine participated in this study. This paper is grounded in Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural psychology . Data was collected through over two hours of video recording of two EFL classrooms and their transcriptions. The findings demonstrated that some gestures enacted by teachers such as hands, posture, head movements, and gaze within ELT classrooms fulfill a pedagogical function. Gestures enable students to comprehend language structural elements like phrasal verbs that require the use of non verbal communication to be fully understood. The author remarks the importance of gestures in teaching and learning a second language in order to facilitate lexical explanations.

Furthermore, Matsumoto and Mueller (2016) conducted a study to investigate the functions of gesture in teaching and learning a second language in a course of English grammar at an American university. The present study integrates the principles and analytical approaches of conversation analysis from a Vygotskian-sociocultural perspective. The participants consisted of two groups of 10 students; each with varying levels of grammar proficiency, namely beginner and advanced. Data were collected through 56 hours of video recordings of the classroom interactions and were analyzed by using sequential analysis. The findings indicated that both groups enhanced their comprehension of L2 concepts regarding English tenses such as past perfect tense and grammatical concepts related to the past and future when their instructor utilized gestures. In addition, Matsumoto and Mueller

underscored the significance of teachers and future teachers recognizing the value of teachers-students NVC as an essential resource for L2 learning.

Similarly, Rémi and Smotrova (2017), drawing upon McNeill's theory (relationship between thinking, speaking and gesturing) and the concept of thinking-for-teaching (teacher's instructional decisions in classroom), aimed to investigate the importance of gestures in unplanned vocabulary explanations. This study was carried out in English classes with students of an English communication programme in the United States. One English teacher and 10 international students participated in this research. Data were collected through two sequential class meetings that were viewed and transcribed at regular speed and in slow motion in order to align speech and gesture. Findings indicated that gestures (using hands, imitations and pointing) within speech convey contextual information that contributes to students' comprehension of unknown vocabulary during unplanned vocabulary explanations. In addition, both authors pointed out the important implications for teacher education programs and the need to encourage the usage of semiotic systems such as gestures to enhance students' understanding of linguistic concepts and to improve the effectiveness of communication between teachers and students.

These previous studies underscore the significance of NVC in English teaching programs or when working with pre-service teachers. These studies make evident that such programs should give more consideration to the multimodal nature of language which teachers can employ to enhance their class performance.

Intercultural Communication

Since English classrooms might hold students from all over the world and each student has diverse cultural backgrounds and identities, it is paramount to address

intercultural communication to understand the ways these dimensions operate in real-time interactions among people from different cultural and social origins. In the following section we present literature about this subject matter.

Numerous studies have been conducted in the field of intercultural communication. However, in consideration of our research focus, the literature review will be restricted to two areas: the impact of IC on English Language Teaching classrooms (Merkin, 2009; Wei, 2013; Busà, 2015) and how verbal and nonverbal modes interact in intercultural conversations (Surkanmp, 2014; Liang, 2016; Noonkong et al. 2018).

Busà (2015) explored the impact of body movement on cross-cultural communication in the context of ELT classrooms. The study conducted two pilot experiments with 10 Italian learners of English at the University of Padova, Italy. The first experiment posited that second language students tend to transfer gestures from their first language to their L2, while the second experiment suggested that such transferred messages can lead to cross-cultural miscommunication when interacting with native speakers of the L2. The study employed video recordings of a classroom oral task and a survey to collect data. The results indicated an interconnection between gestures and speech. First, it shows that students usually transfer L1 emblems into the L2, in this study two Italian emblems (to say once upon a time and what are you doing) were studied. And second, findings demonstrate that students commonly carry over emblems (Italian emblems to say “a long time ago”, “I’m hungry”, “it’s hot in here”, “what’s the problem?”). from their first language to their second language.

Besides, the study raised awareness of the differences of gestures among cultures. Therefore, learners must be made aware of the globalized and intercultural world when learning a second language, and teachers should also take into consideration the diverse facets of language when instructing in classrooms in order to avoid cross-cultural misunderstanding.

Wei (2013) executed a study to enhance English teaching practices by investigating the functions of Western cultural nonverbal behavior in English classroom in China. Data was collected using a questionnaire with close-ended and open-ended questions. The participants were 50 English students in China. The data was subjected to qualitative and quantitative analysis. The findings of the study indicate that language teachers need to have an understanding of NVC and its impact on the transmission of language, as it encompasses more than just linguistic aspects. As a result, the study recommends the inclusion of NVC in the ELT agenda.

With regards to the importance of NVB (behaviours) in intercultural communication, Liang (2016) conducted a mixed-method study to investigate how verbal and nonverbal codes cohere during conversational activities about films and music in intercultural encounters. The study involved 13 university students, they had different nationalities, among them Haitian, Chinese, Taiwanese and Indonesian. Data were collected through video-recordings of English as a lingua franca classrooms which were transcribed by the students themselves. The findings revealed that a variety of synchronizing nonverbal communication strategies like the usage of gaze, laughter, and nods helped to establish mutual understanding in intercultural conversations.

Noonkong et al. (2018) carried out a study on nonverbal communication of Thai EFL students in making requests and refusals in intercultural contexts. The study employed classroom action research with 45 engineering students from a university in Thailand. Data were collected through questionnaires, role plays and interviews, utilizing a mixed-method approach. The Intercultural Interaction Model was used to study and teach students about eye contact, facial expressions, and touching. This model is a pioneering teaching approach in developing NVC in EFL classrooms and it promotes appropriate use of both expressions

and nonverbal cues. The findings indicated that the students improved their NVC skills, such as eye contact and facial expressions. Also, students were able to make more appropriate requests and refusals regarding their opinions in the classroom setting.

Cultures assign different meanings to gestures and behaviors. These studies highlight the crucial need to address an intercultural approach when learning and teaching a foreign language. Furthermore, some of the aforementioned papers illustrate how NVC can serve as a key factor in improving intercultural communication. Integrating an intercultural approach supported with NVC skills to train language teachers language learning and teaching can contribute to creating more competent and confident language learners and teachers.

Misunderstanding and Conflict

Misunderstandings or conflicts may arise while talking to people from different cultural backgrounds or when interacting in a foreign language (Poyatos, 2002). Given ELT's intercultural nature, the importance of addressing this subject matter has been increasing. This review aims to explore the aforementioned topics within language teacher education from different perspectives such as the attitude towards cultural conflict (Baiutti 2016; Nemati 2019) miscommunication in the classroom (Jia & Jia, 2017; Matsumoto 2018a, 2018b) and cultural awareness to avoid conflict (Cho & Larke, 2010; Ntuli, 2012; Benattabou 2020).

Baiutti (2016) conducted a study on the attitudes of L1 Italian students between 16 and 17 years old. The students participated in an annual study abroad program promoted by the Intercultura association in three regions of Italy. Data was collected through interviews. The research used qualitative empirical methods, and two distinct attitudes emerged from the analysis. The first attitude entails a passive approach of simply showing respect towards

others without actively engaging in meaningful interactions. The second attitude requires a more active and introspective approach to understand why the others act differently. The latter involves stepping back from one's own perspective and striving to understand why others may hold different views. By adopting this approach, language teachers can create a supportive and inclusive learning environment that encourages cultural diversity and mutual understanding.

Matsumoto (2018a) conducted a qualitative study that investigated the communicative functions of laughter during moments of miscommunication in English as a lingua franca encounters in two writing English classrooms at a University in the United States. Participants in each classroom were 19 students and two of their instructors. All participants' first language was other than English (Chinese, Korean, Arabic, Indian, Malaysian). The data collection process involved recording 45 hours of classroom interactions on video, taking observation notes during class, and conducting interviews with all participants. The current study employs a combination of sequential, multimodal analysis and ethnographic data analysis to prove that laughter can serve as an indicator of miscommunication, signaling to the teacher that there is a problem that needs to be addressed. This paper suggests that laughter can indicate when students do not know the meaning of a word and it can also help to build a collaborative environment in the classroom when there is a miscommunication problem. This study remarks the importance of NVC as a tool that can enable the teacher to repair any misunderstandings or conflicts in intercultural classrooms.

Additionally, Matsumoto (2018b) conducted another qualitative study that explored miscommunication moments and how they are repaired by third parties within an English as a lingua franca scenario. The study involved the participation of 19 students from India, China, South Korea, Malaysia, Kazakhstan, Ecuador, and Mexico and a teacher from Ukraine in the United States. Data were collected by using video recordings of a writing course that lasted

29 hours and interviews conducted with students and teachers. Combining sequential analysis and ethnographic information, the results of the study suggest that third parties can play an essential role in assisting with the miscommunication phenomena and can help to repair it effectively. Third parties can reformulate what an interlocutor said or negotiate phrases during classes. This finding is significant because it highlights the importance of peer support and collaboration in multilingual classrooms where different cultural backgrounds and languages are present. The study also suggests that miscommunication should be seen as a normal and useful process to build understanding of different cultures. This finding has pedagogical implications for teaching formation programs, emphasizing the need to incorporate intercultural communication skills into teacher training programs in order to help repair miscommunication situations.

Another author that carried out research on intercultural misunderstanding and conflict is Benabdelkader (2019). She explored intercultural communicative tendencies and strategies of language learners in situations of misunderstanding in an online classroom. The participants were six students of different nationalities (British, Belgian, French and Algerian) who communicated using English and French. Students interacted twice a week to follow conversation based on everyday topics proposed by the researchers. Data was collected through Skype video interaction recordings and observation procedures. Results showed that students commonly take on either the role of an expert or a novice when conversing with another language learner. It also showed participants utilized different means to construct meaning and achieve communicative goals, including strategies such as repetition and nonverbal cues (gestures, smile, looks, body movement) to request clarification and signal intercultural misunderstandings.

In conclusion, the reviewed literature sheds light on the importance of NVC, intercultural communication, and misunderstanding and conflict in language teaching

education programs. Even though they separately address language education, it is noticeable the need to do further research to complement the gap that exists in the integration of these areas. Besides, this data suggests how crucial it is for teachers, pre-service teachers and students to raise awareness on these topics in order to create better teaching-learning practices.

It is evident that nonverbal communication plays a significant role in intercultural communication, particularly in language education programs. Therefore, this research seeks to contribute to the existing literature by examining the role of nonverbal communication in the comprehension of misunderstanding and conflicts in intercultural communication.

Methodology

Design

Type of study

We adopted an explanatory sequential mixed method (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). According to Creswell and Creswell (2018) this method involves collecting and analyzing quantitative data first, followed by qualitative data to explain the quantitative results in greater detail. This design is considered explanatory because the initial quantitative data results are explained further with qualitative data, and sequential because the initial quantitative phase is followed by the qualitative one. A survey and a semi-structured interview were necessary to follow Riazi's (2016) model which combines qualitative and

quantitative approaches aiming to facilitate robust inferences about research problems and broaden the scope of survey data analysis.

Quantitative data resulted from the survey, which inquired about the importance of nonverbal elements within students' English teaching formation programs and about factors that can lead to intercultural misunderstanding and/or conflict. Qualitative data were gathered from 10 interviews concerning students' perceptions about the NVC and about their previous misunderstanding and conflict experiences. The survey also provided qualitative data coming from one open question that was included.

Context and Participants

This study required two data collection procedures: a survey and a set of interviews. Our participants were Colombian undergraduate students from majors in foreign languages who were in their last year of their academic formation. This condition was set because it is the stage where the students' basic disciplinary and linguistic-communicative training culminates and they focus on their teaching practicum and their undergraduate research. At this phase, it is assumed that students have the criteria, knowledge and experience to express their conception of NVC and its relationship with misunderstanding and conflict.

In relation to the sociodemographic characteristics of the participants, 204 students filled out the survey. All participants belonged to Colombian public and private Universities. Of these 204 participants, 124 identified themselves as females, 48 as males, five people indicate to belong to diverse gender identities, one preferred not to mention and 27 did not respond to this question.

Students' ages overall ranged between 21 and 25 years. 19 students were between 26 and 30 years of age. 11 students were between 16 and 20 years of age. The rest of the students were in different ranges of age. Regarding ethnicity 56.4% of our participants

identified themselves as mestizos, followed by white with 8.3%, Afrocolombian with 5.4%, and indigenous with 2.5%.

