

Critical Thinking and Intercultural Competence: Review, Use, and Classification of the 21st Century Skills in Intercultural EFL Education

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Abstract

We all live in a globalised world today, and even the smallest interactions taking place in our daily lives can now take place in a global level thanks to the advancements in telecommunication facilities. To keep up with these intercultural interactions, whether virtually or in real life, people now need some abilities for effective communication and cooperation, and 21st Century Skills are a way to address this need. Among these skills, critical thinking – clear and rational thinking, might be a helpful way of approaching issues arising from intercultural communication and guiding learners in developing their intercultural communication and interaction skills. Both of these competences are used in the area of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL), in textbooks, materials, and assessment tools. This article review aims at scanning the literature to find traces of different uses of the skill of critical thinking and intercultural competence in the EFL context to tackle issues resulting from intercultural communication or develop language learners' intercultural competence. The study also intends to classify these uses by analysing similar patterns in the studies investigated. The review explores 14 studies discussing these two competences in the EFL context and determines three distinct approaches by the researchers.

Keywords: critical thinking, intercultural communicative competence, intercultural communication, intercultural education

1. Introduction

The 21st century is a time of fast development and change, especially in the field of business, which has turned into a global company calling for sharing, travelling, and cooperating in an international scale (Dunning, 2000). This transformation surely requires a workforce that is equipped with qualifications that make it possible to think, act, and communicate within this complex global company (Levy & Murname, 2004). To address the need for producing such a human workforce, a group of frameworks has been created to supply the necessary technical and intellectual criteria required for the curriculum.

According to Reynolds, Tavares, and Notari (2017), three of these frameworks point to the foundational conceptions at the core of the 21st century skills, and they represent the perception of these skills by societies in both the western and the eastern hemisphere, by educational and business resorts. These three are as follows: 1. “21st Century Skills and Competences for New Millennium learners in OECD countries” collated by Ananiadou and Claro (2009), for the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries; 2. Assessment and Teaching of 21st Century Skills (ATCS) that focused on issues in ICT-based assessment (Griffin, P., McGaw, B., & Care, E., 2011); and 3. Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21), an American organisation established in 2002 as a kind of support mechanism propounding standardisations for the educational setting (Reynolds, Tavares, & Notari, 2017).

One of the skills mentioned in all the three frameworks is the skill or competence of Critical Thinking (CT). Although this cognitive process is mainly subject to the domain of psychology and philosophy (Lewis & Smith, 1993), it is also possible to define it within the very field of education (Sternberg, 1986). Hunter (2014) defines the skill as a reflective process of thought provocation as to choose what to regard as true and what false. Due to the connotation the word “critical” resonates, many people confuse CT with being overly critical of a statement or a situation; or remaining

inactive or neutral in the case of a dispute (Beck, 2011). On the contrary, Sumner (1940) emphasises that CT is:

“... the examination and test of propositions of any kind which are offered for acceptance, in order to find out whether they correspond to reality or not. The critical faculty is a product of education and training. It is a mental habit and power. It is a prime condition of human welfare that men and women should be trained in it. It is our only guarantee against delusion, deception, superstition, and misapprehension of ourselves and our earthly circumstances” (p. 632-633).

Also, it is a common mistake that people take creative thinking to be the same thing as CT; however, creative thinking is described as the ability to come up with original solutions to a problem or answers to a question (Duff, Kurczek, Rubin, Cohen & Tranel, 2013). According to Ülger (2016), while creative thinking is built on the characteristics of imagination, productivity, and ingenuity in forming original solutions and thoughts; analysing, assessing, decision-making, and logical problem solving are essential features of CT.

With Sumner’s description and remark in mind, this article review is intended to investigate the uses of CT against certain types of “delusion, deception, superstition, and misapprehension” that can occur within highly delicate grounds, which is intercultural education. For this purpose, studies that focus on intercultural communication cases in language learners’ context with the inclusion of CT were collected through library databases and Google Scholar. After this step, the studies were grouped according to the strategies they appealed to benefit from the skills of CT and intercultural competence. Lastly, these strategies were classified so as to synthesise patterns in the uses of CT and intercultural competence in intercultural EFL education.

