



Higher Education: Interculturality as a Development Process in Border Territories

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Abstract

This research proposal is developed within the framework of the thesis work required to obtain the Master's degree in Communication, Culture, and Border at the University of Pamplona.

The purpose of this study is to explore the intercultural dynamics that emerge within the academic context of higher education, considering them as key elements for communicative development.

This work follows a qualitative research approach. It is based on a compilation and analysis of theoretical references concerning interculturality in higher education and border territories, carried out from a critical analysis perspective, using documentary inquiry as the main method.

The findings underscore the importance of cultural diversity at the intersection of language, traditions, stereotypes, and symbolic interpretations, which influence and shape academic experiences.

These intercultural elements enrich the academic environment and contribute significantly to the advancement of communication in higher education settings..

Key words: Cultural diversity, Higher education, Interculturality, Intersection of language, Border territory.

Introduction

In an increasingly interconnected world, "of intentional actions that are mostly inscribed in political and military strategies, and are based on complex alliances and social dynamics" (Hoyos, 2020, p. 44), the communicational development and integral formation of individuals acquire a primordial importance, integrality, which must be sustained in the prudent connection in the face of the complexity of the human being, between their passive cognition and active consciousness, on the emotional axis that "is that fire that warms and gives meaning and coherence to reason, thought and mental processes and, therefore, to creative thought itself" (2017 in Ciencia, pensamiento y cultura, 2020, p. 20). In this context, of "the academic, virtual, business and physical world, that of the convulsion of texts and images, that of the revolution of citizen activism, where representations of truth(s) and reality(s) flow and vibrate incessantly" (Soto, 2020, p. 23), on a plane of "cognitive dispersion" (Pérez, 2020, p. 208), to understand how people learn to live together in the midst of diversity and difference, with the necessary practice of recognizing "different points of view and disagreements" (Gámez, 2023, p. 4), becomes an essential factor in forging a higher education that not only prioritizes academic growth, but also promotes this growth for the integral development of the being in society; and it is that "both society and communication evolve at the same time" (Medranda, et al., 2020, p. 20), a communicational scenario open to empathy, respect and collaboration between different cultures and perspectives, an opportunity for the construction of collective intelligence, to the "methods of large groups" (2008 and 2016 in Leal, 2022, p. 37) in the "process of growth,

differentiation and mutual reactivation of singularities where each person, through self-evaluation and recognition of their potential, can learn to think together" (Frontera, 2021, p. 35). In this sense, education, with its transformative capacity, is challenged by new information, communication, and data processing technologies, technologies that, according to Frontera (2021), are a narrative written and designed "for the community, but experienced individually" (p. 36), which require immediate adaptation, a necessary appropriation in the educational field. These actions are crucial to effectively face the challenges inherent in societies and their logical development, and in essence, to propose an intercultural path.

The objective of this research is to explore the intercultural dynamics created in an academic context of higher education as an essential element of communicational development from an integrative perspective, analyzing various approaches to interculturality from the theoretical references for the understanding of its dynamics in the university context, integrating the processes of interculturality, communication and development in a border territory in the structure of the higher education and in that order, to reveal what interculturality entails and its contributions to the development and integral formation in higher education.

It is relevant to mention that there is a prevailing motivation to understand and address the emerging intercultural dynamics in the academic context of higher education in the border territory, without evading what the socio-political dimensions currently offer, as in the closest context, "Venezuela, a country that maintains friction with Colombia due to the dynamics derived from the armed conflict" (2006 in Suárez and Ardila, 2022, p. 25), and with the colour of violence that "erodes trust in institutions and, therefore, weakens the conceptions and exercise of citizenship" (Buitrago, 2021, p. 28). Given the particularity of this border region, characterized by its rich cultural and social diversity, it is essential to propose the psychosocial imagination of VV. AA. (2023) to explore how the interactions between diverse identities and perspectives influence the process of communicational development, all without neglecting "the dark cultural heritage of remote rural traditions" (1999 in VV. AA. 2023, p.35). This integrative approach seeks to shed light on the challenges and opportunities that arise at the intersection of Colombian and Venezuelan cultures in an academic environment, thus enriching the global understanding of interculturality as a key driver for educational and social progress in a border territory, in the thought that "socially life is increasingly migratory" (Nail, 2021, p. 19).

Likewise, this research highlights the importance of valuing and strengthening interculturality in higher education as a contribution to the sustainable development of communities in border areas, in the understanding that these institutions "are assumed as social and historical constructions, as learning organizations" (Sánchez, 2022, p. 135).

Methodology

The collection of information for this paper is carried out through a qualitative, compilation work that analyzes the theoretical references of interculturality in higher education and border territory with a perspective of critical analysis, from documentary analysis.

