

2018

## The intercultural communication of the business world: A review of the literature and application to Colombian and English-speaking professionals

Anna Colleen Kelly  
*University of Northern Iowa*

*Let us know how access to this document benefits you*

Copyright ©2018 Anna Kelly

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/hpt>



Part of the [International Business Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Kelly, Anna Colleen, "The intercultural communication of the business world: A review of the literature and application to Colombian and English-speaking professionals" (2018). *Honors Program Theses*. 325.  
<https://scholarworks.uni.edu/hpt/325>

This Open Access Honors Program Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Honors Program at UNI ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Program Theses by an authorized administrator of UNI ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@uni.edu](mailto:scholarworks@uni.edu).

THE INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION OF THE BUSINESS WORLD:  
A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND APPLICATION  
TO COLOMBIAN AND ENGLISH-SPEAKING PROFESSIONALS

A Thesis Submitted  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Designation  
University Honors

Anna Colleen Kelly  
University of Northern Iowa

May 2018

This Study by: Anna Kelly

Entitled: The Intercultural Communication of the Business World: A Review of the Literature  
and Application to Colombian and English-Speaking Professionals

has been approved as meeting the thesis or project requirement for the Designation University  
Honors.

---

Date

---

Dr. Elise DuBord, Honors Thesis Advisor, Department of Languages  
and Literatures

---

Date

---

Dr. Jessica Moon, Director, University Honors Program

Abstract

This paper studies major works that contribute to the knowledge of the formation of cultural values and how those values are influential in the context of business, especially when it comes to international management. As the world becomes more globalized, business organizations face new challenges as members encounter cross-cultural situations. Experts on international management and leading scholars on culture and business Alfons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner (2012) explained that the “internationalization of business life requires more knowledge of cultural patterns” (p.6). It is no longer sufficient for business people to ignore their own culture, and to understand and accept the differences of cultures other than their own. This paper examines the various dimensions of culture, the application of clustering national cultures, and the impact of culture differences on communication. A case study for a specific situation of intercultural communication is also described within this work. The potential case study would show the perspectives of Colombian business professionals on the presence and influence of cultural values when interacting with English-speakers in the workplace.

## The Intercultural Communication of the Business World:

### A Review of the Literature and Application

### to Colombian and English-Speaking Professionals

The topic of intercultural communication is increasingly relevant as the world continues to be more globalized, especially within the business sector. In today's business world, communication across cultures is becoming a more frequent occurrence (Joynt & Warner, 1996). Naturally, these occurrences may lead to misunderstandings, and so it is important to study the influences of cultural values and the influence of their differences in such intercultural communication. I analyzed current literature on the impacts of culture on communication in the workplace to better equip modern-day professionals as they encounter situations of intercultural communication. The purpose of the analysis was to look at the major works that shape the current knowledge of culture for a better understanding the intercultural reality of the contemporary business world, and to apply it to a real-life scenario between English-speaking professionals and those of Latin America, such as within the country of Colombia.

### **Literature Review**

Many scholars have contributed to the field of study of culture and the impact that cultural values have in the workplace. Culture has been measured on several dimensions, allowing for comparisons of culture across countries. When it comes to communication, culture can influence communication styles, as well as the interpretation of another's body language and speech. The influence of multiple cultures when it comes to business organizations can add a layer of complexity for professionals who manage multicultural teams or interact with external parties from other nations. Recommendations for such managers and businesspeople are

explored, along with the need to further research into the complex nature of intercultural interactions in the workplace.

### **Foundation of the Study of Culture**

The effects of culture are present in our everyday lives. However, what exactly is culture? A major researcher in the area of culture and its effect on management, Hofstede (1980) explained that there is a multitude of definitions. The definition of culture depends on the context in which one defines it, such as whether it is a culture pertaining to a nation or that of an organization. Hofstede's own interpretation was that culture is "the collective programming of the human mind that distinguishes the members of one human group from those of another" (p. 24). This distinctive mental programming naturally leads to groups being characterized in different manners. These notable characteristics have given rise to the study of cultures and on the consequences of culture when members interact in an intercultural situation.

The basis of much of cultural research has come from Hofstede's *Culture's Consequences*<sup>1</sup> in 1980, in which Hofstede examined culture, its various components, and how culture affects organizations. Within his work, Hofstede explored the relationship between culture and values. He explained that values represent tendencies of a social group to choose a "certain state of affairs over others" (p. 19). Hofstede tried to capture the nature of the individual within a group culture. Looking at any one collective social group, there typically are traits or values that are relatively apparent. However, an individual within the group will deviate somewhat from those collective values. Therefore, those values of the collective group are seen

---

<sup>1</sup> The specific source used in this text is "Culture and Organizations" by Hofstede (1980), and is a modified version of chapter one of said author's book.

more as a consistent tendency to reflect certain characteristics or choices when faced with a decision or option. However, there are always individual differences despite the values shown by the collective group's tendencies. As such, the strength of one of the collective values depends on its relevance to the individual members. The strength of the collective value for the individual will guide them in their perspective and decisions in a situation. The society, or culture, then uses these collective tendencies to form a value system that is distinct from other social groups. A culture's 'collective programming' creates a cohesiveness of values across the individual members. However, there is deviation from values within a culture, such as with certain subgroups or individuals. Typically, prevailing values for the culture as a whole are applied to the subgroups as well (Hofstede, 1980).

In his original research, Hofstede specified four specific dimensions through which a culture's value system can be characterized (as cited in Ferreira, Serra & Pinto, 2014, p. 382):

- Power Distance is related to the response towards unequal distribution of authority
- Individualism/Collectivism is the level to which the individual's concept of self or that of the collective guides the individual's behavior
- Masculinity/Femininity is the drive towards achievement versus the concern with others
- Uncertainty avoidance is the degree to which a society deals with the uncertainty and risk present in everyday life

These four dimensions are used in a multitude of other important investigations within the study of culture and have become a basis for such studies. It is noted that Hofstede's primary focus was on studying the effects of culture on and within business organizations. Another important note is that these are not the only dimensions by which it is possible to measure

culture. However, these specific dimensions have proven useful through Hofstede's research and the subsequent research from them.

Another major contributor to research on culture is Alfons Trompenaars, through his work on understanding diversity within the business sphere. Trompenaars, along with his colleague Hampden-Turner, highlighted that culture is more than just the products of a society, but contains many layers, "like an onion" (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2012, p. 8), with its other layers being its values and beliefs. Like with these many layers, culture can also be applied to different contexts, such as that of a nation. Culture is typically thought of in the national context, as a country is a rather easily defined collective group. However, culture can also be applied on smaller levels, such as within the business context. There is corporate or organizational culture, which refers to the values of an entire organization. Businesses typically have their values, mission, and other aspects of their culture published for the public and its members to see. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner also explained that there is culture within the particular functional areas of a business, such as the values within the marketing division or the values of the research and development division of the company. The authors defined culture through several dimensions, although they were rather different dimensions than those of Hofstede. Pointing out that the comparison of cultures is usually outlined by their differences, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner explained how certain problems arise due to the variations between cultures. These problems stem from how the individuals from a specific culture act with respect to their relationships with other people, society's understanding of the passage of time, and their relationship with the environment. Within the dimension of relationships with other people, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) outlined the relational orientations of: (a) universalism vs. particularism, (b) individualism vs. communitarianism, (c) neutral vs. affective,



(d) specific vs. diffuse, and (e) achievement vs. ascription (p. 11-12). Combined with the other two relationship dimensions, the authors characterized cultures through these seven dimensions to be able to study the different impacts caused by various cultures in the workplace.

