



# VNiVERSiDAD D SALAMANCA

CAMPUS OF INTERNATIONAL EXCELLENCE

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**ESCUELA DE DOCTORADO**

**FACULTAD DE FILOLOGÍA**

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Doctoral Dissertation

*Enhancing intercultural communicative competence through a CLIL and PBL hybrid approach  
at tertiary education: A Costa Rican approximation*

**Karol Viviana Cubero Vásquez**

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# UNIVERSIDAD DE SALAMANCA

Programa de Doctorado: Estudios Ingleses Avanzados: Lenguas y  
Culturas en Contacto



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Enhancing intercultural communicative competence through a CLIL and PBL hybrid approach at  
tertiary education: A Costa Rican approximation

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

**PhD in Advanced English Studies: Languages and Cultures in Contact**

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## DEDICATION

*There is hope in constructing better societies, there is hope in fighting evil tendencies and behaviors. There is hope in inheriting future generations a better, healthier and peaceful world. Let us teach about the other, ourselves, and our common ground in respectful and flexible frames.*

*Karol Cubero Vásquez*

To Vivianne, the light of my life

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God will generously provide all you need.  
2 Cor. 9:8

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# COMPETENCIA COMUNICATIVA INTERCULTURAL MEDIANTE UN ENFOQUE HÍBRIDO ENTRE AICLE Y ABP EN LA EDUCACIÓN TERCIARIA: UNA APROXIMACIÓN COSTARRICENSE

## RESUMEN EN ESPAÑOL

**Karol Viviana Cubero Vásquez**

### **1. Introducción**

El papel que desempeña la educación en el desarrollo de las sociedades en contextos dinámicos y de profundas transformaciones en diversos ámbitos de la vida impulsados por corrientes económicas, sociales, tecnológicas y sanitarias, invita a la reformulación de prácticas y nociones que se adapten mejor al mundo actual. La educación, vista como pilar en la ecología social, debe garantizar un proceso continuo y transformador mediante mecanismos que aseguren el progreso social, fomenten la innovación y la colaboración con el fin de preparar íntegramente al estudiantado a enfrentar, reconocer y responder a las demandas de la sociedad. Para ello es fundamental formar mejor al estudiantado teniendo en cuenta que el Consejo Europeo (2018) ha recomendado el fortalecimiento de competencias críticas a favor del aprendizaje continuo que favorezcan, entre otras habilidades, el aprender a aprender, los idiomas, la competencia digital, el trabajo en equipo, el pensamiento crítico, la creatividad, la resolución de problemas, la comunicación, la negociación y la consciencia crítica intercultural. En su papel social, la universidad está llamada no solo a formar profesionales, sino también a educar a ciudadanos activos conscientes del contexto culturalmente diverso y plural de hoy. Según Kahn (1990), son muchos los educadores que se interesan en innovar la práctica docente para proponer un tipo de aprendizaje diferenciado que fomente el desarrollo de competencias clave. Luther (2000) plantea la necesidad de adoptar nuevos métodos de aprendizaje que enfatizen el aprendizaje colaborativo y dinámico para cultivar habilidades de pensamiento de orden superior, pensamiento crítico y

sentido de comunidad que motive a los estudiantes a apoyarse mutuamente para comprender las complejidades del conocimiento. Por ende, se reconoce la importancia de generar y probar enfoques alternativos que valoren y ofrezcan un ambiente de aprendizaje respetuoso que motive a los individuos a involucrarse activamente y convertirse en entusiastas por aprender a aprender y por desarrollarse de manera integral.

Los educadores, como agentes de cambio, pueden facilitar prácticas novedosas para mediar una experiencia de aprendizaje activa, experiencial y colaborativa de la cual pueden surgir beneficios de aprendizaje significativos. Estos retos y requerimientos ponen de manifiesto la necesidad tangible de abordar la enseñanza desde una perspectiva amplia, inclusiva y funcional que sirva al propósito de humanizar la educación con el fin de preparar ciudadanos culturalmente conscientes, activos, colaborativos y empáticos de sus conciudadanos del mundo.

En el caso particular de la enseñanza de idiomas, la enseñanza de la lengua meta se puede utilizar como un vehículo para aprender y negociar contenidos variados, lo que favorece la formación de hablantes interculturales y el desarrollo de competencias y habilidades críticas para operar globalmente de manera efectiva. Esto es esencial debido a que los encuentros interculturales son cada vez más cotidianos. Por lo cual, los educadores de idiomas están llamados a potenciar la adquisición y desarrollo de conocimientos, habilidades, actitudes y consciencia crítica cultural que les permita a los estudiantes la solidez y confianza para interrelacionarse en el mundo moderno, multicultural e interconectado. Una perspectiva intercultural, mediada de manera explícita y regular en el aula de idiomas, potencia acciones y avances importantes que ayudan a construir un mundo más sensible e inclusivo, enmarcado en el entendimiento mutuo, la empatía y el respeto. Esto maximiza una visión de colaboración internacional e intercultural, comprometida con la sana coexistencia y resolución de los problemas globales que aquejan a la humanidad e implica el

desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa intercultural que se adhiere a la competencia lingüística en su globalidad.

El constructo de la competencia comunicativa intercultural (CCI) tiene el potencial de contribuir con la consecución de esos objetivos mediante la formación en idiomas (segunda lengua o lengua extranjera). Como consecuencia de ello, el proceso de enseñanza de idiomas se convierte en un proceso ecléctico, dinámico y pertinente que no se limita a alcanzar los objetivos lingüísticos, sino que postula el desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa desde un marco intercultural que busca la eficacia en la comunicación. El reconocimiento de la CCI como competencia fundamental no es asunto nuevo ya que constituye parte de un dinámico y continuo debate que ha cautivado el interés de muchos educadores e investigadores durante las últimas décadas que estaban interesados en explorar su impacto en la formación de los estudiantes. En la comunidad de educadores de lenguas existe consenso sobre la necesidad de educar a las personas discentes para que se conviertan en hablantes interculturales capaces de gestionar las complejidades, tanto lingüísticas como interculturales, cuando se comunican con interlocutores culturalmente distintos. Este reconocimiento ha motivado la generación de teorías, modelos e investigaciones que abordan las diferentes formas de adquirir dichas competencias.