For this writing, the following books were used as sources: Editorial Sb., Dykinson, Trotta Editorial, Narcea Ediciones, Editorial Abya-Yala, Ediciones USTA, Editorial Verbo Divino, Ediciones Unimagdalena and research articles from the journals: Revista Interuniversitaria de Didáctica de las Lenguas Extranjeras de la Universidad Internacional de La Rioja (UNIR), University of Utrecht (Netherlands); Journal of Spanish Language Teaching of the University of Oviedo, in Spain; the Conrado Magazine of the Autonomous Regional University of Los Andes. Ecuador; International Journal of Research in Education, of the Javeriana University of Colombia; Revista Dissertatio de Filosofia de la Universidad de Aysén in Chile; magazine of the Universitat Rovira i Virgili; Polo del conocimiento magazine of the Technical University of Manabí, Ecuador; Scientific Research Publishing Inc. From the University of L'Aquila, L'Aquila, Italy; Cuban Journal of Higher Education and the book Social Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Human Rights from the collection of Administration Sciences of the Military School of Cadets, "General José María Córdova". Colombia.

Filtering and classifying sources according to their value and academic projection significantly benefits ongoing research. In the case of Research Experiences in Education, according to its thematic axis: Education, Communication and Culture, for example, propose to the author Villegas et al. (2022) in connection with the seed idea that «students' perception of teachers' credibility has a notable influence on communication» (Froment, 2022, p. 35), is fundamental for the rationalization of intercultural communicative competence in higher education, which is of significant importance due to several key factors such as globalization and diversity in relation to the interaction between students and professors from different cultures and contexts; the training of global citizens to promote empathy, tolerance and openness towards different perspectives and cultures, in an interconnected world; preparation for the labour market that requires understanding the needs and expectations of clients and colleagues from different fields, and adapting to changing work environments; conflict prevention, academic enrichment; the development of critical skills to evaluate situations in a reflective and contextualized way; the promotion of peace and cooperation to foster the peaceful resolution of conflicts and collaboration between people and nations.

On the other hand, it is crucial to refer to the European authors Pérez, et al., (2022, p. 3), from the perspective of the "third space", indicating that as a result of hybridity, our social and cognitive constructions allow us to work under a more creative framework of cultural enrichment, an interesting prism to deal with "forgetfulness and lack of prospective vision" (Rego, 2020, p. 202), also, that intercultural communication in higher education contexts requires specific commitments from the interlocutors to create an environment of

understanding, opening the space for the understanding that "each place of learning evokes in the body the experiences lived, the body uses sensoriality and speech to link the past and the present" (Navarrete, 2022, p. 32). In the same way, offering the point of view of Viteri, et al., (2022, p. 1) on respect and intercultural differences in the Ecuadorian territory for a dignified education, turns out to be significant for the parallel analysis of policies related to diversity and multicultural coexistence in the context of higher education in the border area.

For this process, it is also important to note that the references are recent for the purpose of working with updated information. Higher education and interculturality are constantly evolving due to their interactive dynamics, and it is essential to be aware of the latest perspectives and approaches, especially to incorporate interdisciplinary approaches, where research activity allows the dissolution of the dividing lines between disciplines (Carmona, et al., 2023), which enhance the understanding of interculturality in higher education and in border contexts. all this, with the intention of contributing new ideas and perspectives to this field of study.

Comparative tables were used to qualitatively analyze theories on interculturality, reviewing relevant academic literature and highlighting key concepts and methodological approaches, such as the Critical Contextual approach, Intercultural Adaptation, Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication, as well as Intercultural Identity. The information analyzed helps to see how these theories address interculturality in higher education, especially in border areas, and to identify how they can improve comprehensive education in a multicultural environment.

The study of information from a qualitative approach contemplates four theoretical perspectives: Contextual Critical, Intercultural Adaptation, Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication and Intercultural Identity, on an intercultural, communicational and development objective in a border territory in the structure of higher education together with the continental challenge that all this implies. The next step is to apply the concepts of the four theories to the three characteristics analyzed and propose comparative tables for each theory.

Results

Authors and selection abbreviation

Avila (2022)	A1	Gamez (2023)	A1 4	Moreira and Guzmán (2022)	A2 8	Rodríguez and Hernández (2023)	A4 2
Álvarez and Cotán (2022)	A2	Gázquez, et al. (2021)	A1 5	Nail (2021)	A2 9	Sánchez (2022)	A4 3

Buitrago (2021)	A3	Garre & Ruiz (2023)	A1 6	Navarrete (2022)	A3 0	Soto (2020)	A4 4
Calvo, et al. (2020)	A4	Ibarra (2020)	A1 7	Nava, et al. (2022)	A3 1	Suárez and Ardila (2022)	A4 5
Cobos, et al. (2023)	A5	Hurtado (2020)	A1 8	Nuzzaci (2020)	A3 2	Urrutia, et al. (2022)	A4 6
Cobos, et al. (2023)	A5	Hoyos (2020)	A1 9	Olivero (2022)	A3 3	Villegas, et al. (2022)	A4 7
Cornille, et al. (2021)	A6	Jackson (2021)	A2 0	Prado (2021)	A3 4	Viteri, et al. (2022)	A4 8
Colmeiro (2021)	A7	Lafont and García (2021)	A2 1	Pérez, et al. (2020)	A3 5	Valdés (2023)	A4 9
Carmona, et al. (2023)	A8	López, et al. (2023)	A2 2	Pérez (2020)	A3 6	Van, et al. (2020)	A5 0
Dalouh and Soriano (2020)	A9	Leal García (2022)	A2 3	Ponce (2022)	A3 7	VV (2022)	A5 1
EDUCATION FOR A RENEWED HUMANISM (2020)	A1 0	THE EMOTIONAL DIMENSION (2020)	A2 4	Pastrana and Peniche (2022)	A3 8	VV (2023)	A5 2
Fonseca, et al. (2022)	A1 1	Martín and García (2022)	A2 5	Roca and Djurdjevic (2022)	A3 9	Authors and selection abbreviation	
Frontier (2021)	A1 2	Medranda, et al. (2020)	A2 6	Rey, et al. (2022)	A4 0		
Froment, et al. (2020)	A1 3	Miñán (2020)	A2 7	Rego and Angel (2020)	A4 1		

Table 1.Contextual Critical Reflective Analysis.