The application of the research by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, and Hofstede has led to another aspect of the study of culture. Ronen and Shenkar (1985) utilized the four indices defined by Hofstede in order to determine country clusters. Clusters represent a grouping of countries that share a relatively similar culture. The authors found these groupings by looking at the cultural values of a society, especially the values found in the workplace setting. They drew the data together from numerous empirical studies that found workplace values within different nations. The studies then grouped the countries together from certain criteria to show similarity between the cultures of individual nations. By analyzing and combining these studies, Ronen and Shenkar (1985) created a more comprehensive and accurate map of country clusters. From their analysis, they also concluded that the national cultures were clustered due to a strong correlation of their relative geographical proximity, language, and religion. Clusters included that of Latin America, Anglo, Nordic, the Far East, in addition to several other clusters.

After having applied the concept of culture to define such clusters, it is important to also view how values of nations may change across time. As such, Ronen and Shenkar returned in 2013 to look at their country clusters from twenty years earlier. Their more recent analysis updated the data set by utilizing contemporary studies of national culture. The more recent studies that Ronen and Shenkar (2013) used provided a higher level of detail on the countries' culture and included a greater number of countries studied than had been accessible previously. The researchers found that country clusters stayed relatively consistent throughout the time period. There were a few shifts in the clusters' composition, but those could be explained by the

increase in the level of data gathered, allowing for better accuracy in placing the countries in the appropriate cluster. The greater number of detail and countries surveyed allowed for the development of a more accurate map of country clusters than in the previous study in 1985. Countries that had changed to a different cluster could have also been explained in some cases by a profound change that occurred within the nation to change values of the culture, such as an upheaval in the political sphere of that country. However, it was getting harder to measure change of national culture due to higher levels of multiculturalism within some countries (Joynt & Warner, 1996). The increased amount of cultural difference within a nation may lead to contradictions in the research or the need to change some of the research criteria. Hofstede found another aspect of how culture changes over time. In his study in 1980, Hofstede concluded that all cultures may be moving more towards individualism, as quoted by Joynt and Warner (1996, p. 98). Another scholar, Yang, explored the effects of modernization and how it leads to more value on individualism in many countries, also cited in Joynt and Warner (1996, p. 98). The effects of time will likely change how we study culture, and the cultures' values themselves as many nations become more multicultural.

**Continuing knowledge.** These noted researchers, Hofstede, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, and Ronen and Shenkar, have provided much information on culture that has led to other research, but the field of intercultural studies is still developing, including with the possible changes over time in the values of individual national cultures and in those of organizational cultures. It is clear that there is still much to learn about what drives culture and how it relates to other cultures. For instance, Hofstede has since added two more dimensions to his original model after having continued research that identifies aspects of culture. The two additional dimensions were 'Confucian work dynamism' (also known as 'long term orientation'), and 'indulgence vs.

self-restraint' (Ferreira et al., 2014). The Confucian work dynamism was defined in a study Hofstede conducted with Bond in 1988 and it looks at the value of time orientation. The indulgence vs. self-restraint was outlined in the 2010 edition of Hofstede's book *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. These new additions demonstrate the need for further investigation to the nature of culture's shaping of values, as well as recognizing the bias shown by researchers. Hofstede's addition itself of these other dimensions reflected how he as a Westerner was ignorant of some important aspects of national culture, such as Confucianism, due to his own cultural background (Joynt & Warner, 1996).

Additionally, the interest in intercultural studies in general has grown. Members of the international business community have increasingly used the works of Hofstede, as shown by Ferreira et al. (2014), when examining top-rated business journals. References to the work of Hofstede have increased significantly over thirty years since his first study in 1980 (Ferreira et al., 2014). This study also showed how Hofstede's research has been cited in works on a variety of topics over the years. For example, in the period of 2001-2010, Hofstede's research on intercultural studies was cited with greater emphasis on studies dealing with environmental topics, where in previous years his research was used more in conjunction with other topics. The utilization of his work throughout the studied thirty-year timespan demonstrated the growth of interest in intercultural communication and the importance of his work as it has been applied in many areas of the business world.

**Critique of the study of culture.** Some studies have shown that the generalization of cultures, such as when creating country clusters, for research purposes is not reliable due to varying factors. Minkov, Blagoev and Hofstede (2012) looked at the relevance of showing cultural differences through surveying different populations to find their norms or values as a

society. Their study showed that the very questions from such a survey can be perceived very differently by country. An example they gave was on asking whether tax evasion is ethically right or wrong. Legally paying taxes may represent a very important value for one country, and therefore is decisively identified as being wrong due to the value of paying taxes according to the tax system set up. However, for a different country, it may be a nonoccurrence simply due to their tax system, such as in a system where the employer pays taxes, and the individual does not need to. This means that the response to a question on the ethicality of tax evasion does not necessarily reflect their cultural values. Rather, it may simply be that the specific question is irrelevant for those from that other country with a tax system that minimalizes the occurrence or possibility of tax evasion. As such, surveys need to be explicit with questions and adapted to the respective countries as needed. This does add another layer of complexity to the process and would require knowing more about the implications of questions within surveys and how they pertain to the different target populations.

The criticism of culture clusters themselves can be found by looking at how countries change over time. Fernandez, Carlson, Stepha and Nicholson (1997) found that many countries changed significantly with regard to their collective values when compared to Hofstede's 1980 study. However, it must be said that this study was conducted differently than Hofstede's 1980 study. The number of countries from which they sampled was much smaller, and the nature of the sample was different. The study did represent the ability to misinterpret cultural factors, and that one cannot disregard the possibility that countries can shift their relative cultural values over time, especially given extenuating socioeconomic and political circumstances. These critiques of cultural studies show the importance of continuing to look at culture and the evolution of a

society's value system over time, as well as being sensitive to other factors when constructing such studies.

Another important criticism on the application of culture comes from the prejudice of the researchers themselves. The ecological fallacy comes into play in many studies, though scholars such as Hofstede warned about it, as cited in Joynt and Warner (1996, p. 100). While it can be beneficial to be aware of the values of a national culture when in an intercultural setting, it is important to acknowledge that all individuals from a particular culture may not adhere to those values. A smaller sample set may show very different values of a population than a larger and more representative set would for the nation. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) also warned of the danger of stereotyping. They acknowledged that stereotyping attempts to characterize a norm behavior of a culture, and that only very cautious use of stereotypes can be useful in explaining a few fundamentals of culture (p. 36). However, stereotypes have a very limited view on a culture and only in a specific situation, and often give a negative impression and are inaccurate. While the ecological fallacy and misuse of stereotyping are avoidable, they can potentially occur in such studies on culture or in practice within the business world or personal life. Due to the potential error of stereotyping or overgeneralization, researchers must be aware and conscientious when conducting such studies of culture and drawing conclusions.