Uno de los modelos más influyentes para el desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa intercultural en contextos educativos es el propuesto por Byram (1997, 2020), quien afirma que los objetivos lingüísticos deben orientarse a la formación comunicativa intercultural a favor de promover el modelo de hablante intercultural. Para Byram (2008) un hablante intercultural es una persona capaz de adoptar una perspectiva empática, abierta y positiva mientras interactúa con otros culturalmente diferentes. La noción de la competencia comunicativa intercultural, según Béréšová (2019), se relaciona con el contexto y los individuos que como hablantes deben ser competentes,

tanto en contextos específicos como situacionales, comunicándose y comportándose adecuadamente.

Desde una perspectiva general, el modelo teórico propuesto por Byram postula la exploración del constructo vinculando cuatro dimensiones, a saber, conocimiento intercultural, actitudes, habilidades y conciencia crítica. Estas dimensiones proveen una plataforma integral, cuyo rol es esencial para comprender y adaptar estrategias efectivas para la interacción e interrelación intercultural a través de un idioma extranjero o segunda lengua en escenarios interculturales. En este proceso de formación el descubrimiento o redescubrimiento del papel de la cultura nativa o propia es fundamental para comprender cómo influye la visión del mundo, las prácticas y los comportamientos y creencias aprendidas en los encuentros comunicativos con personas de otras culturas. Además, sirve de base para que el alumnado entienda el papel de la propia cultura en toda la experiencia de aprendizaje al incorporar o reincorporar elementos socioculturales a su identidad.

El modelo desarrollado por Byram es especialmente adecuado para el contexto específico de la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras, ya que los componentes del modelo teórico subyacente se presentan en objetivos comprensibles y alcanzables. Esto presenta oportunidades para extraer implicaciones prácticas para los estudiantes, educadores y profesionales interesados en el aprendizaje, la enseñanza y la evaluación de la mediación de la CCI en contextos de EFL e invita a considerar la mediación de lenguas extranjeras al integrar la comunicación intercultural dentro de la filosofía holística (Byram, 2020; Barret, 2016; Byram, 2008; Byram *et al.*, 2017).

Esto supone ventajas importantes ya que al convertirse en comunicadores interculturales se aumenta potencialmente la disposición a colaborar, negociar y establecer relaciones. Durante décadas los investigadores han abogado por la necesidad de realizar más investigación y prácticas

pedagógicas que ayuden a cumplir estos objetivos que preparen a las personas discentes para desarrollar la competencia intercultural que favorezca una exitosa y fructífera comunicación entre culturas (Byram *et al.*, 2017; Byram, 2020; Borghetti, 2017; Houghton, 2016; Deardoff, 2012). La competencia comunicativa intercultural (CCI) es una vía adecuada para facilitar el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras desde un proceso de aprendizaje permanente que tiene un enorme impacto sobre la percepción de la vida y de la visión del mundo de los estudiantes. Alcanzar este objetivo no es una tarea fácil pues plantea retos e interrogantes debido a la naturaleza compleja del constructo de cultura y representa un replanteamiento de las nociones y prácticas implicadas en la enseñanza de idiomas. Sin embargo, la integración de la CCI representa un importante objetivo y la oportunidad de fortalecer el currículo y la experiencia de aprendizaje de idiomas en un marco intercultural explícito y progresivo.

En este contexto, esta tesis plantea el abordaje de una metodología pedagógica híbrida que destaca principios teóricos de los métodos de aprendizaje integrado de contenidos y lenguas extranjeras (AICLE) y del aprendizaje basado en proyectos (ABP) como alternativa efectiva para alcanzar el objetivo lingüístico de desarrollar la CCI. Tanto el AICLE como el ABP reconocen que la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras o segundas lenguas debe abogar por una pedagogía integral, inclusiva y holística. Tanto el PBL (aprendizaje basado en proyectos) como el AICLE (aprendizaje integrado de contenidos y lenguas) son enfoques centrados en el alumno que facilitan el aprendizaje de nuevos contenidos mediante el uso del idioma meta. A la vez, favorecen el desarrollo de competencias necesarias para el siglo XXI debido a que ambos centran el desarrollo de habilidades lingüísticas a través de una serie de actividades, tareas y proyectos diseñados en un contexto de comunicación con propósito genuino que fomenta la investigación, habilidades de pensamiento y trabajo colaborativo mediante la gestión de contenidos.

La combinación de los principios de ambas metodologías puede ofrecer una plataforma para cumplir tanto objetivos lingüísticos como interculturales. Por ejemplo, el enfoque AICLE promueve el dominio, tanto del contenido como de la lengua a niveles predefinidos (Marsh, 2012). Este modelo tiene múltiples beneficios que implican experiencias de aprendizaje variadas que destacan y fortalecen la comunicación, la cultura, el contexto y la cognición (Coyle *et al.*, 2009). Por otro lado, el PBL es una filosofía constructivista y flexible que invita a trabajar cooperativamente temáticas de la vida real según los intereses y necesidades de los estudiantes. Según Doppelt (2003), el PBL es un enfoque que promueve un entorno de aprendizaje activo en el cual los estudiantes aprenden mediante la interacción, investigación y procesos de creación de productos, lo que mejora sus conocimientos y habilidades sociales y de pensamiento.

Para entender la dimensión intercultural en la enseñanza de idiomas se exploran algunos constructos y perspectivas del modelo de Byram que permitan guiar la experiencia de aprendizaje sobre el qué, por qué y cómo abordar, enseñar y evaluar la CCI mientras se enseña inglés como lengua extranjera en el contexto costarricense. Para emprender un camino diferenciado, los educadores necesitan repensar sus propias creencias sobre lo que implica la enseñanza de una segunda lengua o lengua extranjera. Por lo tanto, la competencia comunicativa intercultural (CCI) parece ser una vía adecuada para facilitar el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras trascendiendo el foco de la competencia lingüística de estructuras y formas hacia uno integral y ambicioso que aporte múltiples beneficios en el aula de idiomas.