Critical Contextual Theory	
It focuses on analyzing interculturality from the perspective of the "key points of social tension, orientation, and philosophical sense (Indians, Afro-descendants, grassroots communities, workers' movements, women, sexual dissidence, etc.)" (Valdés, 2023, p.2).	
Category 1	Authors and relationship
In the dynamic understanding of interculturality in the university context.	It is relevant for analyzing global interaction in higher education because it allows us to examine how cultural diversity manifests itself in the relationships between students and professors from varied social and ethnic contexts (indigenous, Afro-descendants, women, sexual dissidence, etc.). In this framework, it addresses the way in which educational institutions manage and promote inclusion in key processes such as intercultural dialogue, equity in access to academic opportunities, and the curricular integration of diverse perspectives. This theory also allows us to observe how tensions and power dynamics affect the teaching-learning process, promoting an education that responds to the social and philosophical realities of all the actors involved. In short, it is linked to higher education through the promotion of an environment that not only manages diversity, but also critiques and transforms the structures that perpetuate exclusion and inequality. <i>The authors: (A4, A7, A8, A10, A17, A27, A28, A30, A31, A33, A35, A37, A38, A40, A47, A49) contribute to this category.</i>
Category 2	Authors and relationship

In the integration of the processes of interculturality, communication and development in a border territory in the structure of higher education.	It allows for a conscious intercultural perspective in higher education by focusing on the points of social tension that emerge in border territories, such as ethnic, gender, and class inequalities, as well as the claims of indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, and sexual dissidence. These key points are manifested in situations of social confrontation such as educational exclusion, lack of representation in curricula, and institutional discrimination. By integrating these realities, higher education can promote communication and development processes that recognize and value cultural differences, fostering an inclusive dialogue that promotes the development of a border territory through equity and social justice. <i>The authors: (A6, A11, A20, A34, A39, A42, A48) contribute to this category.</i>
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Category 3	Authors and relationship
In the challenge of interculturality and its contributions to the development and integral formation in higher education.	It enriches the use of interculturality in higher education by recognizing and addressing the social and cultural dynamics of marginalized groups (indigenous, Afro-descendants, women, sexual dissidents, etc.), allowing for comprehensive training that goes beyond technical and academic knowledge. By integrating these points of social tension into the curriculum, it fosters the development of critical, ethical and reflective skills in students, promoting empathy, respect for diversity and social justice. These dynamics include the visibility of struggles for human rights, gender equality, the recognition of cultural identities, and the vindication of grassroots communities, promoting integral development that connects with social and cultural reality, favoring social cohesion and collective well-being. <i>The authors: (A1, A2, A3, A5, A9, A19, A27, A32) contribute to this category.</i>

Source: Authors, (2024).

Table 2.Reflective Analysis of Intercultural Adaptation.

Intercultural Adaptation Theory

It addresses interculturality as a "particularly active and complex sociocultural space of hybridity" (2004 in Roca & Djurdjevic, 2022, p. 3), which highlights the need for cognitive and behavioral adjustments to achieve effective communication.

Category 1

Authors and relationship

In the dynamic understanding of interculturality in the university context.

It addresses sociocultural fusion in the university context by highlighting how students and teachers from different cultures must make cognitive and behavioral adjustments to achieve effective communication. This approach involves activities such as the exchange of cultural experiences, collaboration in intercultural academic projects, and participation in debates and discussions that challenge pre-established norms and values. These dynamics include the reinterpretation of cultural identities, the negotiation of shared meanings, and the integration of diverse perspectives into the curriculum and daily life of the campus, creating a hybrid space where cultures merge and coexist in active and complex ways. This facilitates a learning environment in which interculturality is not only managed, but also lived and experienced, driving a deep understanding of global socio-cultural realities.

The authors: (A2, A4, A6, A7, A9, A17, A26, A32, A35, A37, A39, A40, A42, A46, A47) contribute to this category.

Category 2

Authors and relationship

In the integration of the processes of interculturality, communication and development in a border territory in the structure of higher education. It recommends cognitive and behavioral adjustments that are essential for effective communication and development in higher education. Cognitive adjustments include the reevaluation of previous prejudices, stereotypes, and attitudes about other cultures, while behavioral adjustments refer to the adaptation of forms of interaction, such as nonverbal language, flexibility in social norms, and the ability to listen actively. These adjustments become evident in situations such as the interaction between indigenous and mestizo students in academic discussions, or between teachers and students from different backgrounds in the planning of community projects. The need for these adjustments enhances effective communication by allowing for greater mutual understanding and cooperation, and promotes development by generating inclusive environments where diverse cultural perspectives are leveraged in problem-solving and social innovation, fostering growth in a territory characterized by diversity and cultural boundaries.