**Support for the existing studies on culture.** In their book *Managing Across Cultures*, Joynt and Warner (1996) compiled significant research from scholars across the world that looks at management in a multicultural organization and interactions across cultural divides and compared the work of Hofstede and Trompenaars<sup>2</sup>. While Hofstede and Trompenaars studied

---

<sup>2</sup> Joynt and Warner (1996) used Trompenaars' original edition of *Riding the Waves of Culture*, of which Trompenaars was a sole author.

different dimensions of culture, their conclusions on the common cultural dimensions, particularly those of individualism/collectivism and power distance, were supported across both scholars' works. Particularly with Hofstede's work, many scholars have found that his conclusions were consistently verified.

### **Intercultural Communication**

The existence of cultural differences can have a significant impact on relationships and communication between groups of people. As the world becomes more globalized, intercultural encounters occur more often, especially in the business sector. Ting-Toomey (2010) explained that there are various ways to study how culture and communication relate. One of the traditional ways of looking at how an individual interprets communication is based on their linguistic background. Another perspective is to study how a perceived minority chooses to communicate or express itself to other cultural groups. The social science theory explains intercultural interaction through cultural values and how those values shape interactions between members of different cultures. Cultural values dictate the manner in which one culture communicates with another culture (p. 170-171). As such, intercultural communication can be explained in part by looking at the previously explained cultural clusters and their relative values.

In their research, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) looked into the various parts of communication and how they can play out in intercultural situations. Research has shown that 75% of communication is nonverbal (p. 95), which can create an interesting dynamic when cultural differences come into play. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner gave the example of an Italian professor visiting a U.S. college campus. The Italian was surprised when multiple U.S. students greeted him and asked whether they know him. The U.S. students had no idea who he

was, but because he looked at them for a prolonged period, they assumed that the professor knew them in some way. The usage of eye contact is an example of nonverbal communication that can be complex when looking at intercultural situations. Misinterpretation of eye contact, or physical space, can have consequences depending on the cultural values of the parties involved in the intercultural situation. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner also gave insight to verbal communication. Both the tone and the style of verbal communication can differ vastly across multiple cultures. Where the Latin American style of communication is much more volatile in tone, and often two parties will interrupt each other, an individual from an Asian culture would potentially lose respect for someone so 'emotional' and be offended by interruptions while speaking (p. 94-95). Culture affects the various components of communication, which has the potential effect of complicating situations of such intercultural communication.

Another factor of intercultural communication comes from the influence of linguistic background itself. Language, as seen with Ronen and Shenkar's (1985) country clusters, can have a heavy influence on culture. Likewise, West and Graham (2004) found that the nature of a language influences the way an individual perceives the world. Languages differ in their structure, such as a language that has multiple tiers of honorifics to refer to others within their society. The speaker of such a language will speak to another according to their relative hierarchical positions, to reflect their respect or superiority to the other person. This results in a different mentality than a speaker of a language that has little to no honorifics. This sort of linguistical structure can influence the collective linguistical group's values, such as putting more emphasis on social relationships in order to know the proper honorific to use when communicating with another person. West and Graham (2004) determined that the differences between national cultures coincided with the linguistic distances between the languages of the

country. Using English as the focal language, it was determined the linguistic distance of other languages from English. These languages were then linked back to their cultures based on the country clusters formulated by Hofstede (1980). In this system, countries with a language that is closer to English have a lower score (Germany is ranked as 1), and those with a less similar language are ranked higher (Hong Kong was ranked 6). West and Graham then used this ranking and compared it to the relative cultural values found by Hofstede (1980) and found that the proximity of the languages does coincide with the similarity of cultural values of the respective countries. Given this correlation, language is important to keep in mind when members of different cultures are communicating.

The structure of a language can demonstrate other differences between cultural groups. Sociolinguist Deborah Tannen stated that English has contributed to the “argument culture” reflected in American conversational style (as cited in West & Graham, 2004, p. 245). Tannen believed this due to that English is a language that is very direct and efficient when conveying information, despite the fact that this may upset others. The structure of English itself causes members from English-speaking countries to be more candid and care more about what is being said than the manner in which it is said. English is a low context language in that way, while Spanish, on the other hand, is a high context language. Spanish requires more information about the context in order to successfully use the language. For example, the Spanish language requires knowing the grammatical gender of all nouns. Due to this linguistic construction, Spanish-speakers often need to know more of the context to convey meaning accurately, while speakers of low context languages ignore certain aspects of a situation, as explained by Tannen. Though these seem to be only linguistic differences, they can impact the formation of cultural values,



such as putting more emphasis on the individual or on their being a member of a collective group.

When looking at intercultural communication specifically, the ability to communicate with members of a different culture is composed of various factors. When Mizco and Welter (2006) investigated the use of humor in intercultural communication, they broke down intercultural communication into the following parts (a) intercultural apprehension; (b) ethnocentrism; (c) emulation; and (d) intercultural willingness to communicate (p. 61). The concept of ethnocentrism was especially detrimental when communicating between cultural groups. McCrosky defined ethnocentrism as the “perception that one’s culture or in-group is superior to all others” (as cited in Mizco & Welter, 2006, p. 65). When it comes to multicultural communication, functions of speech such as the use of humor conveys inclusion or disparagement. Ethnocentrism plays an important part on the positivity or negativity of the message of the communication when it is being sent as well as how it is received. The success of intercultural communication is dependent on these factors. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) also explained how humor can impact intercultural communication. Humor can at times show a potential conflict between cultural values. However, cultures will differ on the how and when to use humor. A joke that would work for U.S. culture as an icebreaker may be met with silence in another setting. It may also not work across cultural boundaries if the other party does not understand the context or the irony.

### **Interculturalism in a Business Context**

Intercultural communication can be seen from a business perspective. As the world becomes more globalized, professionals more often find themselves in cross-cultural situations.

These situations may lead to consequences, such as a lost negotiation deal with a business from another country but can also lead to business benefits. Matveev and Nelson (2004) looked at both U.S. and Russian business managers who work in multicultural environments. Their research indicated that multicultural teams (comprised of members of different nationalities) often have better results due to their diversity, regardless of the business industry the team is in (p. 255).

One of the key factors to the success of the team is communication. As used by Matveev and Nelson, the Cross Cultural Communication Competence Model points out the parts to successful communication as (a) interpersonal skills; (b) team effectiveness; (c) cultural uncertainty; and (d) cultural empathy (p. 257). Team members must possess these skills in order to be effective communicators within the team, and to therefore have success as a whole in their task. The nature of the globalization of business drives the incentive to increase the ability to communicate interculturally.

The need to expand knowledge on cross-cultural interactions that occur in the business setting is reflected in a study by Ferreira et al. (2014). The authors showed that the use of Hofstede's work has grown more frequent throughout some of the top business journals and how the application to business of studies of culture has developed. Research of culture and its impact on business professionals and managers has become more in-depth in order to address the culturally diverse environment of today's business world.