Regarding students' semesters in course, most of them were in 9th semester (34.3%), followed by 8th semester (27.5%), and 10th semester (14.2%). A smaller percentage of students were in 7th semester (7.4%) or beyond 10th semester (1%). Additionally, a group of respondents (15.7%) did not disclose their current semester.

Concerning the interview's participants, 10 out of the 204 students of the survey were chosen to present the interview. This selection was done due to the richness of detail in the answer to the open question of the survey, their availability and willingness. In this question, students were asked to narrate an experience regarding conflict or misunderstanding (see appendix 2). The group of the interview students consisted of six women, three men, and one transgender person, with eight participants between 21 and 25 years old and the remaining 2 students were between 26 and 30 years old. Nine students recognized themselves as mestizos and one student as "other". Five students were in eight semester, three attended ninth semester, the two remaining students indicated to be in seventh and tenth semester by the time they contributed to the interview.

It is relevant to mention that this study is part of a larger and international project conducted by Professor Jose Aldemar Álvarez Valencia from Universidad del Valle, Manuela Wagner from University of Connecticut and Mary Yakimowsky from Samford University. This project addressed the role of the NVC and interculturality in teacher education.

Data collection procedures

Survey

The first pilot of this survey was conducted in 2020. It focused on students from Universidad del Valle and it was carried out by professor José Aldemar Álvarez Valencia and Ángela Cordero.

The survey was done through the Qualtrics platform (see appendix 1) and it was composed of five parts with questions on a Likert scale and an open-ended question. The Likert scale is a type of closed-ended, forced-choice scale commonly used in questionnaires. It presents a range of answers that span from one extreme to another (Bertram, 2008). The questions intended to know students' perceptions about the components of communication and the NVC, its possible inclusion in language teaching programs, experiences regarding misunderstanding and conflict and sociodemographic aspects of the participants.

The first part inquired about the different components of communication and NVC and the level of importance given to them by the participants. We also asked if non verbal components of communication should occupy a space for teacher education programs.

In the second section, we presented the participants a list of NVC components and asked them to indicate the level of importance given in their teaching language program. Similarly, they were asked to indicate the degree of relevance those elements should have in teaching language programs.

The third section explored which elements (verbal and nonverbal) from a list of options influence conflict or misunderstanding in communication.

The fourth component examined the participants' experiences regarding the intercultural dimension and conflict and misunderstanding from their perspective as in-service teachers. It also included an open-ended question that invited the participants to

write about cases of intercultural conflict or misunderstanding due to differences in nonverbal communication cues.

Finally, the fifth section of the survey collected the participants' socio demographic information and included an invitation to participate in an interview if more information were required. They had to voluntarily write their names, phone number and email address.

Interview

The interview aimed to deepen into the participants' answers from the section of the anecdote in which they narrated an intercultural experience regarding NVC in which they have experienced misunderstanding or conflict. From the participants who expressed their willingness to be interviewed, a careful selection process was applied following Marshall and Rossman's (2011) purposeful sampling. This selection process aimed to ensure the collection of high-quality information by choosing 10 participants who met specific criteria.

To choose the participants of the interview, a review of the survey responses was conducted, focusing particularly on the section containing the anecdotes. The aim was to identify responses that described instances of misunderstanding or conflict specifically related to NVC and that required further elaboration. These selected responses were prioritized for the interview phase.

This semi structured interview (see appendix 2) was designed to last from 15 to 30 minutes. To contact the selected population we called them using the contact information from the survey. Once they accepted to be part of the interview, we sent them the interview protocol via email.

A piloting process was followed with one student from the survey participants. The interview protocol consisted of four questions about the NVC, intercultural communication and the generation of misunderstandings or conflicts. Finally, we used the Zoom platform to carry out the interviews.

Interviews were done in four weeks (from June the 7th 2022 until June the 24th 2022) and each of them lasted approximately 20 minutes. They were done in Spanish because it was the interviewees' mother tongue but for this study all interviews were translated into English from the authors of the study. Each interview started with a brief greeting and acknowledgement for participating in the research study. Then, we reminded the participants the session was being recorded and we started with a short reminder of what NVC was. Later, we asked our four research questions (see appendix 2) that were created based on our general and main objectives. At the end of the interview, we reminded the participants about the anecdote they told us in the survey and we asked them to widen it, in some cases participants told a different anecdote. We close the interview with a space for comments or questions. All interviews were recorded and transcribed for further analysis (see an example in appendix 4). In total we collected two and a half hours of audio reports.

Data analysis

All the survey data was moved from Qualtrics to Excel where it was cleaned, organized and prepared to be transferred to the 27th version IBM Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) for depuration and analysis. Descriptive statistics including frequency distributions and measures of central tendency (M) standard deviation (SD) and percentages were calculated to answer specific research questions in order to achieve our specific objectives: describe the perceptions of final-year undergraduate students in Colombia regarding the role of nonverbal communication in generating conflict or misunderstanding in intercultural communication and identify the types of intercultural conflicts or misunderstandings associated with the nonverbal dimension that are present in the anecdotes narrated by final-year language education students in Colombia.

To ensure validity, reliability (Fowler, 2014), and transparency (Marshall & Rossman, 2011) of the survey, an analysis of the same spreadsheet was performed individually and then, it was compared in pairs. This process involved eight researchers working together to review and validate the survey methodology and results. Moreover, our aim was to enhance the validity of the study by employing methodological triangulation, which involved comparing the outcomes from both the survey and the interview. This approach allowed us to effectively address the research questions and further reinforce the credibility of our findings (Patton, 1990).

The qualitative analysis focused on the survey's only open-ended question which was about previous experiences of conflict or misunderstanding. A thematic analysis matrix (see appendix 3) was created on a spreadsheet to categorize the types of conflict or misunderstanding, as well as their underlying causes and potential strategies for resolution. We codified the data in terms of elements presented in the anecdotes; four main categories were initially designated: cause of the misunderstanding or conflict, type of conflict or misunderstanding, nationality/origin of the interlocutors, and finally the strategy for handling the conflict or misunderstanding.

The first part aimed to identify the triple structure of communication (Poyatos, 1992) each anecdote would fit in: paralinguistics, kinesics or language. In order to establish which component would be selected we used theoretical definitions and examples based on the aforementioned author. The second section defined which semiotic systems involved in miscommunication or conflict were present in the participants' answers. Here there was a drop-down menu with the semiotic systems presented in Poyatos's (1992) proposal (body, adaptors, proxemics, paralinguistic elements, kinesics, phonology, morphology, among others). The choice of this element was related to the situation's category within Poyatos's triple structure. Once the last subcategory was established, the specific feature that had

caused the misunderstanding (loudness, personal space, lack of cultural knowledge, intonation, etc.) was described.

Subsequently, a category was created to establish if each anecdote narrated was a case of conflict or misunderstanding. Besides, we included the “undetermined” category because in some anecdotes it was difficult to say if it belonged to the conflict or misunderstanding category. Another subsection inquired about the participants' roles and identities in each anecdote. This subsection described the participants' nationalities, the origin of the interlocutor involved in the experience and who caused the misunderstanding or conflict in the situation. Three subcategories (misunderstanding, conflict and resolution method) were used to identify the misunderstanding (avoiding, clarification request, repair and undetermined) or conflict (avoiding, cooperating, competing and undetermined) resolution methods. Also, a category was established to define the subtype of conflict resolution strategy (pretend, give in, maintain harmony, among others).

Findings and discussion

In order to establish the role of the nonverbal dimension in understanding conflict or misunderstanding in intercultural communication among foreign language students in Colombian universities we have organized the data obtained from the survey and the interviews into two distinct sections. Each section aligns with our specific objectives which were: first, describe the perceptions of final-year undergraduate students in Colombia regarding the role of nonverbal communication in generating conflict or misunderstanding in intercultural communication; and, second, to identify the types of intercultural conflicts or misunderstandings associated with the nonverbal dimension that are present in the anecdotes narrated by final-year language education students in Colombia.

The importance of NVC in intercultural communication

The first objective focused on describing the participants' perceptions of the role of NVC in the generation of conflict or misunderstanding in intercultural communication. Here, we present the results coming from the interview and the survey.

For the purpose of answering our first objective, the first question of the interview was the following one: how important is to know about NVC aspects in order to avoid misunderstandings or conflicts in an interaction with a person from a different country? Results show that all ten participants from the interview agreed on the importance of knowing aspects about NVC. Some students even stressed the importance of this subject matter in English teaching and learning.

For example, participant 9 said:

“I would consider it crucial, not only to avoid causing a rift with someone from another country but also to understand one's immediate context. Because, as you say,

nonverbal communication consists of gestures, tone of voice, actions, and even the way we dress, and we experience this on a daily basis, even though many people are not aware of it. In other words, I believe that this is a topic that is worth teaching. It could even be taught in schools (...)"'. (Participant 9; Interview June 24th, 2022).

This participant suggests that many people are not fully aware of the impact of nonverbal communication, indicating the need to increase awareness and education on the subject. She proposed that teaching about NVC could be valuable, even recommending its inclusion in school curricula. The answer indicates that the participant believes in the importance of teaching about nonverbal communication from an early age. According to Álvarez Valencia (2016, 2018) and Argyle (2005), there is a need to broaden students' understanding of communication beyond verbal means, particularly in teacher education programs.

Participant 2 also mentioned the importance of NVC and how sometimes communication does not succeed because of the lack of knowledge on this matter:

I believe it is very important because it has a significant influence. Sometimes, when one only tries to express oneself through words, talking and talking, one often fails to convey what one truly is trying to communicate with the other person (Participant 2; Interview, June 6th, 2022).

The participant suggests that there are other factors that play a crucial role in effective communication. This implies understanding the significance of nonverbal cues, such as body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice. These nonverbal elements can often convey emotions, intentions, and nuances that words alone may struggle to express. The anecdote implies that the participant recognizes the need for a holistic approach to communication,

where NV cues, as Argyle (1972), Poyatos (1992, 2002) and Matsumoto (2013) also point out, are taken into consideration alongside verbal expression. It highlights the importance of paying attention to these NV signals in order to accurately convey one's intended message and better understand the messages of others.

Lastly, participant 8 said:

I also mentioned in the survey that, until now, we hadn't seen subjects that addressed and delved into this topic, which I find super important. We are learning a foreign language, and with a language, it's not just about grammar, listening, and speaking. Behind it, there is an entire culture, and non-verbal communication is a significant part of any culture. So, I believe that yes, it is extremely important because we don't learn a language just to fill English scenarios or something like that. Language is learned with the purpose of interacting with other cultures, right? (Participant 8; Interview June 7th, 2022).

This anecdote highlights the participant's observation regarding the lack of attention given to a specific issue (which was not detailed) in her studies. The participant revealed a gap in her major's curriculum, as she had not come across subjects that explored the mentioned subject in depth. She expresses her belief that this topic is highly important. Later, she connects her idea to the broader context of learning a foreign language. She emphasizes that language learning is not solely about grammar, listening, and speaking skills. She asserts that language is intimately intertwined with culture, and NVC plays a significant role in understanding and participating in culture (Poyatos, 2002).

The speaker argues that non-verbal communication is an essential component of any culture and should not be overlooked in language learning programs. She emphasizes that

learning a language is not merely for the purpose of fulfilling English language requirements or similar practical contexts. Instead, the primary aim of language learning, in the participant's view, is to facilitate meaningful interaction with other cultures.

In sum, according to participant 8's perceptions, it is important to know NVC aspects in order to avoid communication breakdowns. Some authors have argued about the multimodal nature of communication (Álvarez Valencia, 2021; Kress, 2000; Van Leuween, 2006) and participants (participants 9, 2 and 8) show the need to understand that communication is more than words. The interviews also show how relevant and pertinent it is to include the NVD in ELT programs because, according to their perspective, ELT programs are not completely working from a multimodal perspective and they are leaving important information, behaviors and modes of communicating aside while teaching and learning a foreign language.

In the purpose of complementing our first objective about students' perceptions of NVC in intercultural communication in order to avoid conflict or misunderstanding. We also explored the main aspects that cause misunderstanding or conflict. The following section shows this matter in detail.