The authors: (A3, A13, A14, A18, A20, A23, A25, A28, A30, A33, A34, A49) contribute to this category.

Category 3

Authors and relationship

In the challenge of interculturality and its contributions to the development and integral formation in higher education. It highlights the need to adjust thoughts and behaviors to promote a comprehensive education. Thoughts such as the recognition that there is no single way to approach knowledge, and openness to other worldviews, are key, while behaviors include adapting communication style, respect for response times, and valuing the different forms of participation in the classroom. These adaptations become necessary in situations such as collaboration between students from diverse cultural backgrounds in group projects, where some may prioritize collective work over individualism, or in discussions in which certain groups value respectful and thoughtful dialogue over direct confrontation. By adjusting both cognitive and behavioral expectations, an inclusive learning environment is facilitated, where cultural differences are not only tolerated, but also integrated as part of the development and holistic training of all students.

The authors: (A1, A5, A8, A10, A12, A15, A16, A19, A21, A22, A24, A27, A31, A38, A44, A48) contribute to this category.

Source: Authors, (2024).

Table 3.Reflective Analysis of Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication.

Theory of Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication	
It focuses on linguistic differences and non-verbal signals, where "the conditions in which the modern world develops influences the use of language, committing the subject to express themselves clearly, coherently, and precisely to develop communicative skills" (2019 in Moreira & Guzmán, 2022, p. 4).	
Category 1	Authors and relationship

In the dynamic understanding of interculturality in the university context. It reveals the points of analysis for communicative observation that include linguistic differences (accents, use of idiomatic expressions, vocabulary) and nonverbal cues (gestures, eye contact, body language). These points are essential to understanding how students from diverse cultural backgrounds express themselves and interpret the message within a multicultural environment. Situations such as academic debates, group work with international students or exchanges between teachers from different cultures are scenarios where discrepancies can arise. For example, one culture may interpret silence as respect, while another perceives it as disinterest, affecting communication. This process of observance is relevant to identify and correct possible misunderstandings, contributing to the development of communicative skills such as active listening, intercultural empathy and the ability to adjust the communication style to be clearer and more understandable. These inputs not only enhance academic interaction, but also prepare students for a globalized world, where effective communication across cultures is a critical skill.

The author: (A1) contributes to this category.

Category 2

Authors and relationship

In the integration of the processes of interculturality, communication and development in a border territory in the structure of higher education. Understanding linguistic discrepancies and nonverbal cues is key to effective cross-cultural interaction. This process of understanding involves first recognizing that different cultures interpret language and gestures differently, which can lead to misunderstandings. Discrepancies may include the use of linguistic expressions that have no equivalent in other styles of speech, or differences in intonation and rhythm of speech, which may be misinterpreted as disinterest or aggressiveness. As for nonverbal cues, gestures such as eye contact, physical proximity, or the use of hands can have opposite meanings depending on the culture. These discrepancies are evident in situations such as collaboration between students and teachers of different nationalities in border territories, where indigenous languages, local dialects, and the country's official language converge. In these cases, the comprehensive process requires adjustments in the way of communicating, the patience to interpret the different cultural codes, and the flexibility to overcome linguistic and non-verbal barriers, facilitating clearer and more effective communication that promotes development in these multicultural territories.

The authors: (A9, A11, A13, A18, A20, A35, A37, A42, A47, A49, A51) contribute to this category.

Category 3

Authors and relationship

In the challenge of interculturality and its contributions to the development and integral formation in higher education. It shows the importance of interpreting and projecting the use of language in a modern and changing world. Necessary interpretations include acknowledging that linguistic differences can lead to misunderstandings, and that nonverbal cues, such as gestures, facial expressions, or physical proximity, vary by culture. Projections of this conditioning involve adapting communication to be more inclusive and aware of these variations, which becomes essential in situations of academic dynamics such as in a frontier university, where students and faculty from diverse backgrounds must interpret not only the words, but also the cultural nuances behind the language. Circumstances such as discussions in cross-cultural classes or interaction in multidisciplinary groups require participants to adjust both their verbal language to be clearer and more precise, and their body language to avoid misunderstandings. This adaptation helps to overcome cultural barriers and develop communicative skills that are essential for comprehensive education in a globalized context.

Los autores: (A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7, A8, A10, A12, A14, A15, A16, A17, A19, A21, A22, A23, A24, A25, A26, A27, A28, A36, A38, A39, A40, A41, A43, A44, A45, A46, A48, A50, A52) aportan a esta categoría.

Source:	Authors,	(2024).
Table	4.Reflexive	Analysis of Intercultural Identity.

Theory of Intercultural Identity

It examines how cultural and personal identities are intertwined in intercultural contexts, such as a "situated practice", whichiscarriedoutbymeansofexperience, ofdecoding and understanding of the different cultural codes and theirwritings, which are offered to subjects from time to time" (Nuzzaci, 2020, p. 10), referring to a natural and regulated process that influences growth and development in a normal and expected way.