Managers can have varying degrees of competence when it comes to cross cultural interactions. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) outlined 'hypercultural competence' as the combination of: (a) cross-cultural competence, (b) intercultural competence, (c) transcultural competence, and (d) intracultural competence (also termed as servant leadership) (p. 354). This multifaceted model was constructed from academic research and experience through consulting

businesses in cross cultural situations. The different competencies encapsulate certain skills and capabilities that managers can have in a cross-cultural situation. For instance, cross-cultural competence was defined as “the capability to function according to the cultural rules of more than one cultural system; the ability to respond in culturally sensitive and appropriate ways according to the cultural demands of a given situation,” which will produce the outcomes of avoiding blunders, avoiding embarrassment, and avoiding showing ethnocentricity (p. 355). The ‘servant leadership’ facet is particularly interesting, in that intracultural competence is the management of cultural and ethnic diversity in a way that creates business benefits from diverse teams by optimizing and capitalizing on employees’ cultural differences. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner went further to build a holistic assessment of managers with regard to these competences. The assessment was divided between 12 individual components grouped into the four sections of realization, recognition, respect, and reconciliation. This profile of the manager’s cultural competence is then used as a tool to make managers aware of their relative strengths and weaknesses in cross-cultural situations.

Hofstede (1980) likewise explored how the value systems of the members within and outside of an organization have an impact on the organization as a whole. Executives determined goals and decision-making processes based on their values, and the non-elites would comply with these and supported the executives according to their values. Superiors within organizations also tended to install reward systems that benefitted those who hold the same values that they do. Values stemming from organization members’ national culture can therefore have a high impact on the successful functioning of the organization.

Beyond the impact of culture on the internal side of the organization is the way in which external relations are handled. Due to the influence of national cultures, business managers in

one culture operate distinctly than otherwise similar managers from another culture. For instance, as noted by Conaway and Wardrope (2004), Latin American professionals differed in their communication style from U.S. professionals. Professionals from Latin America are likely to be more formal with honorifics and communication style, less direct, and prefer not to give bad news. The need to understand cultural backgrounds when communicating in the business world can be shown through such differences in communication styles. A U.S. professional would be more likely to get to the point and be direct, potentially coming off as rude or blunt. Say, for example, that a U.S. professional receives a communication from a Latin American business relation, such as a partner or potential client/provider. They may perceive the communication in a different way than how the Latin American professional intended it to be received and cause misunderstanding due to lack of cultural knowledge on part of the U.S. professional. The U.S. professional could potentially interpret the business communication as vague or dislike that the purpose of the message was unclear or took too long to get to. However, the Latin American professional would have been communicating their respect towards the U.S. professional by

Within the business world, there is a need for the acknowledgement of cultural differences and intercultural communication skills to enable successful cross-cultural relationships.

It is interesting to note that the workplace does have an effect on certain values. Joynt and Warner (1996) explained how previous research suggests that work centrality is consistently higher when more autonomy and self-direction is given to the employee. This effect of autonomy on employees increasing their work ethic was consistent across the wide variety of countries studied. This signifies that decentralizing organizational decision-making processes has the potential to increase work ethic of the members of the organization across differing cultural settings.

## **Ways to Improve Intercultural Communication**

Fortunately, there are ways in which intercultural communication can be improved. Ting-Toomey (2007) explained that one method of improving communication with those of other cultures is simply to be mindful of the cultural differences. The author stated that “we have to learn to see the unfamiliar behavior [of an individual from another culture] from a nonjudgmental, nonreactive standpoint” (p. 259). Through mindfulness, individuals can begin to look at situations from a different perspective, and so can begin to search for culturally based explanations of the behavior of that other individual. This can be seen within the context of conflict. In some cultures, members tend to pretend that a conflict did not happen after it occurs, and other cultures prefer to be more up front and direct with what they think about the conflict (p. 258). When in a situation of conflict between members of these two cultures, it would be helpful if each individual were mindful of the other’s cultural values. If not mindful of the other’s culture, there could be misunderstandings or tension because their responses to the conflict may be much different. In addition, taking steps to increase cultural knowledge and awareness further enhances mindfulness when communicating across cultures. It is possible to increase cultural knowledge through exposure to other cultures, researching into cultural values of another culture, and through looking at the cultural values of one’s own culture. Specifically, for managers and business professionals, there are trainings and consulting groups to learn on how to deal with intercultural situations in the workplace and how to become a culturally competent professional. Another aspect of intercultural communication is the context in which it takes place. Informal interactions, as compared to business negotiations, may vary in the need for cultural knowledge and preparation.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) went so far as to give concrete recommendations when approaching intercultural situations within the workplace. Among the recommendations, they included these ten general steps: the theory of complementarity; using humor; mapping out a cultural space; from nouns to present participles and processes; language and meta-language; frames and contexts; sequencing; waving/cycling; synergizing and virtuous circling; and the double helix (p. 247). The majority of these tips are based on reframing our perception of cross-cultural dilemmas to be able to reconcile the differences that come about due to culture. For instance, identifying the dimensions (such as those used by the authors listed previously—universalism vs. particularism, neutral vs. affective, etc.) are a tool to help us to understand culture and its relative values. However, these steps work to improve how we actually look at culture without focusing too much on dimensions or labels, and to prevent harmful thinking, such as stereotyping, from happening.

The first step is the theory of complementarity, which reminds us that while individuals are a part of a culture, the individuals themselves still have characteristics that are apart from the norm of their culture. The way that they as individuals rank along the spectrum of these dimensions tend to coincide somewhat with the culture's rankings, but it is possible that the individual strays from the culture by a large margin on some or all dimensions. As values reflect the tendency of the collective cultural group, there are also exceptions, and we must remember that as we work with the individuals. With regard to humor, we can use it as a tool for awareness of conflict in intercultural situations, and getting to know the type of culture within an organization itself. When there is an intercultural conflict or dilemma present, mapping out a cultural space is useful in the identification of the differences between the values along the spectrum of the seven dimensions that the authors used for culture. An example could be a short

term/long-term conflict, in which shareholders of an international business pertain to cultures that differ in their time orientation. Shareholders, such as those from the U.S., emphasize the importance of taking advantage of immediate opportunities (short-term perspective), while those from Far East cultures look to their vision and perseverance for long-term growth and benefits. By mapping out these two perspectives, it is possible to see how synergy could be created by finding a way in which the two perspectives contribute to the business in order to create more benefits than just having one or the other perspective guiding business actions. It is also helpful to consider the dimensions in the terms of present participles rather than as nouns to have a more accurate conception of a value by conveying the dynamic nature of the dimensions. This would mean that instead of universalism v. particularism, we should think of the dimension as universalizing or particularizing. The dimensions are meant to show the spectrum that national culture lies on but labeling a culture as individualist or collectivist gives the impression that it is wholly one or the other. However, thinking of a culture as individualizing gives the impression that it is acting more in the way of individualism without being completely individualistic. This way of thinking of the dimensions creates a more open mentality when interacting with others, rather than mistakenly assigning them as individualistic simply due to which way their culture falls on the dimensional rating.