## **2 Metodología y preguntas de investigación**

El diseño de este estudio se enmarca en un enfoque mixto que utiliza datos cuantitativos y cualitativos durante las diferentes etapas, lo que proporciona diversas perspectivas en torno a la



temática investigada. Los estudios mixtos permiten al investigador obtener una comprensión más completa del objeto de estudio ya que, como afirma Creswell (2008), este tipo de investigación implica recopilar y analizar datos cuantitativos y cualitativos para comprender más a fondo un problema de investigación. El método mixto, por lo tanto, proporciona mayor confiabilidad, validez y precisión de los resultados, por lo que se seleccionó debido a la naturaleza y objetivos del estudio.

El diseño de la investigación fue cuasiexperimental. Este diseño mide la eficacia de un tratamiento y establece una relación causa-efecto entre las variables dependientes e independientes. En este contexto, la investigadora utiliza grupos intactos y equivalentes, pero solo un grupo experimenta el tratamiento mientras el otro actúa como grupo de control (Price *et al.*, 2015). En ámbitos educativos, los diseños cuasiexperimentales (QED) mejoran el conocimiento al estudiar la magnitud de los efectos causales durante las intervenciones. Los cuasiexperimentos pueden sostener un cierto nivel de confianza en cuanto a los resultados obtenidos debido al mecanismo de control al comparar los grupos control y experimental mediante la aplicación de pruebas y *test* en diferentes momentos de la investigación.

Este diseño también fue de corte longitudinal, ya que se midió a los participantes durante dos semestres: en el primero en el curso inglés integrado I y en el segundo en el curso inglés integrado II. Se aplicó una intervención pedagógica al grupo experimental, el grupo control no participó de la intervención y siguió una metodología más tradicional enfocada a aprender el idioma meta. La intervención pedagógica tenía el fin de comparar tendencias y extrapolar conclusiones entre el grupo experimental y el de control durante los dos semestres. La propuesta de intervención se aplicó por un periodo de 26 semanas, 13 semanas durante cada semestre.

Los estudiantes del grupo experimental completaron tres pruebas como *pretest* y *posttest* (antes y después de la intervención), así como un instrumento de apreciación sobre la metodología usada. El grupo de control completó tres instrumentos como *pretest* y *posttest*. Toda la información recolectada y clasificada se sometió a pruebas y análisis de datos estadísticos usando el *software* IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Los resultados se interpretaron y se utilizaron en la discusión con el fin de contrastar los datos del grupo experimental y del de control para establecer conclusiones congruentes según los resultados.

El alcance del estudio explora si la integración del componente intercultural facilitado de manera regular a través de una metodología híbrida de principios de AICLE y ABP es efectiva en la promoción y desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa intercultural de los discentes que cursaban inglés integrado I y II durante dos semestres consecutivos. La finalidad era identificar el impacto, fortalezas, oportunidades y desafíos en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera durante el proceso de aprendizaje de la competencia intercultural.

Este estudio plantea la hipótesis de que la competencia comunicativa intercultural (conocimientos, conciencia cultural crítica, actitudes y destrezas) mejora al integrar sistemáticamente contenidos interculturales mediante un enfoque combinado de AICLE (aprendizaje integrado de contenidos y lenguas) y ABP (aprendizaje que se basa en proyectos) en los cursos de inglés integrados I y II en el contexto costarricense de la educación superior. El fundamento teórico de esta afirmación se basa en teorías y enfoques que se relacionan con la integración de la CCI en el contexto de la enseñanza de una lengua extranjera. La investigación también establece la hipótesis de que variadas técnicas de enseñanza con un enfoque híbrido de las metodologías de AICLE y PBL facilitan un proceso de aprendizaje significativo y práctico del idioma meta, lo que mejora la CCI y la proficiencia lingüística. Por lo tanto, esta investigación

estudia los principios de enseñanza de AICLE y PBL para fomentar la CCI en el contexto costarricense. El estudio pretende responder a las siguientes preguntas de investigación:

1: ¿Promueve un enfoque híbrido entre AICLE y ABP la competencia comunicativa intercultural de estudiantes en educación terciaria? En caso afirmativo, ¿en qué medida?

2: ¿Existe correlación entre la aplicación de un enfoque híbrido con la promoción o mejora de la competencia comunicativa intercultural en el grupo experimental?

3: ¿Existen diferencias significativas en los resultados de los *pretest* and *posttest* que miden la CCI entre los grupos experimental y de control?

4: ¿Cuáles son los beneficios de la enseñanza de la dimensión intercultural en el aula de ILE en Costa Rica?

5: ¿Cuáles retos surgieron al implementar el AICLE y el aprendizaje basado en proyectos para mediar la CCI?

6: ¿Cuál es el impacto percibido del enfoque híbrido de principios de AICLE y PBL, tanto en la competencia lingüística como en la competencia comunicativa intercultural entre los estudiantes del grupo experimental?

7: ¿Cuál es la percepción de los estudiantes del grupo experimental sobre el enfoque híbrido?

8: ¿Cuáles son algunas estrategias efectivas y prácticas para integrar y mediar la CCI en el aula de lenguas extranjeras?

### 3 Marco teórico

Para mantener una comunicación intercultural eficaz es fundamental fomentar el desarrollo de una serie de elementos que forman parte de la dimensión intercultural como los conocimientos, las habilidades, la conciencia cultural crítica y las actitudes. Este conjunto de dimensiones se ha extrapolado al ámbito de la enseñanza de idiomas con la pretensión de apoyar una nueva conceptualización de lo que el hablante de idiomas necesita para adaptarse a los nuevos contextos comunicativos. Por lo tanto, el interés por la CCI invita a adoptar una visión diferente en la enseñanza de idiomas, contribuyendo, de manera significativa, a uno de los debates más extendidos que abordan la relación entre lengua y cultura, lo que promueve una praxis de enseñanza y aprendizaje en la que la lengua meta y la cultura están entrelazadas inextricablemente.