2. Background

The term “culture” is one of the most common words in our vocabulary inventory belonging to our daily lives, but it is certain that “culture” is also one of the most difficult words to describe. As an attempt, Wang, Brisling, Wang, Williams, and Chao (2000) describe it as aspects of the environment that are related to human beings, which is one of the most simplistic ways to narrow down this complicated term. This complication seems to result mainly from different meanings adhered to the concept. The first of these attributions is the understanding of culture in the sense of artistic and intellectual products putting “high culture” against “popular culture” in terms of aesthetics (Arnold, 1882). The second meaning, fashioned by Tylor (1870), referred to the common features of the status quo of a social group, this time incorporating objects, ideas, habits, and many other things into the concept. The last adherence, pioneered by Frans Boas and several other anthropologists (Verdon, 2007) highlighted the uniqueness of cultures representing distinct societies, objecting to Arnold’s classification and Tylor’s commodification. Under the light of these disagreements and divergences, nowadays culture has still different definitions such as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another” (Hofstede, 1994, p. 5) or “the set of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviours shared by a group of people, but different for each individual, communicated from one generation to the next” (Matsumoto, 1996, p. 16).

As business, travel, education, health, and many other sectors become more globalised, interaction between societies with distinct cultures becomes inevitable. The first scholarly and systematic mention of such complicated interaction is attributed to American anthropologist Edward T. Hall who referred to it as “Intercultural Communication” in the book *The Silent Language*, published in 1959 (Hart, 1998). Hart (1998) asserts that originally intercultural communication was used to educate American diplomats, which was a pragmatical purpose rather than a theoretical one. According to Rogers, Hart, and Miike (2002), the foundations of the paradigm for Intercultural Communication are as follows:

- Emphasis on cross-cultural communication rather than the macro-level analysis of monocultures;
- Communication that takes place in a non-verbal manner without actual words;
- The unaware utterances made during non-verbal communication (which were in particular focus);
- A non-judgmental, objective, and anthropological attitude towards the examination of cultural differences;
- The requirement for participatory training methods for the trainees with field experience;
- Intercultural communication as a highly applied type of training.

Today, there are different definitions for the term given by different scholars. Chen and Starosta (1998) describe it as the form of communication that takes place between individuals belonging to two distinct cultures. It can also be defined as a “symbolic, interpretive, transactional, and contextual” process that yields a mutual meaning resulting from the contact of people from different cultures (Lustig & Koester, 2007, p. 46). According to Arasaratnam (2013, p. 48),

Intercultural Communication refers to the impact of a cross-cultural communication which occurs in a “symbolic” intercultural domain.

As the process of communication between two cultures is highly complex, it is only natural that it requires persons to have certain skills and capabilities to conduct the interaction as flawlessly as possible. A person with such traits could be regarded as what Gardner called an “universal communicator”: people with extraordinary abilities such as intuition and telepathy and characteristics such as firmness, open-mindedness, morality, and socialisation (Gardner, 1962, p. 248). While pioneering studies in this field are mainly focused on international student exchange programmes and international humanitarian aid campaigns, today the field is as broad as it can be encompassing research in countless issues and cases including migration, a global society, global market, and politics (Rathje, 2007). Such an interactional contraction in masses surely urged the introduction of the term “intercultural competence” or “intercultural communicative competence” (ICC). The concept and its developmental timeline have been explained through various models, and Bolten (as cited in Rathje, 2007, p. 255) specifically mentions two different types: list models (an inventory of different competences such as empathy and stress toleration) and structural models (examining ICC as a course of action that requires situational individual skills). According to Deardorff (2006), the terminology shaped around intercultural competence does not have a consensus, which means there are different definitions, purposes, and uses of the concepts such as “intercultural sensitivity” and “global citizenship”. This study, as the core of the theoretical framework, focused on Deardorff’s *Process Model of Intercultural Competence* (2006, 2009) as it is a result of the requirement for its assessment and the development of certain skills peculiar to the concept (Penn, 2011).