Lack of cultural knowledge and nonverbal elements as sources of misunderstandings and intercultural conflict.

The third part of the survey (see appendix 1) proposed a set of statements to determine the extent to which knowledge of certain aspects of communication or foreign culture (lack of knowledge of expected behaviors, lack of linguistic skills, lack of knowledge about administrative organization, wrong use of NVC cues and lack of cultural knowledge) could cause misunderstandings or intercultural conflicts. This part of the survey took into

account verbal and non verbal aspects given we based on the idea that communication is multimodal and we cannot omit the verbal aspect of communication (Kress, 2000, 2010; Álvarez Valencia, 2016). The table below shows the participants' opinion about the elements that might likely trigger intercultural conflict.

Table 1

Elements that Cause Misunderstandings and Intercultural Conflict

Statement	No	Low	Moderate	High	M	SD
One's lack of knowledge and/or disregard for expected behaviors in a particular situation or context (e.g. when to praise or what to do or say if someone praises you about something).	3 1,5%	30 14,7%	102 50%	57 27,9%	2,93	1,007
One's lack of command of the foreign language in terms of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and/or communication style.	1 0,5%	22 10,8%	94 46,1%	76 37,3%	3,09	0,991
One's lack of knowledge about factual information such as how the conversational partner's country is organized administratively, its institutions, political system, geographical characteristics, art, and history.	3 1,5%	28 13,7%	95 46,6%	65 31,9%	2,96	1,045
One's use of nonverbal communication cues such as facial expressions, gestures, body contact, or personal distance.	6 2,9%	17 8,3%	81 39,7%	89 43,6%	3,13	1,054
One's lack of knowledge/understanding of the value assigned to certain concepts, behaviors or institutions (e.g. freedom, family, love, national identity).	3	6	87	97	3,25	0,994

1,5% 2,9% 42,6% 47,5%

No = 1, Low = 2, Moderate = 3, High = 4

Most participants (47,5%) suggest that misunderstandings or conflicts can be caused by lack of cultural knowledge related to socio-political manifestations of diverse cultural groups (freedom, family, love, national identity). This implies that individuals who are unaware of cultural norms, customs, and practices, such as speaking with the mouth full of food or making noises while eating, may unintentionally offend or misinterpret others, leading to communication breakdowns (Liddicoat, 2009).

The second most selected item was the nonverbal dimension (43,6%) which refers to behaviors and aspects of communication that extend beyond verbal language (Argyle, 1972; Hickson et al., 2013; Matsumoto, 2013; Poyatos, 2002), such as body language, facial expressions, vocal inflections, and diverse modes of expression (Poyatos, 1992). This result suggests that misinterpretations or conflicts may arise when individuals fail to understand or properly interpret nonverbal cues due to the incomprehension of other cultural backgrounds. These results align with Quinn (1999) and Ting-Toomey's (2001) theory of miscommunication. Here, they mention that interpreting NV messages outside one's own culture and without knowing about the speaker's cultural manifestations might lead to misunderstandings or conflicts.

The third element selected by the students (37,3%) was the linguistic dimension of communication. This item is related to the basic elements of language (phonetics, phonemics, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and/or communication style). This implies that participants still assign a relevant role to verbal communication in the emergence of issues in intercultural communication. Overall, these results highlight cultural knowledge,

nonverbal communication, and language-related elements as factors that, when uncomprehended, might originate misunderstandings or conflicts in intercultural encounters.

On the other hand, these results echo in the students' interviews where they also reported the same three dimensions as major factors that intervene in the generation of conflict or misunderstanding (lack of cultural knowledge, NVC and language related factors).

In the first part of the interview, our participants were asked to consider the potential factors that might lead to misunderstandings or conflicts when interacting with individuals from different countries. Table 2 below shows the salience of these items. It is important to say that our participants mentioned different aspects in the interview such as gestures, tone and body movements. Then, we organized the items into big categories (Lack of cultural knowledge, NVC aspects and language proficiency).

Table 2

What do you think could cause misunderstanding or conflict in an interaction with a person from another country? (Question 1, interview)

Lack of Cultural Knowledge	NVC aspects	Language proficiency
Knowing about social distances, knowing about rituals, knowing about social codes, knowing about expressiveness	Gestures, gaze, proxemic, body movements, smells	Pronunciation, vocabulary, accent, local expressions, tone, language proficiency,
8 times mentioned	8 times mentioned	3 times mentioned
Elements that could originate misunderstanding or conflict		

Based on the interviews, eight out of the 10 students believe that cultural factors, such as being too warm or too expressive with other people while talking, can cause communication difficulties. They also mentioned the importance of proxemics and gestures which belong to the nonverbal dimension (according to Poyatos, 1992), as well as language

proficiency. Participant 7, in particular, emphasized the significance of cultural competence in nonverbal communication and emphasized how these exchanges can frequently escalate into "confrontations" due to misunderstandings or conflicts.

When we encounter someone from another country and know nothing about their culture, we run a high risk of being disrespectful towards the other person. We feel comfortable with physical contact, don't we? But many times, we may come across someone who, let's say, is European or Asian, and depending on their country or culture, they might not feel so comfortable (Participant 7; Interview; June 7th 2022).

This participant mentions that one's lack of knowledge of the social norms of different cultures might lead us to be disrespectful without even noticing it. She explains that in the Colombian culture, physical contact is seen as something positive or common, meanwhile in other cultures it can be seen as invasive and this can originate misunderstandings or conflicts. Particularly, this commentary relates to the surveys' result in which 43,6% of the participants selected nonverbal elements as triggers of conflict.

Similarly, participant 6 also mentioned that the lack of cultural knowledge is a factor that can cause misunderstandings or conflicts in intercultural communication.

Another thing that can also affect is the cultural aspect, that part that is so inherent to us and that can somehow create certain clashes with the culture of another country or the other place where one is present. So in this case, I would connect language with culture. That could, in my case, cause a breakdown or conflict in communication (Participant 6; Interview; June 24th 2022).

For participants 6 and 7, cultural aspects, which are deeply ingrained in individuals, can lead to conflicts when interacting with people from different cultures. The connection between language and culture is emphasized, indicating that the lack of understanding of cultural nuances related to language can result in communication breakdowns or conflicts. Some authors have argued about this connection before (Byram et al., 2002; Kramsch, 2005; Liddicoat, 2009; Scarino, 2014).

Another answer given by participant 1 highlighted the importance of identity and how we express it through cultural practices. Besides, she also mentioned two of the paramount elements that generate conflict reported by students: proxemics and lack of cultural knowledge.

Let's say language is not just a system of symbols for communication, but also everything that lies behind it. It has to do with who we are, our identity, not only as individuals but also as part of a community and belonging to a group of people. And I feel that... um, that shapes certain characteristics that vary greatly from country to country. I believe that aspects that can cause a breakdown include the lack of knowledge of proxemic codes, the unfamiliarity with cultural norms from other places. For example, this makes me think - I just came back from a trip to Cuba. Cuba is a country that is somewhat close to Colombia, and yet, despite being close and sharing the same language and others, there are situations where establishing smooth communication becomes difficult because they have different proxemic relationships, which are managed differently due to the environment that surrounds them (Participant 1; Interview; June 7th 2022)

Participant 1 argues that language surpasses the notion of being just a tool for communication; language encompasses the identity of individuals both on a personal level and as members of a larger community (Liddicoat, 2009; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Álvarez Valencia, 2021). Language shapes our characteristics, which can vary significantly from country to country. Lack of knowledge about proxemic codes and unfamiliarity with cultural norms from other places can lead to communication breakdowns (Poyatos, 2002). Busà (2015), Wei (2013), and Liang (2016) are among the previous studies that have delved into the impact of culture on nonverbal communication. They clarified that gestures differ across cultures and can contribute to establishing mutual understanding when NVC is understood as encompassing more than just linguistic aspects.

In sum, results show the perceptions of final-year undergraduate students in Colombia regarding the role of NVC in the generation of conflict or misunderstanding in intercultural communication. The interview and the survey revealed the overwhelming importance of the lack of cultural knowledge during intercultural encounters as a factor that ignites misunderstanding or conflict. Some authors have discussed the key relationship between the cultural dimension in communication, they argue that interpretations of messages can fail or be misunderstood because people might not know how to interpret them as they come from different cultural backgrounds (Byram, 1997; Byram et al., 2002; Kramsch, 1998; Liddicoat, 2008; Wagner & Byram, 2018).

Participants also recognized that communicative misunderstandings often arise due to lack of understanding of NV elements, which play a crucial role in face-to-face interactions. The results align with Argyle (1972) and Poyatos' (1992) view of communication and the need to go beyond verbocentric perspectives that are not enough to understand the nuanced intricacies of intercultural interactions.

Recent proposals of communicative competence also recognize the place that linguistic skills have in facilitating face-to-face interaction (Celce-Murcia, 2012). In fact, these basic elements are also taken into account in models of intercultural competence (Álvarez Valencia & Michaelson, 2022; Benner & Bennet, 2002; Byram, 1997; Spitzberg & Chagnon, 2009).

Through language people share their culture (Liddicoat, 2009; Kramsch, 1998) and it is not only through spoken words (Poyatos, 2002; Kress, 2000, 2010) that meaning is conveyed. Every NV behavior is unique from culture to culture (Lustig & Koester, 2013) and it is necessary to understand this in order to have pleasant intercultural encounters. For this reason, our findings also have significant implications for teacher education programs, emphasizing on the importance of incorporating semiotic systems, like gestures, to enhance students' comprehension of language concepts and to facilitate more effective communication between teachers and students. Promoting NVC could help minimizing misunderstandings or conflicts and might help to teach and comprehend effectively a foreign language and, therefore, different cultures.

These findings suggest that NVC aspects (such as gestures, body movements, proxemics) are among the main factors that can affect communication and may lead to misunderstandings or conflicts in intercultural communication. Besides, it shows the importance of NVC for pre-service teachers, and the necessity of reinforcing and sensitizing students to these factors within and beyond the English language classroom.

Existing literature demonstrates research in various domains of nonverbal communication. For instance, some studies have focused on in-service teachers, exploring the benefits of NVC in language learning (Álvarez Valencia, 2021; Poyatos, 2002; Quinn, 1999). Additionally, there is research on students' perceptions of teacher's nonverbal behaviors, as explored by Ananda et al. (2020), Becerra et al. (2017) and Nemati (2019) that claimed that

NVC motivates the students and interactions between teachers and students augmented when NVC was used. While Lizasoain et al. (2021), Dahl and Ludvigsen (2014), Matsumoto and Mueller (2016) have studied pre-service teachers' use of gestures indicating they have positive effects in learning a second language. However, it is important to note that these studies have not specifically addressed pedagogical recommendations or strategies that can assist teachers and teacher educators in integrating nonverbal communication in their classes.

In his model of intercultural communicative competence, Byram (2021) incorporates the nonverbal aspect. The author integrates NVC within the intercultural component, specifically in the skills of discovery and interaction. According to Byram, an intercultural speaker possesses the ability to identify both similarities and differences in interaction processes, both verbal and nonverbal, and effectively negotiate their appropriate usage in specific contexts (Byram, 2021).

Results suggest that addressing these areas in ELT programs might help reduce misunderstandings, conflicts, and breakdowns in communication. To improve intercultural communication, individuals may need to enhance their cultural sensitivity, develop their nonverbal communication skills, and pay attention to language-related nuances. By enhancing cultural awareness and developing proficiency in NVC and language skills, students can improve their intercultural communication competence and mitigate the occurrence of breakdowns and conflicts. Some studies (Özmen, 2010; Rémi & Smotrova, 2017) have also mentioned the relevance of including NVC when teaching or learning a foreign language.

In order to better understand misunderstandings and conflicts in intercultural communication, in the following section, we explore their different types in our experience and how people deal with these situations when they arise.