The last half of the steps is more complicated in that it combines previous steps to enhance the process of understanding how we think about culture. The step of language and meta-language refers to a manager (or individual) being able to hold two opposed ideas in one's mind to be able to come to a decision. The authors used the example of a manager (you) being "able to see that a *particular* customer request is outside the *universal* rules your company has set up, yet be determined to qualify the existing rule or create a new rule based on this case" (p.

254). The meta-level of this situation is the determination to qualify the request with an existing rule or to create a new rule, while the object language-level is that a particular request breaks existing rule. The opposing ideas of particularism and universalism values can be difficult, but a manager who can come to reconcile those opposing values will be successful in intercultural situations. Frames and contexts can be related with the previous step, by using the meta-level as a frame for the object level. This would mean that a customer's request that breaks a rule is framed by the manager's determination that it meets a rule or to make a new rule to address the request. As such, the manager does not focus on the unacceptableness of the customer's request, but rather frames it in another way to allow their values to not cause them to panic but find a solution in such a situation. Sequencing is a process to reconcile cultural values by looking at the processes to coming to a decision. The authors give the example of achievement and studying. Do I study how to achieve so that I can later apply it to projects, or is it that I ascribe status to a project because I believe that achievement is likely to follow? By looking at what my present action will cause brings some clarity as to the values that motivate my actions. Waving/cycling makes a comparison of cultural values to waveforms. It likens two differing values to two different frequencies of music, which creates a harmony that is more beautiful than either one on its own. The authors made the case that we can also apply error-correction to this waveform analogy so that as we go through dilemmas involving differences in values. We learn by using our mistakes, or errors, to be able to improve as we continue to face these intercultural issues, transforming the waveform into a cycle. The second-to-last step is that of synergizing and virtuous cycling. This step focuses on the creation of synergy by having two values work together in order to enhance the result. This creates a cycle of increasing synergy as the values enhance and encourage each other.



The final step recommended by the authors is through the utilization of the model of the double helix structure. The model is meant to combine the former steps into a series of rungs that form a structure that reconciles values through connecting and combining those value differences continuously. It is important to keep in mind that reconciling cultural values is an ongoing process and requires the appropriate mentality, such as that formed by applying the values of the preceding steps. However, this process towards reconciling cultural differences will result in synergy through using the values to support one another and finding solutions that bring the best out of both.

Having a more open perception and interpretation of cross-cultural dilemmas can result in synergy and reconciliation across cultural differences. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) stressed that the foundation of overcoming cultural problems is through the recognition of one's own cultural mental programming and through the understanding and respect for another culture despite its differences.

### **Case Study of Intercultural Communication for Colombian Business Professionals**

The original proposal of this work was to conduct primary research using Colombian MBA students as a sample to look at the reality of intercultural communication for Latin American professionals when working with English-speakers in business settings. The term 'English-speakers' within this framework refers to those who belong to the Anglo country cluster, defined by the study conducted by Ronen and Shenkar (2013). It is acknowledged that there are countries outside of the Anglo country cluster that primarily speak English, but for the purposes of this research only those from the Anglo country cluster are referred to. By using the Anglo country cluster, the study more easily addresses aspects of intercultural communication in

the workplace through narrowing the scope to these two cultural groupings (Anglo and Latin America country clusters). This research would shed light on that scope of intercultural communication between the culture clusters of Latin America and that of Anglo, as well as the concepts of cultural competence provided by the work of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) and the Cross Cultural Communication Competence Model used by Matveev and Nelson (2004). The following contains the additional literature specific to these two culture groups, and what such a study could look like.

### **Additional Relevant Literature**

**Profile of Colombia.** For a study that would specifically examine the relations of Colombian professionals with their English-speaking colleagues, it is important to look at Colombia and its culture. According to *Central Intelligence Agency: The World Factbook* (2017), Colombia has a population of close to 48 million as of mid-2017. It is located in northern South America and has a presidential republic political system. Its largest industries include coal, cut flowers, oil, and coffee, with the 2016 estimate of a GDP per capita of \$14,100. However, there is much more to Colombia than simply these demographics. Colombia is known for dance and music, as well as for beautiful landscape.

Spanish is the official language of Colombia. In a national census in 2005, it was found that only 4% of the Colombian population was able to speak English (as cited in Martinez, 2015, p. 602). As such, English is still considered to be a foreign language in Colombia, although Velez-Rendon (2003) found that English is often necessary for high-level professions, such as in academia and in major corporations. Colombian society generally views knowledge of the English language positively and associates it with having a higher social status (Martinez, 2015).

The support of English-learning in Colombia can be seen through its institutional changes. In 2004, the Colombian government began the Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo (Bonilla Carvajal & Tejada-Sánchez, 2016), which is designed to institutionalize foreign language knowledge in Colombian schools and universities. The program focuses on English due to its importance in international communications, and on the benefits of English knowledge in providing economic benefits. However, it has been criticized for focusing solely on English. Another critique is that the program has had little success and has experienced many changes over the years. There is a perception that English language knowledge in Colombia is needed in general to obtain better and higher-level jobs, but the infrastructure for English language learning within the country is lacking as seen through the failed attempt of the Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo.

**Application to relations between Colombians and English-speakers.** Cultural differences can influence intercultural communication, including the relations between Colombian professionals and English-speakers. Ronen and Shenkar (1985) showed that, based on managerial values, the U.S. was consistently in the Anglo country cluster, and Colombia in the Latin American country cluster. Ronen and Shenkar (2013) found that the two countries stayed within their relative clusters in the more recent study as well. The Anglo cluster includes: United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, and South Africa. The Latin American cluster includes countries such as: Argentina, Chile, Venezuela, Mexico, Colombia, and Peru (p. 884).

From these clusters, the relative national culture values can be drawn. From Ronen and Shenkar (1985), the Anglo cluster show the following values:

- Power distance—low to medium
- Uncertainty avoidance—low to medium
- Masculinity—high
- Individualism—high

Comparatively, the Latin American cluster is characterized by:

- Power distance—high
- Uncertainty avoidance—high
- Masculinity—high variance
- Individualism—low

These characteristics suggest the potential dilemma in communicating due to cultural differences between Colombians and English-speakers.

A study by Fok, Payne, and Corey (2014) examined the real-life application of these characteristics on MBA students from a graduate program in the U.S. and from a graduate program in Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico was considered a part of the Latin American cluster. When making ethical decisions, the two groups' reasonings behind decision-making was significantly different. This is seen through whether one group tended to use more act-based reasoning, or rule-based reasoning when coming to an ethical decision. The U.S. group used act-based reasoning, while the Puerto Rico group used rule-based reasoning. Participants had to give an answer to five ethical problems and then choose one of several provided reasons that reflected why they answered in the way that they did. The scenarios included situations such as whether to give a bribe to enter a market with large profit potential, or whether to alert a customer of a design flaw in your product when your boss knew about the flaw and did nothing. Each group of

students was influenced by their unique cultural values in the ethical dilemma, leading them down different paths of reasoning to come to a decision. Though there was no clear difference in the response to the scenario between the groups, the reasons that they chose for their answers did vary. This was motivated by their cultural values shaping the act-based or rule-based reasoning. Interestingly, the authors found that those who used rule-based reasoning came to make ethical decisions more often.