Category 1	Authors and relationship
In the dynamic understanding of interculturality in the university context.	It allows us to interpret how cultural and personal identities are intertwined in the university context, promoting a development that arises from the constant interaction between students and teachers from different cultures. This intertwining occurs when subjects, through their experiences, decode and understand distinct cultural codes, allowing them to reformulate their own identities. An example of this process can be seen in students from indigenous or regional origins who are integrated into universities with mestizo or international majorities, where their values and worldviews interact with the prevailing academic and social norms. In this space, both groups adapt and enrich their identities, adopting elements of the other, such as customs or languages, without losing their own essence. This development manifests itself in the ability to navigate and understand multiple cultural codes, which strengthens intercultural skills such as tolerance, empathy, and flexibility, which are fundamental for personal and academic growth in a globalized world. Intercultural activities such as debates, collaborative projects and informal meetings are scenarios where this intertwining is activated and facilitates the integral growth of all actors. <i>The authors: (A3, A12, A16, A22, A24, A26, A35, A39, A46, A47, A50) contribute to this category.</i>
Category 2	Authors and relationship

In the integration of the processes of interculturality, communication and development in a border territory in the structure of higher education. It allows the understanding of the complexity of the development of cultural and personal identities by recognizing that these are formed and transformed through experiences in specific contexts, which is called "situated practice". This theory suggests that constant interaction with different cultural codes such as traditions, languages, and values in educational settings, such as universities in border territories, influences the identity of individuals. For example, an Indigenous student attending a university in a multicultural region may experience a series of interactions that challenge and enrich their identity: engaging in dialogues about their culture, collaborating on projects that combine local traditions and academic knowledge, or confronting stereotypes. These experiences, which range from participation in intercultural workshops to collaboration in joint research, allow students not only to reaffirm their own identities, but also to integrate elements of other cultures, thus generating hybrid identities that reflect the complexity and richness of the social environment in which they find themselves. This dynamic of cultural interaction fosters personal and social development that is crucial for cohesion and understanding in diverse educational contexts.

Los autores: (A1, A4, A6, A8, A10, A13, A15, A18, A21, A23, A28, A31, A32, A35, A38, A40, A43, A44, A49, A51) aportan a esta categoría.

Category 3

Authors and relationship

In the challenge of interculturality and its contributions to the development and integral formation in higher education.

It reveals that social circumstances, such as marginalization, ethnic conflicts, migration, and gender inequalities, profoundly affect cultural and personal identities in the university context. These circumstances generate tensions that can lead to the reconfiguration of identities, especially in students from historically excluded communities (indigenous, Afro-descendants, women, sexual dissidents). The complexities that arise include the conflict between preserving one's cultural identity and adapting to a dominant academic environment that may make other worldviews invisible or underestimate. To address this diversity, the processes of decoding and intercultural understanding must be part of the design of educational plans. These plans should include the incorporation of curricula that value traditional and community knowledge, the creation of spaces for intercultural dialogue, and the implementation of participatory methodologies that allow students to express their identities and experiences authentically. An example of this would be the creation of curricula that include the history and traditions of local communities in border territories, along with workshops that promote intercultural empathy. This comprehensive approach not only respects cultural diversity, but also strengthens the development of critical and social competencies in students, promoting an education that promotes social cohesion and respect for diversity.

Los autores: (A3, A5, A7, A9, A11, A14, A17, A19, A20, A25, A27, A29, A30, A33, A34, A36, A37, A41, A42, A45, A48, A52) aportan a esta categoría.

Source: Authors, (2024).

Discussion

In the current global and Latin American context, interculturality has emerged as a topic of deep interest and transcendence in the field of higher education. With the impetus of new information technologies that "generate transformations in the organizational processes of society" (Prado, et al., 2021, p. 30), in a world characterized by the growing interconnection of cultures, the diversity of perspectives and experiences has become a central element in the formation of individuals prepared to face the challenges of the twenty-first century.

however, as societies become more diverse, there is a need to examine how interculturality is addressed and integrated in the higher education environment at the international level and specifically in the Latin American context, on the necessary evolution of the traditional curriculum that "is one of the key elements in the preparation of students to function in public and economic segments of global society" (Pava, et al., 2022, p. 29), "our capacities for change are linked to our capacities to reorient the political imaginary in which we are immersed in order to build meaningful social bonds" (Cornille, et al., 2021, p. 9).

This approach delves into an in-depth analysis of how higher education institutions in different parts of the world and in Latin America in particular, address and promote interculturality as a fundamental tool for the academic and personal development of their students, taking care not to lose sight of "the relationship that exists between the different levels of study, that is, that there is continuity in the contents and methods of teaching-learning" (2007 in Urrutia, et al., 2022, p. 280), as well as for the construction of more inclusive and resilient societies in a time of constant change and cultural convergence.