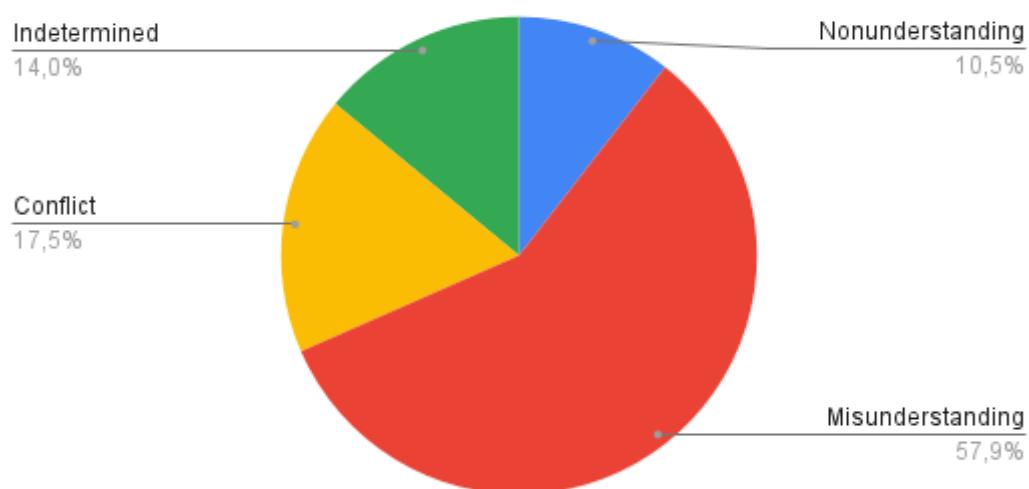
Misunderstanding and conflict of linguistic nature as the main type found in students' anecdotes

The second objective aimed to identify the types of intercultural conflicts or misunderstandings associated with the nonverbal dimension that appeared in the anecdotes from the survey and the interviews. From the anecdotes of the survey there were 57,9% cases of misunderstandings, 17,5% cases of conflict, 14,0% where indetermined and 10,5% were labeled as nonunderstanding (Figure 4).

Moreover, we included (in both the survey and the interview) two additional categories: nonunderstanding, which refers to situations in which people cannot make any sense of what the other person said (Matsumoto, 2018); and “indetermined” which was used to label anecdotes that were not classified in the other categories because it was not clear what the interlocutors experienced or because they did not provide vast information. For this reason, we only focused on the categories of misunderstanding and conflict.

Figure 4

Type of Communication Breakdown



Classification of the communication breakdowns in the survey

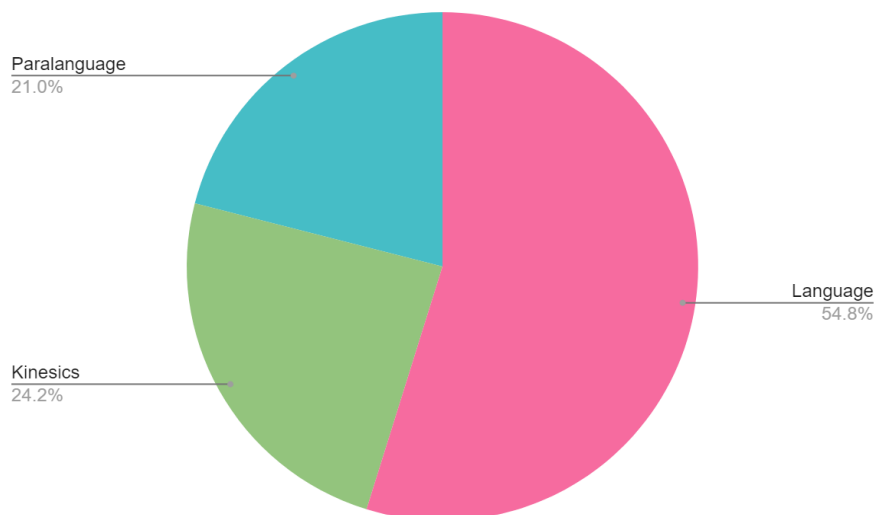
From the interviews, 10 participants narrated their full anecdotes and results show 4 cases of nonunderstanding, 5 of misunderstandings and 1 indetermined. In these anecdotes, there were no conflicts.

Since we based on Poyatos' (1992) tripartite system of communication (language, paralanguage and kinesics) we classified misunderstandings and conflicts in terms of the type of phenomenon that caused communicative breakdown: linguistic, paralinguistic, or kinesic. For this part, first we will show results from the survey and then from the data of the interviews.

A total of 59 anecdotes from the survey were analyzed. Figure 5 shows the distribution of misunderstandings or conflicts framed within the elements of the triple structure of communication, this classification was used to describe the communicative element that ignited or was at the center of the participants' anecdotes of misunderstanding or conflict. It is important to clarify that for some anecdotes, there were various systems of communication involved because participants narrated more than one experience in their answers or some answers involved diverse elements of the tripartite system. As a result, we obtained 62 instances or examples of conflict, misunderstanding or non understanding.

Figure 5

Types of Misunderstandings and Conflicts in the survey



Percentage of each type of misunderstandings and conflicts found in the survey.

Merely describing the nature of communication breakdowns is insufficient; we must delve into the specific semiotic system involved in the process. In every misunderstanding or conflict there was a presence of semiotic systems. According to Álvarez Valencia (2016), semiotic systems are constantly evolving and arise from social interactions. They enable individuals to interpret and convey meaning in communication. Additionally, The New London Group (1996) emphasizes that these systems play a vital role in facilitating the inference and expression of meaning among people. Our decision to explore the semiotic systems found in the anecdotes (after their initial division following Poyato's (2002) tripartite system model) was driven by our multimodal view of communication and our interest in identifying the particular feature that caused the misunderstandings or conflicts described in the participants' anecdotes.

Table 3 shows that the most common source of communicative breakdown is located in language aspects, specifically in the phonetics-phonemics system, accounting for 34.5%. Within this system, intonation appears prominently with 10 occurrences, followed by pronunciation with 8 occurrences, respectively. Besides, the paralinguistic element had the

second score 17,2% and pragmatics, which we understand as utterances that are interpreted differently according to context or culture (Liddicoat, 2009), was in third position with 14,1% and it also belong to the linguistic realm. Lastly, kinesic elements and proxemics, which belong to the kinesic realm, appear 9,4% and 12,5% respectively. The following table shows the specific semiotic system involved in the misunderstanding or conflict situation narrated by the participants.

Table 3

Semiotic Systems in the Anecdotes

Semiotic Systems	Students	
	F	%
Kinesic Elements	6	9,4
Phonetics-Phonemics	22	34,4
Proxemics	8	12,5
Paralinguistic Element	11	17,2
Pragmatics	9	14,1
Vocabulary	5	7,8
Body adaptors	1	1,6
Cultural knowledge	1	1,6
Built environments	0	0
N/A	1	1,6

Semiotic systems that appeared in the surveys narrated by participants.

Based on Table 3, it is evident that people tend to rely more on linguistic features than NV ones during communication. The lack of comprehension regarding linguistic features often leads to communication breakdowns. However, it is worth noting that NV aspects also play a significant role in causing misunderstandings or conflicts among participants in various life experiences. Therefore, it becomes crucial to foster awareness of NV aspects when interacting with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, as each culture interprets emblems, gestures, movements, or proxemics differently (Quinn, 1999; Vilà, 2012).

The classification of misunderstandings and conflicts are correlated with the system of communication described by Poyatos (1992). Within the language dimension, we find phonetics and phonemics, vocabulary, and pragmatics. The kinesic dimension involves kinesic elements, proxemics, body adapters (e.g., decorative elements like rings, earrings), and constructed or modified environments (the use of spaces to contribute to the construction of meanings). In the paralinguistic dimension we find sounds like clicks or whistles that do not correspond to the linguistic realm. The dimension of knowledge of cultural aspects was included as an additional component, although it is not part of Poyatos' (1992) semiotic systems framework, it was included because according to some scholars (Liddicoat, 2009; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Kramsch & Ware, 2005; Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006) culture affects communication at different levels and interacting with people from different cultures might lead to communication breakdowns due to the incomprehension of each other's cultural background.

According to the participants, their most common experiences of communication breakdown arise from situations involving language usage, accounting for 54.8%. These misunderstandings or conflicts were caused by difficulties in pronunciation, intonation as a linguistic function -Poyatos, 1992- (e.g., rising or falling intonation in questions) or vocabulary.

For instance, one participant said: "in my work there are some misunderstandings with the intonation of some words so the another [other] person cannot identify if it is a question or just a sentence" (Participant 46; survey, 2020). This participant's statement mentions a specific example of a communication difficulty related to the semiotic system of intonation. The participant declares experiencing misunderstandings at work due to the ambiguity in the intonation of certain words. According to Poyatos (2002), intonation can be seen as a linguistic element, like in this case, and there is also intonation that

makes part of the paralinguistic realm. This last one, has to do more with the way people intentionally speak; sarcasm or irony are examples of it. This ambiguity makes it challenging for the other person to discern whether a statement is a question or an affirmative sentence. The interlocutor could not understand the meaning of the intonation and that affected the communication. This observation points out the importance of intonation in conveying meaning and the potential consequences of misinterpreting or misjudging the speaker's intention given that every language or dialect has specific intonation patterns.

The way intonation is used to convey meaning can be different in every language. This can make it difficult for people who are learning a foreign/second language to understand what is being said (Cruz-Ferreira, 1987).

Another example that illustrates communication breakdowns occurring in the language realm is told by participant 27:

When I was in a family reunion, one of my cousin[s] had a foreign English partner as a couple. I tried to talk to him, and to be honest I was sure that I would do it well and he would understand me, however, he did not understand very well what I was trying to say, and that made [made] feel my confidence narrow. All this because of my lack in [of] pronunciation skills (Participant 27; survey, 2022).

Participant 27's statement explains the role of the semiotic system pronunciation in communication breakdowns. According to participant 27, most of his/her communication difficulties stem from mispronouncing words, which subsequently leads to a misunderstanding of the intended message. This example highlights the significance of accurate pronunciation in effective communication. When words are mispronounced,

they may sound similar to other words or have altered meanings, causing confusion for the listener and potentially distorting the intended message (Celce-Murcia., et al, 2010). Therefore, this misunderstanding is of linguistic nature.

Another student wrote:

I was at [on] the phone at work (I work as a [bilingual agent]) customer called asking ti[to] edit her shipping address, I helped her, however it was pretty difficult to understand because she was speaking really fast and with her southern accent. We spent over 20 minutes on her inconvenience when it was supposed to be 8z[s] (Participant 17; survey, 2022).

This anecdote also reflects misunderstanding or conflict of linguistic type. Here, the semiotic systems accent and pacing on the phone impeded effective communication. Accents vary from cultures and it might take more time to understand how other people speak. Some studies (Derwing et al., 2010) have examined how cross cultural awareness training on comprehension of foreign accented speech improves the ability to understand foreign accents. Acknowledging how accents work can help to reduce communication breakdowns.

The second highest score is for misunderstandings or conflicts of kinesic nature (24.2%). Participant 18 stated:

Once I was talking with a German. We were speaking in English about our cultures. We were actually having a good time. However, when we were saying goodbye, I got closer to him and kissed his cheek. He was very surprised and he also blushed. I didn't know why because this is very normal in my country but

some months [months] later, I realized that wasn't normal in his culture”

(Participant 18; survey, 2022).

In this anecdote, it is the kiss on the cheek together with how close the interlocutor was with the German person that caused the communication breakdown. German people are not used to kiss on the cheek (according to what the participant describes) and due to lack of cultural knowledge, a communication breakdown appeared. The participant's action of kissing the German person on the cheek had an unintended impact due to the cultural mismatch. The surprise and blush displayed by the German person indicates that the gesture was perceived differently in his cultural context, possibly as an intimate or overly familiar gesture, leading to a moment of discomfort or confusion.

Cultural differences have been studied based on the distinction between tactile and non-tactile cultures (Hall, 1999). According to various studies, Eastern cultures tend to be less tactile in certain aspects. It is also commonly said that the dominant North American culture is less tactile compared to Latin American countries and/or Spain (Vilà, 2012).

According to Vilà (2012) kissing is considered one of the most distinctive forms of greeting. However, the number of kisses and the specific placement can vary across cultures. For instance, some cultures may practice a single kiss on the cheek or hand, while others may engage in two, three, or even four kisses as a customary greeting. Lack of knowledge about this cultural trait leads to communication breakdowns.