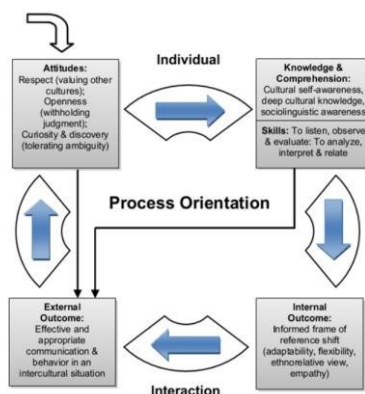


Figure 1. The Process Model of Intercultural Competence. Source: Deardorff (2006)

As Deardorff’s model suggests (Figure 1), ICC is a perpetual procedure that requires the individual to have the knowledge and comprehension of a cultural self-awareness, a deep cultural knowledge, and a sociolinguistic awareness that can be acquired and mastered through the skills of active listening, close observation, and evaluation by means of analysis, interpretation, or relation. This is why CT is quite significant for the assessment and development of ICC (Penn, 2011). Bennett (2013) also emphasises that the developmental process for ICC bears parallelism to the expansion of the skill of CT as both competences are indispensable for a smooth and efficient communication.

The attitudinal features of Deardorff’s model resemble the elements of CT coined in an interdisciplinary panel organised by Facione (2010) to identify the affective and cognitive facets of the skills. The panel resulted in the constitution of certain “dispositions” including:

- inquisitiveness with regard to a wide range of issues,
- concern to become and remain well-informed,
- alertness to opportunities to use critical thinking,
- trust in the processes of reasoned inquiry,
- self-confidence in one’s own abilities to reason,
- open-mindedness regarding divergent world views,
- flexibility in considering alternatives and opinions,
- understanding of the opinions of other people,

- fair-mindedness in appraising reasoning,
- honesty in facing one's own biases, prejudices, stereotypes, or egocentric tendencies,
- prudence in suspending, making, or altering judgments,
- willingness to reconsider and revise views where honest reflection suggests that change is warranted (Facione, 2015, p. 11).

The traits of prudence, open-mindedness, and inquisitiveness identified with critical thinking are quite similar to attitudinal features of Deardorff's model of intercultural competence, which are respect, openness, and curiosity / discovery (Figure 1).

Association of American Colleges & Universities defines critical thinking as "a habit of mind characterised by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion", and the association presents a very comprehensive and practical Critical Thinking Value Rubric (Association of American Colleges and Universities [AAC&U], 2009) that has been devised as a transdisciplinary evaluation of critical thinking in all sorts of assignments requiring inquiry, analysis, and reflection. The rubric contains five fundamental band categories of explanation of issues, evidence, influence of context and assumptions, student's position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis), and conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences). The Capstone (Level 4) band descriptor of the "influence of context and assumptions" category, for example, requires one to "thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyse own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluate the relevance of contexts when presenting a position." Similarly, Deardorff's (2006, p. 250) model of intercultural competence requires one to have "deep knowledge and understanding of culture (one's own and others)" in order for a successful intercultural communication to take place.

3. Methods

One of the aims of this review was to find track studies that were carried out in an EFL setting incorporating CT and ICC, so to this end, some keywords were used to do a search: *critical thinking*, *intercultural (communicative) competence*, *intercultural communication*, *intercultural education*, and *interculturality*. Anchoring critical thinking as the fixed keyword, different combinations were used so as not to overlook any study that could be relevant to the scope of the review. The time interval was taken as the years following 2000, because the first half of the decade was when several frameworks became popular to reform education. The territory where the search was carried out was mainly Google Scholar and the databases of three universities to which the researcher had access to.