Los argumentos a favor de la competencia comunicativa y de la comunicación intercultural sirvieron de base para proponer una conceptualización multifacética de lo que implica educar a los estudiantes de lenguas extranjeras de forma holística con el fin de convertirlos en comunicadores competentes. Estos puntos de vista consideran el proceso de aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras desde una perspectiva diferente, que reformula los propósitos, los objetivos, los procedimientos, las estrategias y los roles en el marco de una nueva pedagogía del lenguaje. Además, reencuadra el papel central del alumno dotado de conocimientos, conciencia de la cultura extranjera y de la cultura de origen, habilidades y actitudes necesarias para comunicarse en diversos contextos (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993; McConachy *et al.*, 2022).

A esto se debe que la competencia comunicativa intercultural (CCI) surja como una amalgama que comprende la comunicación y la interculturalidad y que pone de relieve la naturaleza híbrida y holística del aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera al tratar asuntos como el yo, la identidad, las culturas de origen y extranjera y la dinámica mundial. Un enfoque intercultural

implica pasar de un enfoque estático en el que se estudian hechos fijos sobre una cultura concreta a involucrar a los estudiantes en un proceso de transformación que repercute en su carácter y en sus habilidades comunicativas (Liddicoat *et al.*, 2003).

Este es un camino ambicioso pero adecuado para facilitar el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras y promover un proceso de aprendizaje a largo plazo. Estas ideas encuentran apoyo en el inextricable nexo entre lengua y cultura para desarrollar la competencia comunicativa intercultural, que no solo afecta a la capacidad de desenvolverse con eficacia en una lengua extranjera, sino que también ayuda a los estudiantes a desarrollar actitudes y comportamientos lingüísticos y comunicativos más apropiados.

Los partidarios de esta nueva filosofía proporcionan las bases para acuñar un término que abarca una relación íntima entre la lengua y la cultura y llaman a mediar un proceso intercultural en el contexto específico del aprendizaje de idiomas. Asimismo, enfatizan la idea de que el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras implica un aprendizaje intercultural que se basa en la premisa de que aprender una lengua implica el aprendizaje de significados, valores y prácticas compartidas de ese grupo, ya que estos se representan y difunden en la lengua (Atkinson, 1999; Savignon, 1972; Kramsch, 1993, 1998; Tang, 1999; Liddicoat y Scarino, 2013; Byram y Fleming, 1998). Este argumento se ha apoyado en el hecho de que cuando las personas utilizan una lengua extranjera para comunicarse, estas interacciones son intrínsecamente interculturales, ya que los antecedentes culturales de los individuos tales como la identidad, comportamiento, actitud, valores o sus puntos de vista, influyen durante dichas interacciones.

La literatura señala a Baxter (1983) como uno de los primeros investigadores en proponer que la competencia comunicativa debía basarse también en las interacciones contextuales interculturales para lograr una comunicación eficaz, ya que la comunicación requiere una

comprensión profunda de todas las complejidades y factores que influyen en esta. Más tarde, el concepto de la competencia comunicativa intercultural (CCI) fue reintroducido y analizado por Byram a finales de los años 90 y actualmente es uno de los modelos teóricos más influyentes para entender la multidimensionalidad de la CCI en el contexto de la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras.

Byram (1997) expone que el aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera abarca un proceso que no se basa unilateralmente en el aprendizaje de la gramática, el vocabulario, la sintaxis o el manejo de determinadas situaciones comunicativas, sino que requiere una conceptualización más reflexiva, integral e intercultural. De esta manera, amplía las nociones de competencias socioculturales, sociales y estratégicas propuestas por Van Ek (1986) y concibe el proceso comunicativo desde un marco integral de dimensiones cognitivas, afectivas y conductuales para desarrollar la conciencia crítica intercultural.

Para Byram (1997, 2020) la conexión inseparable entre la competencia comunicativa (lingüística, sociolingüística y discursiva) y la competencia intercultural (actitudes, conocimientos, habilidades de interpretación y relación, habilidades de descubrimiento e interacción y consciencia cultural crítica) constituye un marco de referencia en la enseñanza y aprendizaje para facilitar un proceso en el que los discentes puedan transformar sus perspectivas, actitudes, creencias y comportamientos en interacciones interculturales. En este contexto, la CCI se define como la capacidad de gestionar un entendimiento mutuo entre personas de diferentes identidades culturales y desde su propia individualidad que les permite interactuar con éxito en una segunda lengua o en una lengua extranjera, demostrando un amplio repertorio de habilidades, destrezas y conocimientos (Byram *et al.*, 2002; Byram, 2020).

Sus argumentos sobre la adquisición de una lengua extranjera/segunda lengua están ligados a la adquisición de prácticas y creencias culturales representativas de un idioma en concreto, ya

que el idioma representa la complejidad de prácticas, creencias, comportamientos, símbolos y actitudes un país. Este proceso tiene enormes implicaciones para el individuo en su desarrollo lingüístico, comunicativo y personal y sirve como estructura para apoyar y guiar potencialmente las acciones y comportamientos conscientes durante los actos comunicativos. Desde este punto de vista, el aprendizaje intercultural de lenguas desarrolla, además, la comprensión de la(s) lengua(s) y cultura(s) nativa(s) de los estudiantes por lo que despierta la curiosidad por otras culturas y afina la conciencia crítica al rol que desempeña la cultura propia en la transformación de los marcos de referencia adquiridos (Liddicoat y Scarino, 2013; Mezirow, 2000).

Byram (2020) sostiene que el componente cultural en los entornos educativos requiere una reformulación que permita superar el modo tradicional de considerar los aspectos culturales como declarativos, procedimentales y permanentes por uno que procure facilitar herramientas y prácticas desde el análisis, la reflexión y la evaluación en un marco comparativo. Los principales objetivos del modelo planteado por Byram (1997, 2008, 2020) se basan en reorientar la importancia de la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de lenguas en estrecha relación con el componente intercultural al postular una exploración más rigurosa de los factores vinculados con la comunicación intercultural en el contexto de aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras.