Student 56 claimed:

More or less 3 years ago, I was developing a task in which we had to interview a

foreigner. I interviewed a man from England and at first glance it didn't appear any problem, the whole interview we had a good interaction, but when I was watching the video, this man seemed to be a little bothered by how close I was to him, and he tried to get more distance. Then, I realized that here in Colombia we tend to be more close [closer] and more familiar, however, for a person from a different culture it can be disrespectful. Fortunately, there was no conflict at all and I could learn from this experience for future situations (Participant 56; survey, 2022).

Hall (1990) refers to the concept of proxemics to explore the variations in individuals' usage of personal space. He proposed four types of personal spaces: intimate distance for close relationships and family; personal distance for social interactions or public settings; social distance in places like offices, or stores; and public distance in contexts such as conferences. Each of these spaces signify different levels of proximity, reflecting diverse personality traits or environmental factors that can influence the degree of closeness or distance between individuals (Hall, 1999). Nonetheless, distances change among cultures and the concept of personal space also differs (Hall, 1990).

The anecdote highlights the role of proxemics, a semiotic system and a component of nonverbal communication (Poyatos, 1992, 2002), in generating a communication breakdown. In this case, the act of being physically close to someone was considered disrespectful and invasive. In Colombian culture, there is a tendency for individuals to maintain close physical proximity to one another. However, this behavior may not be universally accepted or understood in other cultures, leading to potential misunderstandings or conflicts.

Finally, the participants reported that the third area that generated conflicts was

the paralinguistic dimension (21%) -Figure 5-. Paralanguage issues include situations of communication breakdown caused by tone, intonations with particular connotations (intonation, in this context, reflects emotional states, attitudes, emphasis, and interpersonal dynamics). It adds layers of meaning to spoken words and helps convey the speaker's intentions, moods, or attitudes. For instance, a high-pitched and enthusiastic intonation might indicate excitement or happiness, while a flat and monotonous intonation may convey boredom or lack of interest (Poyatos, 2002). Hereunder we show some examples of conflict, misunderstanding or non understanding caused by the misuse or wrong interpretation of paralinguistic manifestations.

Participant 56 said: “A friend consider[s] highly disgusting and offensive when anyone else yawn[s] when he's talking...”(Participant 56; survey, 2022). The participant's statement highlights the significance of yawning during communication and its impact on interpersonal dynamics. According to Poyatos (2002), yawning is a paralinguistic cue that can convey various meanings and emotions, including fatigue, boredom, fatigue, disinterest, or even disrespect. He affirms that yawning is displayed, shaped and influenced by cultural norms or individual preferences. In this case, the friend finds it highly disgusting and offensive when others yawn while he/she is speaking which can cause misunderstanding or conflict.

Participant 50 said: “When I was talking with a friend from [the] U.S.A we would have misunderstandings because he could not identify the tone of my sarcasm” (Participant 50; survey, 2022). This participant's statement emphasizes the role of paralinguistic elements, specifically the tone of voice as a semiotic system. Sarcasm, a form of verbal irony, heavily relies on the tone of voice to convey its intended meaning. Poyatos (2002) suggests that the comprehension of sarcasm requires listeners to draw upon their knowledge of the speaker, the situation, and the overall context. Factors such as prior knowledge, shared experiences, and cultural background can influence a person's ability

to recognize sarcasm accurately. However, according to this anecdote, the participant's American friend was unable to accurately identify the tone of sarcasm, leading to misunderstandings in their conversations and therefore we classified it within the paralinguistic type.

Regarding the interview, a total of 10 anecdotes from the interview were analyzed. Results show how misunderstandings or conflicts were categorized based on Poyatos' (2002) tripartite system of communication (language, paralanguage and kinesics), we used the classification as in the survey. This categorization was used to identify the specific element that played a key role in the participants' anecdotes of misunderstandings or conflicts. The anecdotes shared in the interview are essentially the same as those collected in the survey, but with additional details and elaboration. Certain anecdotes involved multiple systems of communication, as participants shared more than one experience in their responses or described incidents that encompassed various elements of the tripartite system. As a result, we gathered a total of 11 instances or examples illustrating conflicts, misunderstandings, or non understandings.

Results indicated that from the interview, 4 participants narrated an anecdote in which the conflict or misunderstanding was of kinesics nature, 4 participants experienced conflict or misunderstanding of linguistic nature and 3 participants of paralinguistic nature.

Participant 8 mentioned an example of misunderstanding or conflict of linguistic nature:

And then I approached the French girl, and with her, well, since I was in my first or second semester, as I said, it's very embarrassing to speak. And I noticed that the French are very elitist with their language, or at least she was. So I tried to

speak with her a bit in her language, but she would correct me with a sour face,
 so it was difficult there. It's like in the sixth semester now, I have gained a bit
 more fluency, but I will never forget that particular girl. (participant 8, interview,
 June 8th, 2022)

Here, the participant attempts to engage in conversation in the girl's language and
 tries to show his willingness to make an effort and bridge the linguistic gap. However,
 the girl's response of correcting the speaker with a negative facial expression further adds
 to the difficulty and potential discomfort experienced during the interaction. We
 classified this anecdote into the category of linguistic misunderstanding or conflict
 because it is language proficiency the main semiotic system, that caused the
 communication breakdown. Here, there is also an additional aspect to consider - the
 kinesic element. According to Argyle (1972), NVC plays a supportive role in verbal
 communication, as observed in the participant's narration. Gestures enhance the message
 being conveyed, and we can argue that, in line with Argyle's (1972) channels of NVC,
 they also substituted verbal communication in situations where the participant found it
 challenging to communicate verbally. Furthermore, considering this was an intercultural
 encounter, it becomes clear that the participant cannot assign an exact, objective meaning
 to the gestures used. This is due to the fact that gestures can carry different
 interpretations in various cultures (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Quinn, 1999). Therefore,
 a communication breakdown emerged.

Participant 7 mentioned an example of misunderstanding or conflict of kinesic
 nature:

So, everything was like in signs and gestures, with smiles, and I think that's

where the confusion may have arisen. Although I don't know if the confusion was, well, yes, because of my way of acting, I know it, but what I'm telling you is that I tried to be friendly, we were very expressive with lots of smiles, being very, very, very kind like that. And also, to make the person feel welcome and all those things that, well, in general, it's what is said about the warmth that one usually has in Latin America. I don't know. And I noticed that this person had a different attitude towards me than they did with my classmates. I also noticed that I was friendlier with my classmates, like I said, I tried to be warm with that person. And based on the interactions that arose, we had each other's contacts, and let's say that even after we kept in touch, he continued talking to me, but in a way that wasn't, well, it wasn't academic anymore and it wasn't as respectful, but rather crossed some boundaries that I believed I hadn't given him, you know? And it was very intense, to put it that way, very, very intense. So, it did confuse me (participant 7, interview, June 7th 2022).

A NVC semiotic system such as smiling has different meanings (Glenn & Holt, 2013; Matsumoto, 2018a): it can work to build social relationships, demonstrate something has been funny, demonstrate solidarity or reduce tensions. The participant emphasizes her efforts to be friendly, expressive, and kind in line with the warmth typically associated with Latin American culture (Vilà, 2012). She used gestures and smiling (kinesic features) that were misunderstood. However, the participant noticed a distinct difference in the person's attitude towards them compared to their classmates.

This observation suggests that the person's response was influenced by factors beyond the participant's behavior alone. Continuing the narrative, she mentions having exchanged contacts and maintaining communication with the person. However, the

subsequent conversations took a different tone. The person's communication style became less academic and less respectful, crossing boundaries that the speaker felt she had not given permission for. This change in behavior is described as intense and confusing for the participant. The misunderstanding of her friendly smile could be attributed to the fact that the other interlocutor may not have been aware that she was simply expressing herself in accordance with her cultural norms. Instead, he interpreted her smile as having a flirtatious connotation.

Finally, participant 1 narrated other anecdote of paralinguistic nature:

Well, I'll give you some quick context. I used to work in customer service, and people would call in furious because their internet wasn't working or because they received a bill that was higher than what they had agreed to pay initially. It was a million things. So, my task was to resolve their issue by redirecting them to the appropriate place where it could be fixed. (...) And when it came to nonverbal communication, I had many doubts. - What does this person's silence mean? What does it mean when they breathe heavily? I often didn't understand if they were angry... or if they were frustrated. I mean, there are certain universal conventions that allow us to understand certain emotions, but many times I don't understand. I don't understand why this person remains silent when I ask them a question, or... I don't understand what they're trying to convey by breathing heavily or... I don't understand what they mean with all those interjections they make all the time (...) (participant 1, interview, June 7th, 2022)

Participant 1 mentioned in the anecdote the significant struggle she had with understanding nonverbal communication cues. The person expresses her confusion about

interpreting the meaning behind a customers' semiotic systems involved in silence, heavy breathing, and interjections. According to Poyatos (2002), silences can act as a “zero sign”. This means that they convey meaning through lack of verbal or kinesic messages when they are expected. Poyatos (2002) distinguishes between two types of zero signs: positive and negative. Positive zero signs carry a clear message that we understand, while negative zero signs are only decoded as the absence of any activity. However, a silent negative zero sign creates mental activity for both the receiver and the sender. The receiver perceives the absence of audible communication, such as not receiving a response to a question like the ones asked by this participant. Meanwhile, the person who initiated the silence is also supposed to assign a meaning to the silence.

The participant reflects on the difficulty of discerning whether the customers are angry, frustrated, or expressing other emotions. Despite being aware of universal conventions for interpreting emotions, they often find themselves unable to fully comprehend the customers' nonverbal signals. This anecdote belongs to a misunderstanding of paralinguistic nature because silences and the sound of breathing are paralinguistic elements (Poyatos, 2002).

These findings indicate a clear link between the results of the first objective and the second one. Participants reported encountering numerous instances of intercultural communication characterized by language-based misunderstandings or conflicts. Consequently, participants identified language factors as the primary contributors to communication breakdowns, establishing language as the key element in intercultural encounters. Nonetheless, aspects regarding NVC were also the source of the second majority of misunderstandings or conflicts. The classification will help to understand how misunderstandings or conflicts can arise in intercultural encounters and therefore, be able to avoid them. These results suggest the further need to reinforce the understanding

of NVC cues that do not belong to one's culture in order to enhance communicative experiences.

To understand how misunderstandings were solved we explored the dealing strategies used by participants.

Solving Misunderstandings and Conflicts

As additional information, in order to broaden the aforementioned results and to know how communication breakdowns are solved, we have also classified the way in which people deal with misunderstanding and conflicts. That is, how they overcome the situation when it happens. To do so, we decided to separate misunderstandings from conflicts because in the literature they are usually treated as two different situations.

According to Bremer (1996) and Bremer et al. (1996), misunderstandings arise when the listener comprehends something in a way that is logical to them, yet it diverges from the intended message of the speaker. On the other hand, conflict can be described as the feeling of dissatisfaction when people from different cultures have different values, norms, goals, and limited resources. It happens when there is a clash between the way they see things and the outcomes they expect in their interactions (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001). Table 4 shows how we classified the misunderstanding and conflict resolution strategies.

Table 4

Resolution strategies for misunderstanding and conflicts.

Misunderstanding	Conflict
Avoiding	Avoiding
Clarification Request	Competing
Repair (repetition, clarification)	Cooperating

Classification according to Bernstein (2016) and to Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2013)

Dealing with Misunderstandings

Now, to indicate how people resolve misunderstandings we based on the study made by Bernstein (2016). We added three categories to determine the type of dealing strategy: The term “clarification request” is used to indicate if one of the parties is asking for clarification. The term “repair” is used to stress that there was a repetition or a clarification without someone asking for it. Finally, we included the term “avoidance” to indicate that the misunderstanding was ignored or evaded. Here, we also included an additional category called “not mentioned” because some of the anecdotes were not complete and this impeded us to make the classification. Among the 59 anecdotes analyzed, not all of them actually involved misunderstandings. Additionally, some of the anecdotes showcased the use of multiple strategies for handling misunderstandings. Therefore, there exists a disparity between the 59 anecdotes and the actual variety of approaches people employed to address misunderstandings. This means that there is a missing percentage because not all anecdotes represented a case of misunderstanding or conflict.