In total, 25 studies were located that brought CT and ICC together, but only 22 of these articles were carried out in an educational context. In the end, the scanning process ended up with only 14 articles as these were the only ones that satisfied the preconditions of involving CT skill, involving ICC or intercultural communication, having been conducted in an EFL context; at least being related to language learning. After narrowing down the target studies, the aims, theoretical frameworks, samplings, questions, hypotheses, findings, discussions, and limitations of all these studies were scanned thoroughly for CT and ICC uses and common patterns. Heyn, Meeks, and Pruchno (2019) describe this type of reviews as Scoping Review, which "... is considered a preliminary assessment of the size and scope of the literature. A form of knowledge synthesis that addresses an exploratory research question aimed at mapping key concepts, types of evidence, and gaps in research related to a defined area or field by systematically searching, selecting, and synthesizing existing knowledge" (p. 200).

According to Heyn, Meeks, and Pruchno (2019), a Scope Review needs to be objective though flexible in searching strategy; time and scope constrains are taken into consideration; there is no need for a priori protocol; aims for the strong and weak points related to the topic; appraisal of the literature is not a necessity but an advantage; and implications for further research and applications are mostly unresolved since the main goal of the approach is to scope current studies.

4. Findings and Discussion

When the studies were analysed thoroughly, it was possible to detect three different approaches to the use of ICC and CT in research set in an EFL context. The first pattern that was obvious in the literature review and theoretical framework of these studies was the presumption of the two competences as "separate" but "interdependent" skills that share certain cognitive and affective characteristics. Such understanding of the concepts is quite natural since these skills resemble in terms of certain dispositions such as inquisitiveness, alertness, self-confidence, open-mindedness,

and flexibility (Facione, 2015) as discussed in the background section. Jianying and Puyu (2015), for example, refer to the refinement of CT skills and ICC in an intercultural communication course with the suggestion of two pedagogical approaches: critical pedagogy and comparison pedagogy. They point to the fact that the concept of “competence” includes the aspects of emotion, cognition, and behaviour, and CT and ICC overlap in all three aspects with certain qualifications such as open-mindedness, flexibility, curiosity, and empathy. Therefore, it is a sensible idea to blend both CT and ICC in a course that has any connection with culture. Jianying and Puyu emphasise that:

“... reflecting on ... critical incidents, students will gradually learn to enhance self-consciousness and have awareness of ethnocentrism and stereotypes and get rid of prejudice; cultivate attitudes of curiosity, openness, appreciation and empathy towards foreign cultures; face up to the uncertainties in communicative context, take the challenge to meet cultural conflicts and tensions (2015, p. 51).

In a similar way, Halleck and Coll-Garcia (2015), through an online simulation, investigated the impacts of international student interaction on the students’ critical thinking skills and awareness on interculturality. They targeted 56 Spanish engineering students learning English and 42 American engineering undergraduates to cooperate in a team project during which students teleconferenced and texted. The two-week project asked students in two mixed groups to first agree on an engineering project, assign a project leader choosing among the provided eighteen curriculum vitae, write an invitation letter, and create an advertisement. The researchers used a survey to find out the participant students’ attitude towards their expected gains from the simulation, their view of lingual and cultural differences, the accomplishment of the task, their suggestions to improve the project further, and what they had really learnt. The results showed that while Spanish students found the experience useful for their foreign language skills of speaking and writing, American students complained about having difficulty in working with speakers of English whose proficiency was not adequate, which points to a lack of development in terms of cultural awareness. The researchers do not specify any particular developments in either of the competencies, CT or ICC, and there is no mention of any particular one having an impact on the other.