En este contexto, los docentes de idiomas desempeñan un papel importante en el uso y diseño didáctico de medios, actividades y en la creación de oportunidades no solo para enseñar y transmitir los conocimientos culturales, sino también para facilitar la reflexión, el análisis y la construcción y reconstrucción de significados vinculados con cuestiones y propósitos comunicativos e interculturales. Desde este punto de vista, la CCI es todavía un concepto joven que evoluciona de diferentes maneras, en distintos contextos y a diversos ritmos. Por lo tanto, esta

propuesta motiva a avanzar hacia objetivos comunicativos interculturales que desarrollen la CCI como preparación integral para la vida académica, profesional y personal.

### **Metodología híbrida**

Con el propósito de avanzar hacia esos objetivos educativos integrales, más coherentes en el contexto del siglo XXI los educadores e investigadores se han embarcado en la búsqueda de diferentes métodos, metodologías y estrategias de enseñanza para contribuir con mejorar las prácticas de enseñanza. Las metas educativas de este siglo requieren fomentar el crecimiento académico, profesional y ciudadano de modo consciente y participativo. El seleccionar una metodología es una tarea clave en la gestión de la enseñanza y aprendizaje que requiere una encarecida reflexión que pondere el currículo, factores contextuales, sociales, tecnológicos y escenarios globales. Por este motivo, el modelo propuesto por Byram es un referente en contextos educativos (Lu y Corbett, 2012; Muller-Hartmann, 2006; Sercu, 2007; Woodin, 2001) y, especialmente, en el aula de idiomas, pues describe y propone objetivos y postulados para fomentar la competencia comunicativa intercultural en todas sus dimensiones (conocimiento, consciencia crítica cultural, actitud y habilidades). La evolución e inclusión de objetivos lingüísticos e interculturales plantea una alternativa a la enseñanza tradicional que busca el uso significativo de la lengua y la comunicación efectiva entre individuos interculturalmente diferentes.

Por lo tanto, un enfoque híbrido de principios, nociones y estrategias de enseñanza presupone la posibilidad de establecer objetivos lingüísticos e interculturales que medien una experiencia de aprendizaje de idiomas holística e integral. Asumir la tarea de construir una experiencia de aprendizaje orientada al desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa intercultural en



el aula de idiomas requiere un educador autodidacta, flexible y autocritico de su propia praxis, de modo que pueda adoptar una cultura de enseñanza y aprendizaje dinámica, evolutiva, integral y contextualizada.

Esta tesis propone fusionar principios de las metodologías de aprendizaje de AICLE y PBL como marco pedagógico en la mediación de los aprendizajes que se basan en actividades, tareas y proyectos dirigidos a fomentar competencias y habilidades lingüísticas e interculturales esenciales para relacionarse de forma eficaz en una lengua extranjera. Una metodología híbrida gestiona el proceso de aprendizaje de idiomas desde una óptica más participativa, funcional y significativa en la cual los discentes pueden experimentar la adquisición de la lengua meta en conexión con elementos interculturales que permiten responder de manera oportuna a las dinámicas de las sociedades modernas. La combinación de dichas metodologías dota a los profesionales de conocimientos clave, habilidades, competencias y de una formación holística que no se limita a aspectos lingüísticos.

La fundamentación teórica de estas metodologías sugiere una amplia y variada interrelación del contenido, la lengua y la cultura como pilares al fomento de habilidades lingüísticas y de la competencia intercultural. De esta forma, los métodos AICLE y ABP se correlacionan en ciertos principios de enseñanza por su naturaleza interactiva y multimodal que abordan contenidos, la lengua meta, la cultura, el contexto, elementos de la vida real, y habilidades sociales, colaborativas y de pensamiento.

Una referencia significativa reside en el hecho de que ambas metodologías conceden importancia al alumno como centro y foco del proceso de aprendizaje dotándole de autonomía, voz y participación a través de las tareas significativas y auténticas. Además, se promueve la comunicación con propósito y la necesidad del uso de la lengua en contextos reales en los que la

lengua se convierte en un vehículo para realizar, aprender y trabajar contenidos para fomentar competencias clave (Cubero, 2021).

Por ejemplo, del aprendizaje por proyectos (PBL) se destaca el énfasis en los procesos que promueven la creación de un producto mediante la colaboración con los compañeros y el educador, lo que desencadena una actividad constructiva en la que se usa, aprende y reafirma la lengua meta, las habilidades sociales, las habilidades de pensamiento y la participación. El método AICLE se enfoca en dos dimensiones durante el proceso de aprendizaje, a saber, el contenido y el aprendizaje de un segundo idioma de manera simultánea y en situaciones prácticas. Por lo tanto, otorga énfasis a la utilización de la lengua meta y brinda a los estudiantes la oportunidad de acceder a un enfoque transversal del conocimiento construido a través de las 4Cs que componen el programa de inglés, que son la comunicación, el contenido, la cultura o el contexto y la cognición (Coyle *et al.*, 2007; MacGregor, 2016; Marsh y Frigols, 2012).

La combinación de PBL y AICLE supone una perspectiva educativa integral que fomenta diferentes habilidades y conocimientos (Diez-Olmedo, 2020). Ambas metodologías se complementan en sus principios mediando un estilo de enseñanza explícito, comunicativo y colaborativo en la construcción de conocimiento que activa habilidades cognitivas, comunicativas e interculturales a lo largo del proceso de aprendizaje. El foco comunicativo en ambas metodologías realza su potencial didáctico en la enseñanza de idiomas y en este caso particular en la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera o segunda lengua. El marco de referencia del AICLE es multilingüe, mientras que ABP es experiencial. La fusión de ambas nociones refuerza el propósito pedagógico de la comunicación significativa. Las actividades y tareas bajo los principios de ambos modelos de enseñanza animan a los estudiantes a involucrarse en una comunicación real (Haines, 1989; Levine, 2004).