Table 5 shows the dealing strategies used by the participants when they witness a misunderstanding in a conversation.

Table 5

Dealing Strategy in Misunderstandings

Dealing Strategy	Number of students	Percentage
Clarification request	5	8,47%
Repair	3	5,08%
Avoidance	1	1,69%
Not mentioned	48	81,36%
Total	57	96.6%

Percentages of dealing strategies used by the participants..

Clarification request was spotted five times. For instance, participant 30 wrote: “I have an experience from someone I know. The most common misunderstanding was with slang, or local expressions. So, they had to ask constantly what certain words meant, and this caused them to be embarrassed for not knowing (participant 30, survey, 2022)”. This participant narrated a misunderstanding of linguistic nature, which arose due to lack of vocabulary, leading to a breakdown in communication. To overcome this misunderstanding, the person had to continuously ask for clarification on the meanings of certain words. However, this constant need for clarification caused them to feel embarrassed for not being familiar with the slangs and local expressions. This anecdote follows the principles exposed by Bernstein (2016), drawing on the works of Schegloff et al. (1977) and Hirst et al. (1994). According to these authors, there are certain patterns observed in how people navigate through misunderstandings during communication. Initially, one of the speakers becomes aware of the misunderstanding. Subsequently, the interlocutor seeks clarification by posing a question that signals to the other person that the message was not clearly understood.

In a similar vein, participant 10 stated:

I remember that a few months ago I traveled to Mexico and I had a problem of misunderstanding in a store. Even though Spanish is my mother tongue I had to ask to the salesperson to repeat a phrase around 3 times because I couldn't understand. It was difficult to understand because the intonation and the pitch were different from what I am used to. They speak too fast and their accent and the vocabulary they use sometimes makes it difficult to understand (participant 10, survey, 2022)

Based on Hall (1959, 1981), intercultural communication takes place when people from different cultural backgrounds engage in interactions with each other. In this anecdote, we can highlight a misunderstanding of linguistic and paralinguistic nature among people who speak the same language but have different cultural backgrounds. In this case, the breakdown in communication can be attributed to the incomprehension of intonation, as a linguistic feature, and the use of pitch in the speaker's utterances created difficulty for the interlocutor in accurately understanding the intended meaning.

The participant had to ask the salesperson to repeat a specific phrase around three times because they could not comprehend it initially. This anecdote shows that even if the interlocutors speak the same language they still have different ways to express and act.

Later, it was shown that there were other dealing strategies used by participants. The “repair” dealing strategy appeared three times. For example, participant 26 said:

By chance, I was part of a research group on interculturality. In one of the meetings we were asked to talk about certain topics, here there were two problems that in a way represented a problem; the first, I mispronounced the word salt; and the second, I tried to bring Colombian sayings to the classroom, but the American participant did not understand them, the Latino did. Therefore, it was necessary to put it in context and explain it to her (participant 26, survey, 2022)

This anecdote narrates a misunderstanding of linguistic nature. Two semiotic systems were involved (phonetics-phonemics and vocabulary or idiomatic expressions). In this case, it was the mispronunciation of a word and lack of cultural knowledge what led to misunderstanding. In the research group on interculturality, the speaker tried to share Colombian sayings in the classroom. However, the American person did not understand

them, while the Latino participants did. As a result, the speaker realized about the importance of giving additional context and explanations to help the American participant understand.

In this anecdote, it is seen how the cultural context plays a crucial role in understanding messages (Liddicoat, 2009) and how cultural differences can create barriers in comprehending expressions, idioms, or proverbs that are deeply rooted in a particular culture. In this anecdote, the dealing strategy used was “repair” made through explanations to the people who did not belong to the Latino culture. This anecdote is an example of intercultural sensitivity (Chen & Starosta, 1999), which requires individuals to adapt their communication style, provide necessary context, and explain cultural references to facilitate understanding across different cultural backgrounds.

Lastly, avoidance only appeared once. Participant 36 narrated:

Once I had the chance to talk with a group of young french foreigners in the public transportation system, I approached them with the intention of exchange some phrases and practice a little bit my french, I was at basic level at that time, however the experience it was not successful because two of them felt intimidated when I tried to get close to them, I noticed their reaction but I did not understand what happened. Long after I commented this event with my french assistant and he told me that french people are picky with their personal space, totally different from me as a Caleño we tend to be really close to others when we talk (participant 36, survey, 2022).

This anecdote is an example of a misunderstanding of kinesic nature. Personal distance (proxemics) was the semiotic system that caused miscommunication. Poyatos (2002) explores the concept of proxemics, which refers to the ways humans utilize space. Drawing upon the research of Hall (1981), who identified four distinct zones of interpersonal distance

(intimate, personal, social, and public), Poyatos (2002) suggests that these zones are not rigidly defined but rather subject to variation influenced by factors such as culture, context, and the relationship dynamics between individuals. Poyatos (2002) highlights the significance of proxemics in intercultural communication. He emphasizes the need to consider cultural variations in personal space norms when interacting with individuals from different cultures. For instance, standing too close to someone from a culture with a larger intimate zone might make them uncomfortable.

In this anecdote, the French people decided to avoid the uncomfortable situation because in France, according to the participant, people are not used to close proximity when talking to unknown individuals in public spaces. The response was just ignoring there was an issue. That is why we classified it in the “avoidance” dealing strategy.

Not mentioned was the category that most appeared in the analysis. This suggests that participants might have written uncomplete anecdotes or anecdotes that were very general or ambiguous to analyze. Besides, some participants only wrote the communication breakdown part of the anecdote and not how they dealt with it. For example, Participant 55 from the survey narrated: “Try to understand a sad situation could be difficult if the correct pitch and prosody is not accurate (participant 55, survey, 2022)”. Here, it is not clear how exactly the person did to solve the misunderstanding.

Another example is from participant 51: “I know about a girl who due to lack of appropriate vocabulary in context had a misunderstanding with someone (participant 51, survey, 2022)”. Here, again, there are not enough details to analyze. All anecdotes located in the “no mentioned” part follow the same logic. For this reason, we mainly focused on the rest of the categories.

Regarding the interviews, out of the 10 anecdotes we examined, 5 of them depicted instances of misunderstanding. The remaining anecdotes described situations of non

understanding (4) and an indeterminate case (1). Within the subset of 5 misunderstandings, only one anecdote involved the employment of a dealing strategy (repair), while the others were categorized as not mentioned due to limited information available.

Participant 3 said:

You see, being from Santander, we have a lot of influence from Cali, where the tone goes up, unlike the more calm and settled tone of the Cauca region. The person I was talking to was from Popayán specifically, so there was this issue where I was speaking with enthusiasm and my tone started to rise, and the person said to me, "No! Why are you yelling at me? Have I done something? Are you angry with me?" And I replied, "No." They said, "Yes, look at how you're talking to me." And I said, "I'm talking normally." But since I had already gotten used to speaking more slowly and calmly to them because when I spoke to them with the "Cali accent," so to speak, it was like, "No, you're speaking too fast, you're yelling." So, that time I forgot and started to increase my speed and raise my voice. Then they said, "You're yelling at me, are you angry? What did I do? What did I say?" And I said, "Nothing." So, that time I had to explain to them, "Look, what happened is that I got carried away, I started speaking faster, and as a result, my tone of voice increased. I forgot that with you, I have to speak slower or softer because you might think I'm yelling (...). But I did have to apologize for raising my tone when I hadn't done anything wrong (participant 3, interview, 6th June, 2022)

In this anecdote, we can see a clear example of miscommunication arising from cultural differences and modes to express. This misunderstanding is of linguistic type and the

semiotic system that was the main cause of the communication breakdown was the tone of voice.

The participant, being from Santander and influenced by the lively tone of Cali, naturally expresses enthusiasm and tends to raise her voice. However, the person she was talking to was from Popayán, with a different cultural background, perceived the increased volume and enthusiasm as yelling. The different perceptions on the tone of voice the interlocutors use creates the misunderstanding. Overall, the resolution involved open communication, mutual understanding, and willingness to accommodate each other's communication preferences. The speaker explained her intentions and cultural background while acknowledging the need to adapt her speaking style in certain situations. The person from Popayán, although initially upset, gradually came to understand the speaker's perspective. Through this dialogue, they reached a point of acceptance and shared a lighthearted moment, even though some differences in communication styles remained. At the end, the participant apologized for raising her tone unintentionally, showing her willingness to take responsibility for the misunderstanding.

Dealing with Conflicts.

In what concerns conflict (17,5%), we used Ting-Toomey and Oetzel's (2013) classification of conflict. They classify it in three styles: avoiding, competing and cooperating. We also decided to include the "not mentioned" category (which was the most common one here) because some anecdotes were incomplete so it was impossible to establish how the conflict was solved. Table 6 shows the dealing strategy in conflict.

Table 6

Dealing Strategy in Conflict

Dealing Strategy	Number of students	Percentage
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Avoiding	0	0%
Competing	1	1,69%
Cooperating	3	5,08%
Not mentioned	6	10,17%
Total	10	16,94%

Percentages of dealing strategies used by the participants..

Cooperating has the second highest score with 3 students. To illustrate this score, participant 36 wrote:

One day a woman from Spain [Spain] offered me a piece of watermelon and I don't know why I tried to reach the biggest piece, a really big one. Suddenly, she moved the plate and offered me another piece with a normal size (participant 36, survey, 2022)

This conflict arises due to a misalignment in expectations and social norms. The speaker's action of reaching for the largest piece may be seen as inappropriate or greedy from the woman's perspective. In some cultures, it is considered polite to take a smaller or more modest portion when offered food, demonstrating consideration for others. The woman's response of offering a different, more moderate-sized piece can be seen as an attempt to cooperate to correct the speaker's behavior and align it with cultural norms.

Participant 31 said: “When I was talking to a British man, he thought that by laughing at everything he said, I was not taking it seriously, but then I explained that his hairstyle was very funny (participant 31, survey, 2022)”. This communication breakdown arises from a misunderstanding of cultural norms and communication styles. This conflict of paralinguistic nature involved the semiotic feature of laughter. In some cultures, laughter is used as a way to create rapport and show engagement in a conversation (Matsumoto, 2018a). However, the speaker misinterpreted the British man's laughter, assuming it meant lack of seriousness. The

speaker's comment about the man's hairstyle was likely an attempt to reciprocate what they perceived as humor. The conflict was resolved through cooperative efforts between the two individuals involved. One person took the initiative to explain their perspective, while the other one was open to change their perception of the situation.

Participant 34 mentioned: “I have experienced some misunderstanding problems with my argentinian friends since their intonations [intonations] sometimes sound irreverent or aggressive [aggressive], so I feel attacked sometimes even when I know that's not the purpose of what they are saying (participant 34, survey, 2022)”. This conflict of linguistic nature involves intonation as a linguistic semiotic system which was also the main source of conflict. The differing intonations can create a misalignment in perception, with the speaker interpreting the tone as aggressive or disrespectful, even when their friends did not intend it that way. The resolution in this situation was achieved through cooperation, as the interlocutor, despite initially feeling attacked, was able to comprehend that the issue stemmed from cultural differences.

Finally, one case of competing conflict style was addressed in our analysis. Participant 39 mentioned an anecdote that took place in a bus:

A misunderstanding that I witnessed was on a bus, since there was a very close body contact [with a woman]. [This] woman got angry and argued with the other subject because she felt pressured, but the reality was that the other person, because of the crowd of people, had no way to isolate himself a little bit and there was a rose [tension] (participant 39, survey, 2022)”.

This conflict highlights the importance of considering different perspectives and circumstances in a given situation. The woman's anger and argument were triggered by her

perception of being invaded or pushed due to close body contact. However, it is important to recognize that the other person may not have intended to cause discomfort but it was simply dealing with the crowded environment. The dealing strategy here was competing because the woman demonstrated her discontent about the situation and reacted in anger against it. Within this category there was an emotional expression that worked for the woman to spread her dissatisfaction.

Not mentioned was the category that most appear in the analysis (10,17%) because of the scarce information in the anecdotes. For example, Participant 41 from the survey mentioned: “I once had a problem with a person I knew, he was asking me something and my gestures combined what I wanted to explain to him (participant 41, survey, 2022)”. In this anecdote, the person mentioned a problem, which automatically is assumed as a conflict, but the participant did not provide more information about it. For this reason we classified it into not mentioned category.