Also, Khatami and Ghaffarzadeh Hassankiadeh (2015) conducted a study that examined the connection between ICC and CT, two important components of learning/teaching processes. The sample was a total of 100 translation students from B.A. level translation studies and TEFL in a university. Quantitative data were collected through an OPT test, a Critical thinking questionnaire, and an Intercultural Communicative Competence Questionnaire. The results suggested that there was a positive linear correlation (0.44) between CT and ICC skills. The researchers refer to the two competences separately within the theoretical framework, but they do not suggest a cause/effect relationship or that one competence is necessary for the development of the other. Soboleva and Lomakina (2018) share, similarly, an evaluation of intercultural communication with regards to the parameters that shape cognition, and they report that there is a correlation between these parameters and the CT process. So, they call for the interconnected improvement of both processes to foster students’ ICC. To the researchers, the two competences intersect at certain points, and a person equipped with CT can easily avoid bias and partiality to tackle problems stemming from intercultural interactions. In a similar way, the fostering of ICC will have an impact on the development of CT skills, so Soboleva and Lomakina recommend that courses on intercultural communication include the development of CT skills into the curriculum as part of a systematic attempt to assure the desired outcome.

In their reflective article, Vurdien and Puranen (2018) evaluate and account the experiences of students working on three bilingual (English and Spanish) task-based projects involving collaboration. Both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered through questionnaires administered at the beginning and end of the projects to see how the students could improve their CT skills and intercultural awareness through telecollaboration, and how they could cascade their knowledge and views via social network and teleconference. The first project involved 19 Spanish EFL students and 17 Finnish students collaborating on Facebook; in the second project, 12 Spanish EFL students and 17 Finnish students communicated asynchronously through videoconferencing; and the last project comprised 9 Spanish EFL students and 12 Finnish students who used both videoconferencing and writing tasks on Facebook. The observations and analyses illustrated that these online interactions to share opinions and perspectives enabled students to find out one another’s cultural characteristics through communication, exchanging, reflection, discussion, and analysis, thus enhancing their CT skills to engage in an environment of intercultural education. Finally, the paper by Jing-xia (2019) first introduces important features of Language and Intercultural Critical Thinking Integrated Approach (LICTIA) to teach English to non-English major graduates of Central University of Finance and Economics, and then provides a basic guideline on how to benefit from LICITIA in practice. According to the author, the approach is an essential way to enhance language learning skills, intercultural CT, and humanistic education, while achieving the goals of competence, CT, and ICC, set goals of English teaching in Chinese universities. The tasks included in the approach, such as debate, public speech, panel discussion, and role-playing can be interpretive, reflective, or evaluative. The targeted gains are certain universal

values like humility, autonomy, integrity, courage, perseverance, confidence in reason, empathy, and fair-mindedness which are indispensable for intercultural communication. Section by section, the author explains how different language skills help students improve these traits. For example, literary reading can change students' thinking patterns by fostering imagination and CT. Also, argumentative writing can enable students to avoid bias and prejudice, whilst listening to recent hot issues can create awareness in students in terms of what happens around the world, cultural misunderstandings, and economic issues to help them refrain from self- and cultural centralism. The author, however, does not necessarily state if one of the competences, CT or ICC, has an impact on the other.

The second pattern that was detected in six of the studies analysed is the presumption of CT skill as a catalyser in the development of ICC. Each case of cross-cultural interaction is a decision-making process, and according to Klein, Moon, and Hoffman (2006), an effective decision-making process requires the agent to gather evidence and analyse the evidence critically, inquire consistency, and be aware of the assumptions that influence their understanding of the case, which are among the universal values of the skill of critical thinking (Association of American Colleges and Universities [AAC&U], 2009; Epstein, 2003; Brookfield, 1987; & Scriven & Paul, n.d.). As an exemplification of this pattern, the report by Marcellus (2016) aims to profile and exemplify a sociology textbook in order to foster intercultural education and CT in EFL students from an engineering university in the United Arab Emirates. The target book was used as a way to enhance CT skills and facilitate an environment where students could share opinions regarding interculturality. Two strategies were applied to collect data from the students: they had to read the assigned pages and write journals comparing their gains from the reading to their experiences in real life. The second method was whole-class discussions in which students referred to cultural backgrounds (both self and others') to agree or disagree with the remarks of the author. The experience is reported to have enabled students to approach information critically and from different points of view, guiding them in having a glimpse of the world outside their own. The reporter states that such a practice is quite essential for learners to become global citizens that can tackle cultural issues through empathising and understanding.