La construcción de una metodología híbrida basada en principios de AICLE y ABP representa una valiosa contribución a la investigación en los campos de la lingüística aplicada y de la didáctica en cuanto a que es un enfoque alternativo, ecléctico y antagónico a metodologías tradicionales en la enseñanza de idiomas. La propuesta de metodología híbrida presenta a la lengua meta como vehículo para explorar y desarrollar la competencia comunicativa intercultural, así como consolidar la competencia lingüística y las habilidades del pensamiento de forma significativa. La combinación de ambas metodologías representa una propuesta eficaz para integrar las cuatro destrezas lingüísticas en el proceso de adquisición del idioma inglés, a saber, escuchar, hablar, leer y escribir.

La amalgama de principios teóricos de ambos enfoques se basa en la novedad y el significado que debe utilizarse en la formulación de objetivos lingüísticos e interculturales en función de las necesidades del alumnado, su contexto de enseñanza, plan de estudios, los objetivos y nivel lingüístico. Esto se debe a que el desarrollo de la CCI implica un proceso continuo, sistemático y progresivo que requiere aprender y reaprender nociones interculturales sobre uno mismo y el otro. Consecuentemente, el rol del educador es fundamental en la mediación y consecución de metas y objetivos propuestos con dirección intercultural, lo que permite avanzar en el aprendizaje de lenguas hacia el desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa intercultural.

Según Byram (1997), el uso de recursos, técnicas y estrategias multivariantes permite a los discentes participar activamente en las oportunidades de aprendizaje prácticas para fomentar el conocimiento, la actitud, las habilidades y la conciencia crítica intercultural. Este pilar intercultural todavía necesita reforzarse en la enseñanza y en la investigación, tanto explícita como implícitamente (Porto, 2018; Cucchi, 2021; Gómez, 2020).

Las aportaciones de la neurociencia han ayudado a comprender los mecanismos que sustentan el aprendizaje y han señalado los elementos que intervienen en el aprendizaje de idiomas al aportar evidencia sobre la compleja coevolución del lenguaje y el cerebro con un propósito comunicativo social (Li *et al.*, 2020). Este conocimiento sobre el aprendizaje y la adquisición de un idioma ha reforzado los argumentos sobre la importancia y eficacia de mediar el aprendizaje del inglés mediante recursos y medios multivariados que activen los sentidos y conexiones neuronales. Por lo tanto, la noción del alumno como centro de la experiencia de aprendizaje supone un proceso dinámico, interactivo, contextualizado y agradable.

Los principios de ABP y AICLE en simbiosis en el aula de idiomas proporcionan un proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje significativo, dialógico y constructivo que responde a los requerimientos de las sociedades modernas y a lo que los discentes requieren según los retos de la modernidad y demandas en la formación profesional. El enfoque AICLE hace que los docentes sean conscientes de su responsabilidad de educar y formar integralmente al estudiante (Ellison, 2019). Además de prepararlos para la sociedad del siglo XXI, al seguir vías de aprendizaje emancipadoras, creativas e interdisciplinarias (Cruz, 2019; Jiménez Raya *et al.*, 2007; Ohler, 2013).

La combinación de principios de AICLE y PBL contribuye a abordar explícitamente el qué, el porqué y cómo integrar contenidos interculturales en el contexto de lenguas extranjeras/segundas lenguas. Además, la hibridación de ambos métodos ayuda a considerar los intereses y necesidades del estudiantado en cuanto al material, contenidos y la exposición lingüística en el proceso de las actividades, tareas y proyectos. Estos modelos abordan el contenido, la cultura, el contexto, la lengua y la comunicación como factores clave para generar y construir significados, resolver problemas, analizar realidades, así como adquirir y desarrollar la competencia comunicativa

intercultural, la sensibilidad y la conciencia crítica intercultural (Cubero, 2021; González-Rodríguez y Borham-Puyal, 2012; Corino y Onesti, 2019; Mahan, 2020).

#### **4 Conclusiones**

Los motivos que sustentan este estudio buscan ofrecer una visión global del importante papel que desempeña la competencia comunicativa intercultural en la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras/segundas lenguas. Existe una demanda latente en promover la investigación experimental y aproximaciones teóricas que sirvan de guía estructurada para facilitar una experiencia de aprendizaje comunicativo e intercultural en el contexto educativo. Esta tesis contribuye al debate y a la reflexión constructiva sobre el papel fundamental de la cultura en el contexto del aula de lenguas extranjeras o segundas lenguas.

Los resultados de los diferentes instrumentos que se utilizan y, en general, tras el cuasiexperimento, reafirmaron que una experiencia de aprendizaje intercultural planificada, explícita y constante tiene importantes implicaciones pedagógicas y orientativas en el diseño de un enfoque híbrido y contextualizado para abordar la dimensión intercultural en el aula de inglés. Los resultados del estudio aportan pruebas suficientes a favor de la hipótesis que afirma que la integración sistemática de la CCI en el aula de ILE mediante un enfoque híbrido de principios AICLE y PBL mejora la competencia comunicativa intercultural en todas sus dimensiones según los resultados encontrados en el grupo experimental. Las principales conclusiones del estudio en cuanto a las preguntas de investigación son las siguientes:

P.1: ¿Promueve un enfoque combinado entre AICLE y PBL la competencia comunicativa intercultural de los estudiantes en la educación terciaria? Si es así, ¿en qué medida? P.2: ¿Existe

correlación entre la aplicación de un enfoque híbrido con la promoción o mejora de la competencia comunicativa intercultural en el grupo experimental?

Los estudiantes que participaron en el grupo experimental recibieron formación intercultural en dos periodos de intervención pedagógica durante dos cursos de inglés (integrado I y II). Los resultados del instrumento de autoevaluación de los componentes del ICC mostraron una tendencia positiva en el complejo proceso de adquisición de la competencia comunicativa intercultural. Al comparar los progresos realizados por los alumnos de los grupos control y experimental durante la primera y la segunda intervención se comprobó que los resultados eran estadísticamente significativos ( $p < 0,001$ ) en cada uno de los componentes estudiados (conocimientos, conciencia cultural crítica, actitud y habilidades).