For Villegas et al. (2022), in higher education it has become especially relevant to obtain professionals with intercultural competence, "to train individuals in a critical, free and universal way in different areas of human knowledge to generate possibilities for solutions to social problems" (Nava, et al., 2022 p. 73), capable of collaborating and communicating effectively with individuals from diverse backgrounds, This need is influenced by the implementation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), which recognises the importance of integrating intercultural competence into university curricula due to the growing cultural diversity in today's world. In the same way, the ability to function effectively in contexts where different cultures coincide and meet has become a valuable asset for individuals, as well as an essential element for success in careers and education, "to this is added the growing demand in digitalized societies to communicate in an effective and interculturally appropriate way, also in virtual environments" (Pérez, et al., 2022, p. 1).

In Latin American higher education, interculturality is being promoted by valuing and preserving the cultural identities and languages of different ethnic groups. Educational institutions are fostering harmonious coexistence among students from diverse backgrounds and combating discrimination, especially towards indigenous peoples. This approach enriches education and strengthens identity and respect among the different cultures of the continent. Thus, for the Ecuadorian Higher Education System, "science and ancestral knowledge coexist in a symbiotic relationship for the construction of solutions to the country's problems; all this in direct relation to the development of research competence in students" (Viteri, et al., 2022, p. 4).

The integrative perspective in interculturality, applied in higher education, focuses on creating an environment where cultural differences merge in a beneficial way, with a "different appropriation, where one's own conception is increased" and multiplied in all educational aspects (Ibarra, 2020, p. 174), so that it coincides with "the improvement of

consciousness, of the possibilities we have to be and to do" (EDUCATION FOR A RENEWED HUMANISM, 2020, p. 528).

Likewise, this research is based on the fundamental need to recognize and enhance the intrinsic relevance of interculturality in the field of higher education for the sustainable development of the communities in these bordering areas. Placed in the dimension of an intercultural objective within this context of advanced training, where education "must be able to be at the service of the empowerment of societies, cultures, peoples and individuals" (Calvo, et al., 2020, p. 135), it has a fundamental role in the sustainable development of communities in the border area, since it acts as an engine for social, economic and environmental progress, and to contribute to this objective, universities and other institutions of higher education can offer specialized educational programs that prepare not only students but also allow beneficial actions on the communities that inhabit these territories in the "practice of active and innovative methodological strategies such as cooperative learning, problem-based learning and service-learning experiences" (Cobos, et al., 2023, p. 326), to address challenges such as natural resource management, rural engineering, community health, and intercultural education.

Universities can lead research projects and be a bridge and initiative to address local problems, such as water scarcity, desertification, biodiversity or the development of renewable energies, "think about the design of joint management strategies for ecosystems shared by two or more States" (Hurtado, 2020, p. 37). This not only generates knowledge, but also provides practical solutions to improve the quality of life in these communities. Higher education institutions can establish direct links with local communities, "to attend, understand, accompany, and learn from the community problems in question, where the objective is to strengthen theoretical knowledge and ancestral knowledge in attention to community problems" (Rodríguez & Hernández, 2023, p. 120), working collaboratively for their sustainable development. This includes extension programs, technical advice and continuous training.

In the bordering areas, there are often marginalized communities or those with less access to educational services. Higher education can play an important role in social inclusion, providing scholarships, access programs and strategies that ensure that all groups, including the most vulnerable, have that opportunity because "all people have equal rights but different needs. And everyone has the right to education, to participation in society, to a quality of life, in interaction with others" (Miñán, 2020, p. 234).

Educational institutions can be catalysts for local economic development through the creation of jobs, the promotion of business innovation and the promotion of sustainable industries, an example of this is the Barter Games initiative, which emerges as a model to mitigate the "serious environmental, economic and social impact generated by the current and more widespread system of production and consumption of fashion products that has turned the textile industry into a sustainable environment". one of the most polluting in the world" (Garre & Ruiz, 2023, p. 8), thus taking advantage of local resources responsibly.

Higher education can instill values and principles of sustainability in students, who will then apply them in their personal and professional lives, creating a multiplier effect in their communities, as in the case of public-private partnerships. "By joining other public bodies (such as the regulatory environmental entity, development banks, ministries, governors and mayors' offices), the process is aligned with the national policy of strengthening the productive apparatus and promoting the development of the environment. sustainable development" (Van, et al., 2020, p. 197).

In many bordering areas, collaboration between neighbouring countries is crucial. Universities can play a key role in promoting cross-border dialogue and cooperation, facilitating the exchange of knowledge and the development of joint initiatives to address common challenges, a case of analysis is the one evidenced between the borders of Tijuana and San Diego, "universities work with partners on the other side of the border to promote research agendas and provide international educational experiences for their students" (VV, 2022, p. 220).

This approach, in addition to fostering a deep and respectful understanding of cultural diversity, should lead to an improvement in the quality of education by enhancing the exchange of knowledge in the classroom to contribute to the formation of competent global citizens and strengthen social cohesion that projects a sense of inclusive and collaborative community, and to enhance this effect, ICTs are the most plausible option to increase "the level of training and the implications for academic results in schools and universities" (2011, 2013 in Gázquez, et al., 2021, p. 229). An example of an integrating opportunity in favor of multicultural appreciation in education is examined in Ecuador, the insufficient training of teachers of mixed descent "makes the activities they elaborate outside the official textbook acquire a distinctly Hispanic-Western character. If we add to this the design in Spanish, the ignorance of indigenous cultures and worldviews is reaffirmed" (2018 in Ponce, 2022, p. 5). In short, this perspective is relevant and prepares students and their groups for a multicultural world, so that it contributes to the creation of more inclusive societies that are aware of the cultural diversity present in a territory.