The proposed research explores the impact of cultural knowledge and values on professionals from Colombia, another Latin American country, when communicating with members from the English-speaking Anglo country culture. As such, it is possible to assume that successful communication between the two populations will require more effort to reconcile these differences as compared with communication practices amongst members of the same culture.

In relation to communication specifically between citizens of the U.S. and those of Colombia, Costalas (2009) explained some of the cultural factors that influence their interactions. One of the biggest cultural differences is that Colombian professionals are high context and U.S. professionals are low context, as Costalas explained. This means that Colombian professionals will generally see the context of communication as being more important than the content, as well as have long-term relationships, oral agreements, and deep ingrained cultural traditions (High and Low Context Cultures section). Likewise, English-speakers, such as those from the United States, place more importance on what is said in the message communicated rather than the context in which it is said. High context cultures, such as the U.S., prioritize work over friendship and placing value on accomplishments, in addition to efficiency. As Costalas (2009) pointed out, these differences can lead to potential conflicts in

intercultural communication between U.S. and Colombian professionals. From the perspective of U.S. professionals, Colombians will ask overly personal questions and waste time. On the other hand, Colombian professionals will see Americans as rude for being so direct and hasty as they try to finish the task as soon as possible. There are ways in which to improve intercultural communication, such as those outlined in the previous section. Interacting in such situations can be improved largely through awareness of the differences caused by culture and acknowledging that there will be times of misunderstanding, while still maintaining respect for one another.

### **Research Questions to Be Answered**

This study is intended to measure the following aspects of intercultural communication:

1. The extent to which Colombian professionals are conscious of cultural differences when interacting with English-speakers.
2. The extent to which Colombian professionals change their conduct and speaking style when interacting with English-speakers.
3. The impact of having experience in an English-speaking country on Colombian professionals' ability to communicate in English, as well as to understanding the connotations of native speakers' English and Anglo culture.

### **Methodology**

The proposed study examines the impact of culture on the communication between two distinctive groups. The perception of the intercultural communication would be viewed through the perspective of one of the populations, that of Colombian professionals, when interacting with English-speakers in a professional situation. Previous research, especially by Hofstede (1980) and Ronen and Shenkar (1985), has established that Colombian populations and English-

speaking populations belong to unique cultural groups based on workplace values. Due to the distinguishing characteristics of the Latin America cluster and Anglo cluster, I would investigate how Colombian professionals navigate multicultural interactions with English speakers.

The nature of the investigation would be a questionnaire to be distributed to a sample set of Colombian business professionals. The sample is comprised of current and former students of the MBA program at the Colombian university Universidad EAFIT. According to the Universidad EAFIT official website, the MBA program can be taken at their campuses in Medellín, Bogotá, and Pereira. To be accepted into the MBA program, applicants must have a B2 level of English according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). According to the CEFR, a B2 level indicates an independent user of the foreign language who has a level of fluency that makes it possible for relaxed conversations with native speakers (Council of Europe, 2001, pp. 23-24). For the past six years, the MBA program has consisted of 400 to 700 registered students (Universidad EAFIT, 2017).

The questionnaire would enable a more focused investigation into the nature of intercultural communication in a business setting between two specific groups that are culturally different. In this questionnaire, factors of intercultural communication, such as ethnocentrism and intercultural willingness to participate (Mizco & Welter, 2006, p. 61), will be examined. The intention is to receive reports of interactions and relationships of the participants with their English-speaking colleagues or business contacts. In addition, the Cross Cultural Communication Competence Model (Matveev & Nelson, 2004, p. 257) would be utilized as a measure of Colombian professionals' ability to effectively work in a team with English speakers. The model combines professional skill sets in the areas of interpersonal skills, team effectiveness, cultural uncertainty, and cultural empathy. The questionnaire will explore the role of these aspects on the

intercultural relations between Colombian professionals and English-speaking professionals. The questionnaire would indicate how Colombian professionals reflect on intercultural situations in their capacity as a business professional, and how they communicate with English speakers throughout the course of their profession. The participants would illustrate the potential impact of first-hand cultural knowledge of the English-speaking culture, and whether those experiences in the other party's culture improve reconciling differences in intercultural situations.

The topics in the questionnaire are tied to each of the research questions. As such, they will provide a measure of the various aspects of intercultural communication between the participants and their professional interactions with English-speakers. The survey would be delivered in Spanish through the research and survey tool Qualtrics. A native Spanish speaker from Latin American has reviewed the questions to ensure accuracy and understandability for Colombians. The questionnaire would be administered by email distributed through the MBA office at Universidad EAFIT. Through the medium of Qualtrics, no personal identifiers will be collected. As this proposed case study involves human participants, approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Northern Iowa was granted on November 17, 2017. The following table is a portion of the questionnaire that was originally constructed for this study and which had also received IRB approval (the full survey can be found in the Appendix). This specific portion focuses on Colombian professionals' attitude towards general facets of culture. It has been translated to English for viewers. However, their responses would give insight as to their current cross-cultural experiences and their ability to reconcile cultural differences, seen through the ability to recognize such differences and be open to learning about other cultures which would contribute to healthy intercultural communication.



Table 1

*Attitudes towards Culture*

In your professional life,					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
You encounter people from many different cultures.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There are cultural differences between you and English-speakers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diversity in the workplace is good.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You work in a multicultural team environment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You can see differences between individual English-speakers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You recognize how your culture shapes your point of view.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You are interested in learning about other cultures.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You are open to working with English-speakers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
That other cultures may be better than your own in some ways.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Anticipated Results of Case Study**

The purpose of the potential investigation is to explore the functions of multicultural communication in a specific situation. The outcomes of the data from the questionnaire are anticipated to enlighten on how real-life professionals employ cultural knowledge and react in intercultural situations. I do foresee that there will be a correlation between having spent time in an English-speaking culture and having the ability to communicate well in professional settings

with English-speaking colleagues. Another expected outcome is that the participants who have more contact and interaction with English speakers will be more conscious of the cultural differences that exist. They will be able to recognize that there are individual differences, as well, between the individuals who are English-speaking. Those who are more conscious of the existence of cultural differences will be more likely to adapt their behavior when interacting with English-speakers in order to facilitate multicultural communication.

The results that would come out of a questionnaire such as this one would lead to a better understanding in the manner of intercultural communication between those from the Latin American cluster and those from the Anglo cluster. Conclusions from this study would be able to demonstrate ways in which such communication could be improved through exposure and knowledge of other cultures.