Los resultados demuestran la correlación que apoya la eficacia del método aplicado en la promoción y progresión de la competencia comunicativa intercultural. El grupo experimental obtiene un progreso significativo en comparación con el grupo de control, que no cambió significativamente en ninguna de las intervenciones. Por lo tanto, se puede concluir que las intervenciones mejoraron de manera significativa la competencia comunicativa intercultural del grupo experimental. Durante la intervención I, en el grupo experimental la dimensión más afectada fue la de conocimiento (conocimientos interculturales sobre la memoria nacional y la información general sobre las culturas meta y nativa), los resultados de la media aumentaron de 2,84 en el *pretest* a 3,85 en el *posttest*. En la intervención II, la media más alta del grupo experimental fue en actitud, la cual incrementó de 3,48 en el *pretest* a 4,21 en el *posttest*.

Además, se puede inferir que los participantes autoevaluaron sus perspectivas, favoreciendo un cambio desde el conocimiento, en la primera intervención, hacia la actitud en la segunda intervención. Lo anterior indica que la exposición prolongada y sistemática a contenidos, tareas,

proyectos y recursos interculturales en el aula de inglés es eficaz para ayudar a los alumnos a progresar y desarrollar la competencia comunicativa intercultural. Estos resultados prometedores corroboran la afirmación de Deardorff (2006) que relaciona la actitud como un componente fundamental en el desarrollo de la competencia intercultural, ya que sostiene la modificación de marcos de referencia personales que, finalmente, influyen en los comportamientos interculturales adecuados.

Adicionalmente, en el grupo experimental es interesante observar que, tras las evaluaciones formativas realizadas a lo largo de cada una de las intervenciones, la habilidad lingüística experimentó un ritmo de mejora mucho más rápido que el de la CCI.

P.3: ¿Existen diferencias significativas en los resultados de los *pretest* and *posttest* que miden la CCI entre los grupos experimental y de control?

Se encontraron diferencias significativas entre ambos grupos en los instrumentos aplicados. En el grupo control los resultados según el valor  $p$  ( $p > 0,05$ ) para cada uno de los componentes del ICC (conocimientos, consciencia crítica, actitud y habilidades) no muestran diferencias significativas después de haber trabajado el enfoque tradicional de enseñanza y aprendizaje de idiomas. Por el contrario, los resultados en el grupo experimental en ambas intervenciones resultaron con un valor  $p$  significativo ( $p < 0,05$ ). Los resultados del *posttest* indican una diferencia estadísticamente significativa entre los grupos de control y de intervención en las cuatro categorías, conocimientos, consciencia crítica, actitud y habilidades. Los resultados de la media en los componentes del ICC en el grupo experimental son más altas que las encontradas en el grupo control.

P.4: ¿Cuáles son los beneficios de la enseñanza de la dimensión intercultural en el aula de ILE en Costa Rica?

Los beneficios generales se perciben en diferentes vértices. El proceso de progresión en la CCI, las habilidades lingüísticas y otros beneficios se identificaron en términos de adquisición de nuevos contenidos, vocabulario, redescubrimiento de aspectos clave sobre culturas extranjeras y propia destacando como formación útil para futuros encuentros interculturales y laborales. La actitud de los alumnos y su apertura a nuevos puntos de vista sobre culturas, contenido, información y prácticas en relación con el proceso de aprendizaje de la lengua y la interculturalidad en la clase de inglés cambiaron y se reconoció el rol de la cultura en su formación y progreso lingüístico.

La mayoría de los participantes del grupo experimental destacaron que las intervenciones de corte intercultural desempeñan un papel fundamental en el proceso formativo al ayudarlos a convertirse en usuarios independientes y eficaces de la lengua meta. Esta comprensión se percibe como un beneficio que incrementa la motivación de los alumnos para convertirse y actuar como hablantes interculturales y ciudadanos globales. Los alumnos también reconocieron su papel como agentes de cambio y la actitud demostrada hacia estos temas sensibles fue notablemente esperanzadora, abierta e inspiradora. Después de participar en las intervenciones los estudiantes se percibieron flexibles, abiertos y dispuestos a aprender temas interculturales, que, además, desarrollaban y fomentaban sus habilidades lingüísticas en inglés. La cognición y procesos de pensamiento también se activaron durante las intervenciones pedagógicas. La reflexión, el análisis, la comprensión, la evaluación, la creación y la construcción de conocimiento se evidenciaron en el proceso facilitado en la experiencia de aprendizaje llevada a cabo a través de proyectos, las tareas y actividades que los alumnos realizaron durante las sesiones. El desarrollo de la autonomía y la independencia fue también un beneficio percibido en el grupo experimental durante las intervenciones.



P.5: ¿Cuáles retos surgieron al implementar el AICLE y el aprendizaje basado en proyectos para mediar la CCI?

Durante la implementación y el desarrollo de este estudio surgieron algunos desafíos. Una de las experiencias más desafiantes fue la interrupción abrupta y repentina del aprendizaje gestionado en el *campus* debido a la pandemia de COVID-19. En concreto, la pandemia obligó al investigador a repensar, capacitarse y diseñar tareas, contenidos y proyectos que pudieran mediar a través del nuevo entorno de aprendizaje remoto/en línea. Afortunadamente, para la población estudiantil general que participó la conexión fue posible y, en su mayoría, estable durante las dos intervenciones. Del mismo modo, se realizaron adaptaciones para garantizar que los estudiantes participantes tuvieran la oportunidad de practicar el lenguaje meta en un marco de experiencia intercultural, de forma asíncrona y sincrónica. Además, inicialmente se observó que este tipo de aprendizaje requiere un profesor comprensivo y autodidacta, tanto en la gestión de aprendizaje intercultural como en el uso de herramientas digitales.

P.6: ¿Cuál es el impacto percibido del enfoque híbrido de principios de AICLE y PBL, tanto en la competencia lingüística como en la competencia comunicativa intercultural entre los estudiantes del grupo experimental?