In this way, interculturality addresses an approach that seeks the harmonious and enriching coexistence of diverse cultures, promoting dialogue, understanding and collaboration between individuals and groups with different cultural backgrounds. It recognizes the equality of all cultures, rejects the superiority of one over others and values the unique contributions that each one contributes, promotes mutual respect, and from the educational prism, proposes "intercultural coexistence as that respectful process of interaction of coexistence with various cultures in the educational community, based on pedagogical practices, based on norms, to which individuals concur on an equal footing" (Ávila, 2022, p. 4), in addition, he cites empathy and the construction of bridges between cultures, encouraging people to overcome barriers and address intercultural challenges in a constructive way. In a globalized and diverse world, interculturality stands as a fundamental tool to promote peace, cooperation and harmonious coexistence.

In the exploratory interest of interactions between individuals from different cultures, it is essential to use theoretical elements that allow us to understand dynamic and ecosystem behavior within a context of diversity, of "fluctuating borders and constant migration" (Nail, 2021, p. 21). In this sense, the Contextual Critical theory is presented, which focuses on analyzing interculturality from the perspective of the "key points of social tension, orientation, and philosophical sense (Indians, Afro-descendants, grassroots communities, workers' movements, women, sexual dissidence, etc.)" (Valdés, 2023, p. 2); the theory of intercultural adaptation, which highlights the need for cognitive and behavioural adjustments to achieve effective communication and which addresses interculturality as a "particularly active and complex sociocultural space of hybridity" (2004 in Roca & Djurdjevic, 2022, p. 3); the theory of verbal and non-verbal communication, which focuses on linguistic differences and non-verbal signals, where "the conditions in which the modern world develops influences the use of language, committing the subject to express themselves clearly, coherently, and precisely to develop communicative skills" (2019 in Moreira & Guzmán, 2022, p. 4); and the theory of intercultural identity, which examines how cultural and personal identities are intertwined in intercultural contexts, as a "situated practice", which is carried out by means of experience, of decoding and understanding of the different cultural codes and their writings, which are offered to subjects from time to time" ["situated practice", which is carried out through the experience, decoding and understanding of different cultural codes and their writings, that are offered to subjects from time to time] (Nuzzaci, 2020, p. 10), referring to a natural and regulated process that influences growth and development in a normal and expected way. These approaches provide tools to address communication barriers, avoid misunderstandings and foster mutual understanding, enriching communication in an interconnected and multicultural world.

For this recognition and appreciation of cultural interaction in the praxis of higher education in border areas, it should be mentioned that even today there is uncertainty "about whether radically different cultures can coexist within a modern democratic state, even within a multiculturalist one" (Jackson, 2021, p. 69), and it is consequential to analyze the socio-cultural and political dynamics in border territories determined to a large extent on the points where their intertwining takes place, in the face of the constant migratory fact of recent years and the type of identity that arises from the stimulus produced by the mobilization of communities, where "the ethnic or cultural origin of the migrants does not matter, who whenever they arrive in the host society gradually assume the new culture as their own" (Olivero, 2022, p. 1086), it is essential to unveil the political responsibility that endorses "the uses of mini-publics that would empower a few to make political decisions for all, hoping that citizens will blindly defend them" (Lafont & García, 2021, p. 272). For these processes, it is necessary to know what tools are available and when they should be used, "any integration policy should be based on a systematic and exhaustive knowledge of the processes of integration and exclusion" (2006 in Dalouh, 2020, p. 92), in knowledge of "the permeability of cultural, linguistic and symbolic borders" (Colmeiro, 2021, p. 8). It is evident

that these border areas, due to their strategic value, have a special political consideration and are carefully observed by migration authorities and public forces, "whose function is based on border policies, such as barrier or contact" (2019 in Fonseca, et al., 2022, p. 104), which at the same time, create spaces for interaction and cultural fusion. These unique zones generate hybrid identities, enrich daily life and promote cultural exchange, awakening research interest in terms of "learning to understand the multiple realities of the urgency of feeling like citizens of a global and cross-border society" (Álvarez & Cotán, 2022, p. 18). At the same time, they face political challenges related to sovereignty and cross-border cooperation, but also offer opportunities for trade, tourism, and economic collaboration. These dynamics in border territories influence identity, economy and international relations, playing a crucial role in diversity and sustainable development, circumstances that surround and suggest actions from the governmental political sphere, for social adaptation through institutionality, as in the case of higher education.

In this sense, it is important to point out that higher education for prosperity in a territory of social diversity projects its action from theoretical perspectives on integral training and personal development that offer valuable routes to promote holistic learning. In the construction of an advanced academic training, it is necessary to maintain with freshness and rigor the knowledge about the new strategies, tools and artifacts for the dissemination of information, due to the complex social contexts and the diverse lifestyles that arise, adapt and formalize in the multicultural environment, "the digitalization of educational processes is an irreversible fact" (López, et al., 2023, p. 58). Thus, higher education acquires a special administrative responsibility from the educative, psychosocial and political for the type of mass information phenomena such as the one that arises in digital social networks and the impact that this entails on society, "power and politics are decided in the process of construction of the human mind through communication" (2008 in Martín and García, 2022, p. 11).