### **Discussion**

The nature of intercultural communication is complicated due to the influences of cultural differences. As seen through the review of the literature, cross-cultural competence has many facets which affect the way in which a business professional could conduct themselves in an intercultural situation. As Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) stated, there is no one way to manage within an organization due to the cultural values of the organization's members. Being in charge of a company or a function of a company does not look the same in every culture, as cultural values will cause differences in management styles. The complexity of national culture and its influence on communication, management, and the organizational culture makes it difficult to find a one-size-fits-all approach to intercultural situations. A person who is highly culturally competent may still commit a faux-pas when interacting with those of another

culture due to something simple, such as cleaning your nails out of distraction with the business card of a Japanese business partner in front of them which could ruin the relationship (p. 242). While some intercultural communication may be relatively simple to navigate, especially if the cultures are similar, it does take knowledge and capability to competently communicate across cultural borders in order to accomplish business objectives.

### **Limitations of These Studies**

The biggest limitation was the inability to compare smoothly across studies of culture in different contexts. Due to the variety of criteria used within the studies, difficulties arose in the comparison across the bodies of work. Some studies may have been based upon similar criteria but the way in which the study was conducted or on who it was conducted would vary and was therefore not as insightful. The study done by Fernandez et al. (1997), for instance, may have been built upon Hofstede's four dimensions, but the countries surveyed were far fewer than the work by Hofstede that they were using to compare, as well as a much smaller sample was used within the countries. The difference between the studies, or the way in which they are defining culture, results in a less concise analysis of the work that has been done in the field of intercultural communication and the effects of culture on the organization.

A rather apparent limitation of the case study is the distribution of the questionnaire. The study had received IRB approval, and had been approved through the MBA coordinator at the Universidad EAFIT in Colombia, but unfortunately the contact stopped responding to any electronic communications. Ironically, this may relate somewhat to culture. Colombians have been seen to prefer oral communication (Costalas, 2009, High and Low Context Cultures section). Additionally, I felt as though if it were possible to go into the office in person, I would

have had the opportunity to build more of a relationship and get to know the contact more than was possible over email. Unfortunately, it was not possible to get a response and the potential case study of intercultural communication was not able to be accomplished.

### **Conclusions and Future Study**

Many scholars have explored the area of culture and intercultural communication, especially as globalization continues to influence the business world. In order to have more direction for professionals facing intercultural situations, studies on specific interactions between certain groups can give insight into how to train managers to be competent in cross-cultural situations. As the realm of intercultural communication becomes more relevant in the business sphere, training for such situations will encourage business growth through reconciling cultural differences when working in a cross-cultural atmosphere.

## References

- Bonilla Carvajal, C. A., & Tejada-Sánchez, I. (2016). Unanswered questions in Colombia's language education policy. *PROFILE Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 18(18), 185-201.
- Central Intelligence Agency: The World Factbook. (2017, October 19). *South America: Colombia*. Retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/geos/co.html>
- Conaway, R. N., & Wardrope, W. J. (2004). Communication in Latin America. *Business Communication Quarterly*, 67(4), 465-474.
- Costalas, G. (2009). Intercultural communication between Colombian and American teachers in Colombian institutions. *Profile Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 11, 159-168.
- Council of Europe. (2001). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge, U.K: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge.
- Fernandez, D. R., Carlson, D. S., Stepina, L. P., & Nicholson, J. D. (1997). Hofstede's country classification 25 years later. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 137(1), 43-54.
- Ferreira, M., Serra, F. A., & Pinto, C. S. (2014). Culture and Hofstede (1980) in international business studies: A bibliometric study in top management journals. *REGE – Revista de Gestão*, 21(3), 379-399.

- Fok, L. Y., Payne, D. D., & Corey, C. C. (2016). Cultural Values, Utilitarian Orientation, and Ethical Decision Making: A Comparison of U.S. and Puerto Rican Professionals. *Journal of Business Ethics, 134*(2), 263-279.
- Hofstede, G. (1980). Culture and Organizations. *International Studies of Management & Organization, 10*(4), 15-41.
- Joynt, P. & Warner, M. (1996). *Managing across cultures: Issues and perspectives*. Boston, MA: International Thomson Business Press.
- Martinez, F. (2015). English in advertising in Colombia. *World Englishes, 34*(4), 600-619.
- Matveev, A. V., & Nelson, P. E. (2004). Cross cultural communication competence and multicultural team performance: Perceptions of American and Russian managers. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management, 4*(2), 253-270.
- Miczo, N., & Welter, R. E. (2006). Aggressive and Affiliative Humor: Relationships to Aspects of Intercultural Communication. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research, 35*(1), 61-77.
- Minkov, M., Blagoev, V., & Hofstede, G. (2012). The Boundaries of culture: Do questions about societal norms reveal cultural differences? *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 44*(7), 1094-1106.
- Ronen, S., & Shenkar, O. (1985). Clustering countries on attitudinal dimensions: A review and synthesis. *The Academy of Management Review, 10*(3), 435-454.

- Ronen, S., & Shenkar, O. (2013). Mapping world cultures: Cluster formation, sources and implications. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 44(9), 867-897.
- Ting-Toomey, S. (2007). Intercultural conflict training: Theory-practice approaches and research challenges. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 36(3), 255-271.
- Ting-Toomey, S. (2010). Applying Dimensional Values in Understanding Intercultural Communication. *Communication Monographs*, 77(2), 169-180.
- Trompenaars, A. & Hampden-Turner, C. (2012). *Riding the waves of culture: Understanding diversity in global business*. Chicago, IL: McGraw-Hill.
- Universidad EAFIT. (2017, September 7). Población estudiantil posgrados: Matriculados al semestre 2017-2. Retrieved from <http://www.eafit.edu.co/institucional/calidad-eafit/boletin-estadistico/estadisticas-posgrado/Paginas/poblacion-estudiantil-posgrado.aspx>
- Velez-Rendon, G. (2003). English in Colombia: a sociolinguistic profile. *World Englishes*, 22(2), 185-198.
- West, J., & Graham, J. L. (2004). A linguistic-based measure of cultural distance and its relationship to managerial values. *Management International Review*, 44(3), 239-260.

## Appendix

### Transcription of Questionnaire from Qualtrics (Original Form)

Q1 Buenos días,

Estás invitado a tomar esta encuesta electrónica con el propósito de investigar la comunicación intercultural que se genera entre profesionales colombianos durante su carrera. La encuesta tarda no más de veinte minutos, y es completamente voluntaria y anónima. Todas tus respuestas serán confidenciales.

El objetivo de esta encuesta es abrir el campo de investigación de la comunicación intercultural y buscar maneras de poder mejorarla. Los resultados de esta investigación serán publicados por este medio con el título de 'The Reality of Intercultural Communication for Colombian Business Professionals.' Será publicada en el mayo de 2018 aproximadamente. Esta base de datos es accesible al público, pero la investigación no incluye información personal.

Cualquier pregunta o duda, ponte en contacto con la investigadora principal Anna Kelly (kellyaai@uni.edu) o a su consejera de facultad, Dra. Elise DuBord (elise.dubord@uni.edu). Si tienes alguna pregunta que se trata de los derechos del participante de investigación y el proceso de la investigación, ponte en contacto con la oficina del administrador de IRB (Junta de Revisión Institucional) de la University of Northern Iowa a través del siguiente correo electrónico anita.gordon@uni.edu. No hay riesgo previsto en el acto de participar. Mantenemos la confidencialidad hasta el punto que nos permita la tecnología usada. No hay garantía en el respeto a la interceptación de datos por un tercero.