The article by Sobkowiak (2016) also investigated the relationship between critical thinking and intercultural competence by means of searching through EFL textbook preferred by Polish schools. The aim of the study was to see if the selected 20 coursebooks induced CT in students and urged them to examine intercultural communication instances through their own perspectives. Sobkowiak also supports the claim that certain traits of CT and ICC overlap, and to this end, he believes that students in the language learning classroom should engage in CT process to improve their ICC. Concerning the books analysed, on the other hand, he reports that they contained a little and unimportant amount of opportunities for learners to operate their CT skills systematically. In a similar way, in their study, Lim and Griffith (2016) present the design of language learning activities to develop ICC with the use of Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) skills. The sample activities presented target cultural objectives and CT skills enabling teachers to recycle information and support their students' present gains. Lim and Griffith discuss that improving higher order thinking skills such as comparison, assessment, evaluation, and synthesis is vital to the development of ICC. To be able to engage in intercultural communication flawlessly, learners need to possess a critical awareness in culture, which means to be able to apply their present knowledge in new situations with an attention to the context, limitations, language, and register. The authors share various sample material with various topic areas that work on improving learners' ICC. They finally remark that these activities can equip learners with chances of involving in CT processes to understand the target culture better and develop higher levels of ICC.

The paper by Orna-Montesinos (2017) reflects on the process of a material design for English learners with military-specific profile to build on their linguistic and intercultural skills through genre- and task-based approach, specifically enhancing CT and supporting intercultural awareness. The theoretical framework is built on the notion that learners need to possess the essential skills of both linguistic competence and ICC to engage in cultural diversity efficiently. Orna-Montesinos mentions Byram, Gribkova, and Starkey's (2002) recommendation that a significant requirement for integrating interculturality into language learning material design is to ascertain the qualifications an interculturally competent person would have: the skill of critical, reflective thinking that can enable learners to handle complicated phases of intercultural communication such as bias, sexism, and racism. Orna-Montesinos presents twenty learning tasks designed in three different learning areas: i) Me & the others, ii) Me & communication, and iii) Me & the world, which were determined in line with Sorrells' (2015) three interrelated intercultural communication levels: (1) the micro (individual level = me), (2) the meso (the group level = the discipline and their interlocutors), and (3) the macro (the broad geopolitical scenario = the world) (Orna-Montesinos, 2017, p. 18). She finally comments that:

“requiring learners to develop critical thinking skills and maturity through reading and listening comprehension resources paves the way to reflect on cultural differences... ultimately to equip learners with the content and processual competences of an interculturally competent person” (p.29).

Furthermore, the paper by Meiramova (2017) documents an approach to teaching CT skills to EFL learners in higher education institution in Kazakhstan. The study also provides a sample lesson plan involving CT process to handle issues stemming from conceptualisation. The findings of the research reveal that the skill of CT has an influence on learners' learning process since it acts as an effective approach to ICC. Lastly, the reflection article by Gómez Rodríguez (2018) intends to suggest a genre-based way to enhance English learners' ICC by means of engaging in CT process. He builds the theoretical framework on the stages of genre-based approach, critical thinking skills contained in Byram's (1997) model of ICC, and Numrich's (2006) sequence of explicit CT tasks. As an example for applying all the stages and skills, the author suggests two reading passages to both study the language and to improve ICC. Lastly, he anticipates three main limitations with the proposed genre-based approach: groups introduced to genre-based approach for the first time may find the stages time-consuming; the unaltered authentic language could be challenging for learners; and building ICC could take a lot of time as it is not an inborn skill.