Limitations

For this research several limitations were encountered. First, despite attempts to distribute the survey to all Colombian universities, not all universities responded back. Only a few principals or teachers distributed the survey to their students, resulting in a limited sample size. Besides, there was insufficient engagement from participants and many students did not complete it, leading to scarce data. Additionally, a significant number of the anecdotes provided were deemed irrelevant for the research or focused more on verbal rather than nonverbal communication. As a result, the anecdotes were incomplete, and there was a scarcity of useful information for analysis. Finally, it was difficult to schedule the online meetings with the interview participants due to their tight schedules or in some cases lack of interest to be contacted. As a result, completing the interviews took longer than originally planned.

Conclusions and pedagogical implications

The general objective of this research was to establish the role of the nonverbal dimension in understanding conflict or misunderstanding in intercultural communication among foreign language students in Colombian universities. We relied on the multimodal and intercultural view of communication and Poyatos' (2002) tripartite system of communication. A survey was conducted to pre-service teachers across Colombian universities to assess the students' comprehension of communication factors, nonverbal communication elements, and the specific elements that might lead to conflict or misunderstanding during intercultural interactions. Additionally, interviews were conducted to gather anecdotes from the students, shedding light on their personal experiences of intercultural conflicts or misunderstandings.

To respond to our main objective, we described the participants' perceptions of the role of NVC in the generation of conflict or misunderstanding in intercultural communication. It was found that all participants from the interview agreed on the relevant importance NVC has in order to avoid communication breakdowns in intercultural encounters. Moreover, some participants emphasized the importance of integrating NVC into the process of foreign language learning and teaching. Additionally, from the survey, the participants identified lack of cultural knowledge as the primary cause of communication breakdowns, while scarce understanding of NVC ranked second in our list. This suggests that although participants recognize the importance of NVC in averting misunderstandings or conflicts, they do not consider it to be the primary cause of such occurrences. These results shed light on the importance of NVC inside and outside the classroom and the need to include it in the ELT curricula.

After describing the participants' perceptions of the role of NVC in the generation of misunderstanding and conflicts, we identified the types of intercultural conflicts or

misunderstandings associated with the nonverbal dimension that are present in the anecdotes narrated by final-year language education students in Colombia. Results show that in the survey there were mainly misunderstandings or conflicts of linguistic nature, followed by kinesic nature and misunderstandings or conflicts of paralinguistic nature. On the other hand, the interview showed that 4 participants narrated an anecdote in which the conflict or misunderstanding was of kinesic nature, 4 participants experienced conflict or misunderstanding of linguistic nature and 3 participants of paralinguistic nature.

This suggests that there is a relationship between the results from the first objective and the second. Participants have experienced more situations of intercultural communication in which there is presence of misunderstanding or conflict of linguistic nature. Therefore, participants identify language as the primary factor that could lead to communication breakdown. In other words, aspects related to language dimension are considered as the main source of miscommunication. Nevertheless, NVC keeps being a paramount source of misunderstandings or conflicts. Later, we explored the particular elements that were mentioned in the anecdotes and that originated the misunderstanding or conflict. Results showed that phonetics-phonemics, paralinguistic elements and pragmatics were the three main elements involved in the participants' anecdotes.

In addition, we gathered information on how individuals managed these situations. In terms of misunderstandings, both the survey and interviews revealed that the most common coping strategies involved clarification requests. This typically involved individuals recognizing the breakdown and either requesting repetition or asking for further clarification.

Regarding conflicts, the predominant approach was cooperation. This refers to the parties involved working together to address the communication breakdown and resolve the conflict in a collaborative manner.

In sum, it is seen that NVC has an important impact in communication and it is pertinent to understand it to avoid misunderstandings or conflicts in intercultural encounters. The significance of nonverbal communication components in foreign language education is often overlooked. Therefore, it is essential to raise awareness about this issue to ensure that future language instructors prioritize the inclusion of nonverbal aspects in their teaching. Byram's model of intercultural competence (2021) leads to intercultural sensitivity that can contribute to the avoidance of communicative breakdowns. Further research is needed to understand why nonverbal components are being neglected in language classrooms if they are key to avoid miscommunication, and to explore alternative techniques for incorporating the nonverbal dimension into language programs. It is crucial to shift away from a verbocentric perspective of communication and recognize the equal value of other forms that improve the way we communicate with people from different cultures.

We hope our research awakens the interest for knowing NVC aspects in the community of ELT, teachers, professors and students, as well as in our University (Universidad del Valle) and other Colombian Universities. We expect to continue discovering and spreading (see appendix 6) the advantages of NVC in learning and teaching a foreign language and we hope the space for including this subject matter in our degree is open in the future.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Survey

La comunicación intercultural no verbal en la formación de profesores de lenguas

Estimado estudiante,

esta encuesta forma parte de un estudio exploratorio. Su objetivo es recoger datos sobre el papel de la comunicación no verbal en la comunicación intercultural y en la formación de profesores de idiomas. Ha sido seleccionad@ para completar este cuestionario porque está inscrit@ en el último año de un programa de enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras. Todas sus respuestas serán tratadas de forma anónima y con total confidencialidad. Le tomará alrededor de 20 minutos completar esta encuesta.

¿Cuáles son los procedimientos del estudio? ¿Qué se me pedirá que haga?

Si acepta participar en este estudio, se le pedirá que complete una encuesta sobre el papel de la comunicación no verbal en la comunicación intercultural y en la formación del profesorado. Al final de la encuesta, se le preguntará si desea participar en una entrevista.

¿Cuáles son los riesgos o inconvenientes del estudio?

Creemos que no hay riesgos conocidos asociados a esta investigación; sin embargo, un posible inconveniente puede ser el tiempo que se necesita para completar el estudio.

¿Cuáles son los beneficios del estudio?

Es posible que usted no se beneficie directamente de esta investigación; sin embargo, esperamos que su participación en el estudio pueda contribuir a nuestra comprensión del papel de la comunicación no verbal en la comunicación intercultural y la formación docente.

¿Recibiré una remuneración por mi participación?

¿Tiene algún coste la participación?

No hay costo y no se le pagará por participar en este estudio.

¿Cómo se protegerán mis datos personales?

Haremos todo lo posible para proteger la confidencialidad de la información que recojamos de usted. Su confidencialidad se mantendrá en el grado que permita la tecnología utilizada. En concreto, no se puede garantizar la interceptación de los datos enviados por Internet por parte de terceros.

¿Puedo dejar de participar en el estudio y cuáles son mis derechos?

Usted no tiene que participar en este estudio si no lo desea. Si acepta participar en el estudio, pero luego cambia de opinión, puede abandonarlo en cualquier momento. No hay sanciones ni consecuencias de ningún tipo si decide que no quiere participar.

¿Con quién debo ponerme en contacto si tengo preguntas sobre el estudio?

Tómese todo el tiempo que desee antes de tomar una decisión. Estaremos encantados de responder a cualquier pregunta que tenga sobre este estudio. Si tiene más preguntas sobre este estudio o si tiene un problema relacionado con la investigación, puede ponerse en contacto con el investigador principal, José Aldemar Álvarez Valencia (jose.aldemar.alvarez@correounivalle.edu.co).

Si desea participar en el estudio, por favor inicie la encuesta pulsando la flecha situada en la esquina inferior. Muchas gracias.

	Importance for communication				Importance for prepar programs		
	No	Low	Moderate	High	No	Low	Moderate
Morphology (e.g. the structure of words and parts of words, prefixes, suffixes)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Appearance (including clothing)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Vocabulary	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Phonetics/Phonemics	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	No	Low	Moderate	High	No	Low	Moderate
Kinesics (e.g. gestures, manners, postures, personal space, body contact, gaze)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Syntax (e.g. arrangement and formation of sentences, clauses, phrases)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Proxemics (personal or intimate distances between peers, parents, acquaintances)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Chemical/dermal (e.g. sweating, tear-shedding, blushing)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

PART B: SELF-ASSESSMENT OF YOUR PROGRAM'S INCLUSION OF NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

[illegible]

[illegible]

	Importance in program				Importance that SHOULD be placed in a program			
	No	Low	Moderate	High	No	Low	Moderate	High
Using gestures with hand, face or other part of the body	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Using appropriate touching	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

PART D: PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

PART D: PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

5. Based on your personal experience, please share your level of agreement with the statements listed below. If the statement is not applicable, please indicate N/A.

1/10/23, 10:37 AM

Qualtrics Survey Software

Level of agreement with statement

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

During my education as a foreign language teacher, I have been taught about aspects of intercultural communication.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

During my education as a foreign language teacher, the concept of communicative competence was inclusive of nonverbal communication.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

In interacting with speakers of a foreign culture, I have experienced intercultural misunderstanding or conflict because my conversational partner has misinterpreted some of my nonverbal communication cues.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

In interacting with speakers of a foreign culture, I have experienced intercultural misunderstanding or conflict because I have misinterpreted some of my conversational partner's nonverbal communication cues.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

In interacting with speakers of a foreign culture, I feel that most of my experiences of misunderstanding or conflict have had to do with linguistic aspects (e.g. grammar, vocabulary pronunciation).

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

In interacting with speakers of a foreign culture, I have experienced intercultural misunderstanding or conflict due to my lack of knowledge of aspects of my conversational partner's country such as its institutions, political system, geographical characteristics, art, and history.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Most interactions I have had with foreign speakers of the language(s) that I am learning have been face to face.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

	Level of agreement with statement				
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Most interactions I have had with foreign speakers of the language(s) I am learning have been through digital media (e.g. Facebook, Skype).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Future foreign/second language teachers should be taught how to address aspects of nonverbal communication in their classes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

6. Please share an example of an intercultural experience in which you or your conversational partner experienced misunderstanding or conflict due to differences in nonverbal communication cues (tongue clicks, prosody, pitch, volume, intonation, gestures, manners, postures, personal space, body contact, gaze). If this does not apply to you, you can also describe the experience of someone you know.

Appendix 2: Interview

Comunicación no verbal e interculturalidad en la formación docente

FECHA ENTREVISTA: Mayo 17 de 2022

HORA: 8:00-9:00 am

Enlace Zoom: <https://lobby.sar.ruav.edu.co/#/4C2XU7MKEY5Y>

ASEGURARSE DE EMPEZAR A GRABAR

Buenos días XXXXXX, gracias por aceptar participar en esta entrevista. Mi nombre es XXXXXX y soy investigador/miembro del semillero de esta investigación.

Como ya sabe, la entrevista se está grabando y el protocolo con las preguntas se lo hemos enviado con anterioridad.

Vamos a empezar:

Primero quería retomar el concepto de la dimensión no verbal que como sabrás incluye todos aquellos elementos que no son lingüísticos como los sonidos, los movimientos, la cercanía, los gestos, la forma de vestir, la postura y los objetos que las personas utilizan para crear significado en la comunicación.

Hablemos entonces un poco sobre la comunicación...

1. ¿Qué crees que puede causar ruptura o conflicto en la comunicación en una interacción con una persona de otro país?
2. ¿Qué tan importante es saber sobre aspectos de la comunicación no verbal para evitar ruptura o conflicto en la comunicación en una interacción con una persona de otro país?
3. ¿Cuál debería ser el papel de la dimensión no verbal en la formación de un futuro profesor de lengua extranjera?
4. En la encuesta usted menciona una anécdota en la que hubo ruptura en la comunicación. La anécdota es sobre...

¿Podría contarnos más en detalle sobre esta anécdota?

(Tener en cuenta una estructura narrativa: dónde, cuándo, con quién, cómo, una resolución; ¿entonces cómo se resolvió o no la situación de ruptura de comunicación o conflicto?)

¿Usted recuerda alguna otra anécdota? SOLO SI ES NECESARIO

¿Hay alguna idea o reflexión que de pronto se quedó sin mencionar que quisiera puntualizar antes de cerrar la entrevista?

Muchas gracias!