Muchas gracias por tomarte el tiempo de rellenar esta encuesta. Recuerda manifestar tu consentimiento para participar de esta encuesta.

End of Block: Block 9

---

Start of Block: Block 10

Q2 ¿Estuviste o estás en el programa de maestría en administración (MBA) en la Universidad EAFIT en Colombia?

- Sí (1)
- No (2)



*Skip To: End of Survey If ¿Estuviste o estás en el programa de maestría en administración (MBA) en la Universidad EAFIT en... = No*

End of Block: Block 10

---

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Q3 ¿Creciste en Colombia?

- Sí (1)
- No, en otro país latinoamericano (2)
- No, en el país de (3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

Q4 ¿Actualmente eres residente de Colombia?

- Sí (1)
- No, en otro país latinoamericano (2)
- No, en el país de (3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

*Display This Question:*

*If ¿Creciste en Colombia? = No, en el país de*

*Or ¿Creciste en Colombia? No, en el país de Is Not Empty*

*And ¿Actualmente eres residente de Colombia? = Sí*

Q5 ¿Hace cuántos años viviste en Colombia?

\_\_\_\_\_

End of Block: Default Question Block

---

Start of Block: Block 12

Q6 ¿Pasaste tiempo en otro país?

- Sí, por (1)
- Nunca estuviste en otro país (2)

---

*Display This Question:*

*If ¿Pasaste tiempo en otro país? = Sí, por*

Q7 ¿Por cuántos meses estuviste en el otro país? (Si estuviste en más de uno, pon la más larga estancia en que estuviste en un solo país).

---

---

*Display This Question:*

*If ¿Pasaste tiempo en otro país? = Sí, por*

Q8 ¿En qué país/es estuviste?

---

End of Block: Block 12

---

Start of Block: Block 1

Q9 ¿Cuántos años trabajaste en el mundo profesional?

---

---

Q10 ¿En qué sector trabajas? Si trabajaste en algunos, pon la de temporada más larga.

---

---

Q11 La mayoría de tu carrera profesional fue en

Colombia (1)

El país de (2) \_\_\_\_\_

---

Q12 La mayoría de tu carrera profesional fue en una empresa de

Colombia (1)

El país de (2) \_\_\_\_\_

End of Block: Block 1

---

Start of Block: Block 2

Q13 En ambientes profesionales hispanohablantes,

	Nunca (1)	Raramente (2)	Ocasionalmente (3)	Frecuentemente (4)	Muy frecuentemente (5)
Hablas formal. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eres flexible con el tiempo. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hablas con frases coloquiales y jerga. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Te quedas con compañeros del trabajo fuera del lugar de trabajo. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Haces bromas. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hablas de tu familia y vida personal. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q14 En ambientes profesionales hispanohablantes, ¿cuál forma de comunicación prefieres?

- Por llamada (1)
- Por correo (2)
- Por videollamada (3)
- En persona (4)
- Otra, (5) \_\_\_\_\_

End of Block: Block 2

---

Start of Block: Block 3

Q15 ¿Cuánto contacto tienes con angloparlantes en tu carrera profesional?

- Una vez a la semana (1)
  - Una vez al mes (2)
  - Una vez al año (3)
  - Nunca (4)
- 

Q16 Cuando comunicas con profesionales angloparlantes, suelen comunicarse en

- Español (1)
- Inglés (2)
- Los dos equitativamente (3)

End of Block: Block 3

---

Start of Block: Block 4

Q17 En ambientes profesionales,

	Muy de acuerdo (1)	De acuerdo (2)	Indeciso (3)	En desacuerdo (4)	Muy en desacuerdo (5)
Los angloparlantes se ciñen al horario. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A los angloparlantes les importa el acto de saludar y despedir. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Los angloparlantes mantienen relaciones con compañeros del trabajo fuera del lugar del trabajo. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Los angloparlantes mantienen relaciones después del asunto o trabajo profesional termina. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Los angloparlantes terminan trabajos lo más pronto posible. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Los angloparlantes hablan de manera muy directa. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Block 4

Start of Block: Block 5

Q18 ¿Cuántos años estudiaste el idioma de inglés en la escuela?

---

---

Q19 ¿Cuántos años estudiaste el idioma de inglés después de la escuela?

---

---

Q20 En tus cursos de inglés, la enseñanza incluyó temas de la cultura angloparlante.

- Nunca (1)
- Raramente (2)
- Ocasionalmente (3)
- Frecuentemente (4)
- Muy frecuentemente (5)

---

Q21 En el contexto del idioma inglés,

	Muy de acuerdo (1)	De acuerdo (2)	Indeciso (3)	En desacuerdo (4)	Muy en desacuerdo (5)
Entiendes el humor inglés. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comunicas efectivamente en inglés. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Te expresas sentimientos efectivamente en inglés. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Entiendes las frases hechas de inglés. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Entiendes la jerga inglesa. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Utilizas frases coloquiales y jerga cuando hablas inglés. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Haces bromas con angloparlantes. (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Block 5

---

Start of Block: Block 6



Q22 En tu carrera profesional,

	Muy de acuerdo (1)	De acuerdo (2)	Indeciso (3)	En desacuerdo (4)	Muy en desacuerdo (5)
Encuentras gente de muchas culturas. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hay diferencias culturales entre tu y angloparlantes. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Piensas que es bueno tener diversidad en el trabajo. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trabajas en un equipo multicultural. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ves las diferencias individuales entre los angloparlantes. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reconoces cómo tu punto de vista viene de tu cultura. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tienes interes en conocer otras culturas. (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Estás dispuesto para trabajar con angloparlantes sin reserva. (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Es posible que otras culturas sean mejores que tu cultura en algunos aspectos. (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Block 6

Start of Block: Block 7

Q23 Cuando trabajando con angloparlantes,

	Muy de acuerdo (1)	De acuerdo (2)	Indeciso (3)	En desacuerdo (4)	Muy en desacuerdo (5)
Piensas en tu propio origen cultural. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Estás consciente de incertidumbre debido a diferencias culturales. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sabes mucho de su cultura. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hablas de temas personales (p. ej. familia, sueldo, planes de viaje, etc.). (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Te enfocas más en el éxito del trabajo. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Intentas optimizar el tiempo mejor. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Estás cómodo cuando hay incertidumbre debido a diferencias culturales. (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cambias tu manera o ritmo normal de trabajar. (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Estás paciente cuando hay confusión confusión o malentendidos por el idioma si sea en español o inglés. (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Block 7

---

Start of Block: Block 8

Q24 Cuando trabajando con angloparlantes, ¿en qué forma de comunicación prefieres usar?

- Por llamada (1)
  - Por correo (2)
  - Por videollamada (3)
  - En persona (4)
  - Otra, (5) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

Q25 Cuando trabajando con angloparlantes, ¿en qué forma de comunicación suelen usar angloparlantes contigo?

- Por llamada (1)
- Por correo (2)
- Por videollamada (3)
- En persona (4)
- Otra, (5) \_\_\_\_\_

End of Block: Block 8

---