The third and the final pattern that stems from the use of ICC and CT skills in contexts of intercultural education is the presumption of ICC as a practical opportunity for students to apply their skills of CT. There is no study that points to ICC as a purely cognitive process, so CT cannot be regarded as a skill peculiar to ICC. Actually, there are several other approaches and methods to help EFL learners develop their CT skills (Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 1989; Kusaka & Robertson, 2006; Liaw, 2007; & Brown, 2007). In this frame, one of the studies done is the reflection article by Guo (2013) which inspects and makes suggestions on the elements in cultural variety thinking attitudes of Chinese students and the effects on CT. She mentions Hall's (1969) remark that culture has a huge impact on our verbal and non-verbal behaviour shaping the way we think, feel, and communicate. Therefore, one's cultural perspective can condition that person's inclination of thinking in a certain way. Therefore, Guo suggests that teaching the culture along with teaching the target language will foster students' CT skills. If Chinese students are trained to decode verbal and nonverbal communication patterns that native English speakers use, they will gain awareness towards cultural differences, which will in return systematically improve their CT competence. In her study, Lu (2013) also inquires how the syllabus used for the 50 EFL students at a Taiwanese medical university incorporated intercultural communication to enhance students' CT skills. She emphasises that according to Risager (2007) and Guilherme (2002), ICC is one of the targets of foreign language education, and it includes critical thinking skill in its body. In the scope of the study, a medical freshmen student group was taught a programme addressing sociocultural issues. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected through questionnaires, writing assignments, and course feedback. The analysis of the results pointed to the fact that incorporating intercultural approach through a theme-based syllabus enhanced the participants' CT skills and language proficiency. The researcher mentions gaining insights as to the practicality of designing efficient instructional and intercultural curricula to improve students' CT.

5. Conclusion

This article review sought to scope the relevant literature to discover studies that incorporated critical thinking skills and intercultural communicative competence in the context of an intercultural EFL education. The 14 studies spotted and analysed indicated that researchers followed different patterns as to the integration of the two competences into the learning and teaching processes in three different approaches. The first pattern, regarding ICC and CT as separate and interdependent competences, resonates Facione's (2015) dispositions some of which are common traits observed in both skills. The second pattern was interpreted out of studies that mentioned rather a one-way relationship between the two competences, mostly observing that CT was a skill to enhance ICC. This pattern is closer to Deardorff's (2009) model of ICC since it is composed of several skills one of which could be CT. The last pattern sees ICC rather as a ground making it possible for language learners to apply their CT skills, indicating Lustig and Koester's (2007) model of ICC as a process rather than a skill.

The biggest limitation of the study was one that is similar to the limitations seen in a meta-analysis research design: sample bias. Strube, Gardner, and Hartmann (1985) emphasise that the data collected for studies of this nature usually come from research that is non-random, subjective, and revolving around a conceptual hypothesis, and the biased data causes two main constraints of low magnitudinal representativeness and non-representative direction effect. As such, the small number and low quality of the studies found and incorporated made it difficult to carry out a sound and more meaningful synthesis in the patterns followed. Therefore, book chapters could be incorporated into the scoping process so as to heighten the quality of the data gathered and synthesis derived. Also, concentrating only on particular words during the literature scan greatly narrowed the scope and reduced the number studies that could be reached. According to Snyder (2019, p. 337), by concentrating on just a number of "terms to try to limit your search, you can end up with a very flawed or skewed sample and missing studies that would have been relevant to your case or even contradict other

studies.” Another big challenge for the study conducted was that it required an interdisciplinary involvement into the searching and reading process, with a particular focus on the fields of education, sociology, and psychology to understand the competence dimension of both CT and ICC, cognitive, affective, and behavioural.

The findings and syntheses of this scope review bear significance for syllabus and curriculum developers who aim to enhance an intercultural education with the involvement of critical thinking and intercultural communicative competence; teachers of EFL who wish to increase their students’ levels of intercultural awareness through critical thinking and intercultural communicative competence; and researchers who are involved in designing a literature review for a study that targets the topics of education, language education, critical thinking, intercultural competence, intercultural communicative competence, intercultural communication, intercultural education, or interculturality.

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