Consequently, it continues from humanistic approaches that highlight self-realization and emotional support, to theories of experiential learning that emphasize reflection and practical application, theories that seek to cultivate cognitive, emotional, social and ethical skills in students, where "the instructive, developmental and educational dimensions are incorporated with the clear purpose of preparing the professional, not only in the basic aspects of the profile they study, but also in their subsequent performance as social beings" (2011 in Pastrana and Peniche 2022, p. 4). In addition, they consider social responsibility and global awareness, promoting active and committed citizenship. Together, these theories allow us to form balanced individuals who are aware of their impact on the world, capable of contributing positively to society and are considered instruments for the development of beneficial and up-to-date policies in institutions of higher education.

Higher education in border territories offers an ideal context to explore **interculturality as a process of development where diverse cultural identities converge and evolve, "a space for creative research where we are all hybrids and that allows us to work to**

meet as new beings, more culturally enriched" (Pérez, et al., 2022, p. 3). In this scenario, the Third Space is positioned as a field of cultural experimentation, which not only facilitates the development of intercultural competencies in higher education, but also creates an environment where cultural hybridity becomes a source of personal and academic enrichment that facilitates cultural integration, allowing individuals to recognize themselves as hybrids and, therefore, more culturally enriched (Pérez et al., 2022).

Critical-Contextual Theory highlights how this space allows us to address the social tensions derived from cultural diversity, such as the experiences of indigenous people, Afro-descendants or sexual dissidence, recognizing their struggles and demands in the educational field.

On the other hand, the **Theory of Intercultural Adaptation** emphasizes that the Third Space is a terrain where people adjust their cognitive and behavioral perspectives to adapt to new cultural realities, favoring interaction and effective intercultural communication.

The **Theory of Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication** underlines the importance of communicative competencies, where language and non-verbal cues play a fundamental role for subjects to express and understand cultural codes in a diverse environment, thus enriching intercultural dialogue.

Finally, the **Theory of Intercultural Identity** places the Third Space as an environment where identities are intertwined and transformed through the understanding and decoding of diverse cultural codes, favoring personal and collective growth in educational contexts.

Conclusions

The analysis of interculturality in university education seeks to promote a harmonious coexistence between different cultures. Theories such as Contextual Critical, Intercultural Adaptation, Intercultural Verbal and Nonverbal Communication, and Intercultural Identity, applied from and on the dynamic understanding of interculturality, offer tools to face cultural and communicative challenges. These theories are a first step towards understanding the complex context of higher education in frontier areas.

Integrating interculturality, communication, and development into higher education in border areas helps prepare people for a diverse world. These environments offer challenges and opportunities in identity, economics, and international relations. By addressing these dynamics, cultural understanding and critical skills are promoted, fostering global collaboration. Despite the challenges, higher education can create inclusive and respectful societies, prepared for an interconnected and ever-changing world.

Comprehensive training includes cognitive, emotional, social, and ethical development to create responsible citizens who face global challenges. In this process, interculturality is key to forming empathetic and balanced people who help build an inclusive and collaborative society.

Higher education must take advantage of the sociocultural dynamics that emerge in interactions to prepare new generations for a complex and challenging future.

Interculturality as an engine of development in border territories: Higher education in border territories becomes a key space for the promotion of intercultural development. By integrating the experiences and realities of diverse cultural groups, such as indigenous and Afro-descendants, communication that goes beyond academia is fostered. This process enhances the creation of an intercultural dialogue that challenges traditional power structures and promotes equity and social justice. This facilitates an educational environment where social tensions are addressed critically, transforming both the academic space and the development of the territory itself.

Cognitive and Behavioral Adjustments for Effective Communication: Cross-cultural adaptation in higher education requires students and faculty to adjust their ways of thinking and acting to achieve effective communication in a diverse environment. These adjustments allow actors in the educational process to navigate between multiple cultural realities, facilitating the development of intercultural competencies. This approach is especially relevant in border territories, where cultural diversity is intrinsic, and contributes to the creation of a hybrid space that favors both mutual understanding and social and academic development.

Evolving cultural identities within the university context: In border territories, the cultural identities of students and teachers are constantly intertwined and transformed in response to interaction with different cultural codes. This process of hybridization, facilitated by the university environment, promotes personal and collective growth that enriches both individual identities and social dynamics in the academic context. By recognizing and valuing these diverse identities, higher education not only facilitates academic development, but also contributes to social cohesion in complex multicultural contexts.

In order to propose a future vision in relation to the object of study, the following questions are presented that need to be addressed: What strategies can be developed to manage sovereignty and migratory flows in border territories from an educational perspective? What are the ethical and social implications of promoting an integrative perspective of interculturality in higher education? How can challenges in teacher education and training be overcome so that they can reflexively and transformatively address cultural differences in the educational environment? How can universities foster collaboration and cross-cultural exchange between students from different cultural backgrounds in border settings?

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