Appendix 4: Example transcription of an interview

Nombre del entrevistador: Angela Quiroz (AQ)

Entrevistado: XXXX (XX)

Fecha: Jun. 10, 2022

Hora: [03:00 pm-03:14 pm]

Duración de la grabación: 14 minutos 2 segundos

(AQ) Okay, XX. Entonces. Primero que todo buenas tardes y gracias por aceptar participar en esta entrevista, mi nombre es Ángela Quiroz y soy miembro del semillero de Lingüística Aplicada de la Universidad del Valle. Como ya sabes la entrevista está siendo grabada y el protocolo con las preguntas ya lo hemos enviado con anterioridad a tu correo electrónico. Antes de empezar con la entrevista y con las preguntas quisiera recordar, bueno, traer a colación lo que es la dimensión no verbal, recordemos que la dimensión no verbal incluye todos aquellos elementos que no son lingüísticos como los sonidos, los movimientos, la cercanía que se tiene con otras personas, los objetos que se usan durante el discurso, la forma de vestir e incluso la postura. Bueno, teniendo en cuenta todo esto, empecemos a hablar sobre comunicación. Entonces, la primera preguntas, Heidy, es ¿qué crees que puede causar ruptura o conflicto en la comunicación en una interacción con una persona de otro país?

(XX) Bueno, yo pienso en base a lo que es la comunicación no verbal, tal vez la falta de conocer ciertos códigos no verbales de una nueva cultura puede ocasionar este rompimiento, no. Así también, la falta de conocer aspectos fundamentales de la cultura como es, digamos el lenguaje coloquial, las formas diferentes de pensamientos que hay allá. etc

(AQ) Okay, cuando tú dices que de pronto hay falta de conocimiento o hay diferentes códigos ¿a qué te refieres exactamente?

(XX) por ejemplo, digamos que en un país saludan de una manera, utilizando la comunicación no verbal y en otro país utilizan la comunicación normal y saludan de otra manera, entonces pues ser que por falta de investigar sobre los codigos que manejan en esa cultura, uno puede llegar a confundirse, no

(AQ) entiendo, bueno, XX. La segunda pregunta es ¿Qué tan importante crees tú que es saber sobre los aspectos de la comunicación no verbal para evitar rupturas o conflictos en la comunicación en una interacion con una persona de otro país?

(XX) bueno, yo digo que es fundamental porque los seres humanos nos comunicamos no solo de manera verbal sino también de manera no verbal, no. Y muchas veces uno tiene una conversación con una persona y está hablando pero el gesto, los gestos faciales, los movimientos que hace no son acorde a lo que se quiere transmitir. Entonces es fundamental trabajar en ambas partes, la parte no verbal y la parte verbal

(AQ) Entiendo. Listo, XX. La tercera pregunta es ¿Cuál debería ser el papel de la dimensión no verbal en la formación de un futuro profesor de lengua extranjera?

(XX) debería tener la misma importancia que la parte verbal porque en el caso de educar a otras personas o educar a estudiantes, debemos tratar de ser lo mas claros posibles al transmitir el mensaje, al transmitir la información o lo que queremos transmitir a los estudiantes. Entonces, si logramos tener al mismo tiempo esa parte no verbal y verbal incorporada en lo que, en la comunicación, podríamos ser claros y darnos a entender mejor a los estudiantes

(AQ) Okay, entiendo. XX ¿qué rol crees que tiene la dimensión no verbal cuando se enseña una lengua extranjera? Tú dices que a los estudiantes podría hacerlos desarrollar unas conversaciones en que todo quede más claro

(XX) ajá, ¿qué rol tendría?

(AQ) ajá

(XX) sería útil en el ámbito, en la parte de la comprensión porque muchas veces queremos digamos en una lenguas, al hablar o utilizar una lengua extranjera, a veces el que recibe la información, queda con dudas sobre lo que le estamos trasmitiendo, no. Entonces, si los estudiantes que están, digamos, son principiantes en el aprendizaje de una nueva lengua, pueden o desarrollen esa parte no verbal, pueden darse a explicar mejor o a entender mejor ante lo que ellos quieren transmitir en otra lengua

(AQ) Entiendo, entonces mediante gestos, sería como que complementan lo que ya dicen con la lengua

(XX) Exacto

(AQ) Listo, XX. Y ya nuestra ultima pregunta va mas relacionada a la anécdota que tú nos compartiste en la encuesta que hiciste hace un tiempito ya. La anécdota era acerca de un extranjero que tú nos dijiste que no te habías podido dar a entender o que no le entendiste, ¿nos podrías comentar un poco más acerca de esa experiencia?

(XX) Bueno, esa experiencia fue hace muchos años. Digamos que en ese tiempo, no sé, nuestra familia, mi familia no tenia como unas bases en lo que es la comunicación no verbal. Entonces, a la casa llegó una persona, yo creo que él era de estados Unidos, él entró, cenó con nosotros, él estaba buscando posada, donde pasar una noche, entonces en ese proceso cenó con nosotros

(AQ) perdón, XX. ¿Dónde fue eso?

(XX) donde vivía anteriormente, yo vivía en Mondomo, Cauca. Bueno, entonces él llegó, pasó ddigamos una hora. Claramente no hubo interacción verbal porque pues nosotros no comprendíamos nada de los que nos decía, pero luego él al ver que nosotros no comprendíamos lo que él quería transmitirnos él empezó a hacer gestos. Pasaron algunos minutos y nosotros nos empezamos a preguntar, bueno y qué será que nos quiere decir, entonces cuando de repente mi padre dijo, “ah, él quiere ir a dormir, creo que él quiere ir a dormir” y yo le pregunté “¿y por qué sacas esa conclusión? Y él me dijo “porque él hizo así” (pone sus manos sobre sus mejillas e inclina la cabeza) y nosotros nos pusimos a pensar ahí un ratico y verdad, dijimos verdad, mi papá tiene razón. Claro, eso era lo que él quería, entonces esa anécdota me pareció muy interesante porque muchas veces digamos, uno tiene cierta comunicación con personas extranjeras, como que no hablan nuestra lengua y no les

podemos comprender lo que nos tratan de decir porque no, niquiera sabemos o conocemos los códigos no verbales, necesarios o básicos, entonces esa parte que comenté, es la anécdota.

(AQ) XX, tú cuentas que tu papá llegó a la conclusión de que el extranjero quería dormir. ¿Cómo se solucionó eso? Es decir, si ustedes no hablaban la lengua de él y él solo sabía comunicarse en su lengua, ¿Cómo lo llevaron a un lugar donde él pudiera dormir?

(XX) Es, yo creo que es, no sé, como que uno sabe, digamos que poniendonos en la posición de él. Si él vio que nos pusimos de pie y caminamos hacia un lugar, en ese caso teníamos que subir unas escaleras para llegar a las habitaciones, él solo nos siguió, nosotros como que “ven, síguenos” pero sí fue un poco complejo porque no le entendíamos nada de lo que él decía, entonces, solo era con gestos, gestos tratando de que él nos entendiera, sin embargo, resalto que él si nos comprendía, los gestos que hacíamos para tratar de entablar la conversación con él, él sí nos comprendía, tal vez nosotros sí estábamos un poquito como perdidos en la comunicación no verbal pero él si la tenía muy clara en cuanto a la comunicación no verbal

(AQ) Entonces él simplemente se guió porque ustedes se pusieron de pie y lo llevaron a un lugar, me imagino, donde él pudiera descansar

(XX) sí, lo llevamos, digamoslo así, a la habitación y ya le señalamos, “mira esta es la cama” y ya él, “ya sí”, con los gestos ya comprendimos que comprendió lo que le dijimos

(AQ) entiendo, y XX, de pronto se te viene a la mente alguna otra experiencia similar en la que haya habido conflicto o haya habido ruptura de la comunicación

(XX) ¿dejando a un lado la comunicación on verbal?

(AQ) no, teniendo en cuenta la comunicación no verbal

(XX) Por el momento no recuerdo así que yo diga

(AQ) o bueno, también podríamos pensar en la comunicación en general

(XX) bueno, en la comunicación en general, podríamos también decir que, en el caso de la comunicación no verbal y la comunicación en general, siempre cuando uno, digamos, entabla una conversación con una persona extranjera, siempre uno le mira como los gestos faciales, no, los movimientos que hace, mucha veces uno que está aprendiendo, digamos mi caso, inglés y francés, me enfoco mucho en la vocalización, cómo los movimientos que hace, cómo abre la boca, entonces así ya sé qué palabra podría estar utilizando si no la entiendo en lo que él o ella me quiere decir, pero no me enfoco tanto en los movimientos no verbales de las manos ni nada de eso si no más que todo en la parte facial y en los movimientos que haga, por ejemplo si los profesores nativos franceses son muy gestuales, entonces cuando yo les miro la cara ellos son muy expresivos, entonces puedo comprender mejor lo que ellos me quieren decir.

(AQ) Entiendo, listo XX. ¿Hay alguna idea o reflexión que de pronto se quedó sin mencionar que quisieras puntualizar antes de cerrar esta entrevista?

(XX) no, pues, hablando de la comunicación no verbal y yo diría que muchas veces, cuando uno no ha tenido como esas bases o no ha visto la necesidad de comunicarse a través de gestos o algo parecido, uno tiende a ser muy rígido, digamoslo así, no utiliza esa parte que le

puede ayudar a hacerse comprender mejor en una comunicación con otra persona, entonces yo diría que eso es algo que debería, digamos, los que están en proceso de aprendizaje de una nueva lengua, que deberían trabajar, no. Porque nos ayudaría muchísimo a entablar una relación ya sea con una persona en el extranjero o incluso con nuestros propios allegados

(AQ) sí, XX. Claro. XX, muchísimas gracias, hemos llegado al final de nuestra entrevista, gracias por participar de ella y nada, que tengas un feliz día

(XX) vale, muchísimas gracias a ustedes

(AQ) que estés muy bien, chao

(XX) vale, chao

Appendix 5: Transcription matrix analysis of the interviews

#	Participant	¿Qué crees que puede causar ruptura o conflicto en la comunicación en una interacción con una persona de otro país?	¿Qué tan importante es saber sobre aspectos de la comunicación no verbal para evitar ruptura o conflicto en la interacción con una persona de otro país?	¿Cuál debería ser el papel de la dimensión no verbal en la formación de un futuro profesor de lengua extranjera?	En la encuesta usted menciona una anécdota en la que hubo ruptura en la comunicación. ¿Podría contarnos más en detalle sobre esta anécdota?	Type of communication Breakdown	Dealing strategy	Semiotic system involved
1	xx	Pegar aquí la respuesta completa del estudiante	Pegar aquí la respuesta completa del estudiante	Pegar aquí la respuesta completa del estudiante	Pegar aquí la respuesta completa del estudiante			
PATRONES ENCONTRADOS								
1	xx							

Appendix 6: Presentation Universidad de Antioquía RedPolidiversa**UNIVERSIDAD
DE ANTIOQUIA**

Personería jurídica ley 71 de 1878 del estado soberano de Antioquia y ley 153 de 1887

En atención a que**ANGELA JOHANA QUIROZ MEJÍA**

Identificado con Cédula de ciudadanía 1143867925

Cumplió con las actividades programadas con una intensidad de 24 horas, y reunió los demás requisitos que exigen las normas universitarias en el marco del:

**PRIMER ENCUENTRO DE SEMILLEROS Y LÍDERES
- RED INTERINS. EN POLÍTICAS Y PRÁCTICAS
MULTILINGÜES PARA LA DIVERSIDAD Y LA
INTERCULTURALIDAD.**

La Escuela de Idiomas expide la siguiente constancia el 03 de marzo de 2023.

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UNIVERSIDAD DE ANTIOQUIA

Personería jurídica ley 71 de 1878 del estado soberano de Antioquia y ley 153 de 1887

En atención a que

VALENTINA RUIZ RODRIGUEZ

Identificado con Cédula de ciudadanía 1112497981

Cumplió con las actividades programadas con una intensidad de 24 horas, y reunió los demás requisitos que exigen las normas universitarias en el marco del:

**PRIMER ENCUENTRO DE SEMILLEROS Y LÍDERES
- RED INTERINS. EN POLÍTICAS Y PRÁCTICAS
MULTINLINGÜES PARA LA DIVERSIDAD Y LA
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