El enfoque híbrido de los principios de AICLE y ABP como plataforma pedagógica facilita una experiencia de aprendizaje multifuncional e innovadora ya que los estudiantes se exponen a diversos contenidos, incluido el contenido intercultural, que estudia culturas extranjeras, cultura meta y nativa como contexto para facilitar la progresión lingüística, el fomento de la CCI en entornos educativos de lenguas extranjeras o segundas lenguas y otras habilidades. El método híbrido fue percibido favorable y positivo en el grupo experimental. En lo que respecta a la intervención I, la categoría de satisfacción (percepciones en torno al nivel de satisfacción de los

participantes con las tareas, los proyectos, los temas y los recursos que se utilizan para mediar en una lengua extranjera) obtuvo la media más alta ( $m = 4,11$ ). Esta categoría también incluye las perspectivas de los participantes sobre la progresión en torno a las habilidades colaborativas y cognitivas (pensamiento crítico y creatividad) activadas a través de las unidades, proyectos y tareas interculturales y lingüísticas. Los estudiantes estuvieron muy de acuerdo con estas afirmaciones y se inclinaron ligeramente por esta categoría más que por la de impacto y beneficios.

Las perspectivas de los participantes después de aplicar la intervención II muestran un incremento en los resultados en relación con la intervención I. Es interesante destacar que la categoría con la puntuación media más alta se mantiene en la de satisfacción  $m = 4,37$ , seguida de la categoría de beneficios (beneficios percibidos del enfoque híbrido AICLE y PBL en la experiencia de aprendizaje del ICC) que obtuvo una media de  $m = 4,31$ . Estos resultados se alinean con las declaraciones de Sánchez-Palacios (2017) sobre las oportunidades que la combinación de estas metodologías AICLE y PBL ofrecen a los discentes en cuanto a un entorno de aprendizaje activo para desarrollar competencias funcionales. Este estudio demuestra la viabilidad de trabajar con un enfoque híbrido para fomentar y avanzar en la CCI en el aula de idiomas.

Además, los resultados cualitativos reflejaron avances y progreso en la competencia lingüística ya que los estudiantes fueron capaces de expresar en inglés sus ideas durante las variadas actividades de clase. Con las herramientas digitales adecuadas y básicas los discentes fueron capaces de realizar proyectos colaborativos y participar en conversaciones en las cuales se observó su progreso comunicativo e intercultural, lo que impactó positivamente su conciencia crítica intercultural, conocimiento y actitud. Por tanto, el impacto se resume en términos de adquisición de conocimientos, activación de la cognición, trabajo colaborativo, inicio de un aprendizaje permanente, cambio de perspectivas de lo que implica aprender una lengua extranjera, aprendizaje

autónomo y desarrollo de la CCI. Se concluye, que el enfoque híbrido es eficaz para ayudar a los alumnos a alcanzar múltiples objetivos de aprendizaje.

RQ7: ¿Cuál es la percepción de los estudiantes del grupo experimental sobre el enfoque híbrido?

Los resultados demostraron que los participantes del grupo experimental habían fortalecido su actitud positiva y receptiva para trabajar y participar en las tareas, actividades y proyectos facilitadas mediante las intervenciones. La mayoría de los participantes coinciden y reconocen la relevancia que tiene el componente intercultural en el contexto del aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras. Esta percepción concuerda con lo que los expertos en la materia sugieren al otorgar valor al conocimiento intercultural, las habilidades, la actitud y la conciencia cultural crítica en un mundo multicultural, intercultural e interconectado que exige individuos capaces de comunicarse eficaz y empáticamente.

El cuestionario para recabar la opinión de los participantes sobre las perspectivas de la enseñanza de idiomas y la interculturalidad muestra resultados interesantes que respaldan el aprendizaje de la enseñanza de idiomas de la mano de la interculturalidad y que favorece también la idea del enfoque híbrido. Las respuestas obtenidas sobre el enfoque híbrido parecen favorecer una experiencia de aprendizaje caracterizada por la exposición y adquisición de nuevo vocabulario, estructuras gramaticales básicas, expresiones en inglés, fluidez y comunicación mediante el uso de contenidos variados, interculturales y contextualizados. Además, se identificaron opiniones satisfactorias relacionadas con las actividades, recursos y materiales que se utilizaron en las intervenciones.

P.8: ¿Cuáles son algunas estrategias efectivas y prácticas para integrar y mediar la competencia comunicativa intercultural (CCI) en el aula de lenguas extranjeras?

Las estrategias y tareas que se utilizan a lo largo de las intervenciones pedagógicas pretendían proporcionar a los participantes una experiencia de aprendizaje intercultural mediante la lengua meta combinando y aplicando principios y elementos para promover oportunidades auténticas en la gestión de contenidos, desarrollo de habilidades y progreso en el desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa intercultural. Las diversas estrategias que se emplearon bajo los principios de AICLE y ABP proporcionaron una plataforma teórica beneficiosa para diseñar una instrucción guiada y organizada del aprendizaje del inglés. Entre las estrategias específicas se encontraban las tareas variadas y proyectos o mini proyectos cuyos productos finales eran indicadores de progreso significativo, manejo de los contenidos, uso de la lengua, adquisición del vocabulario y comparaciones conexión entre culturas extranjeras y nativa. Además, la visión global desarrollada en los pasos procedimentales ISUACAFO para la experiencia de mediación de la CCI desarrollada por la investigadora a partir del método híbrido permitió planificar y estructurar con claridad el proceso de la intervención pedagógica.

Con el fin de alcanzar una visión global de la relevancia y la necesidad de fomentar la CCI en el contexto de la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras en la educación terciaria, este estudio exploró la mediación de una experiencia lingüística intercultural a través de los principios de AICLE y PBL. La propuesta aborda una de las tareas cruciales a las que se enfrentan los educadores de idiomas durante su práctica, es decir, la tarea de reinventar y readaptar su práctica docente con modelos híbridos o alternativos que puedan responder a las nuevas generaciones de estudiantes, a sus necesidades contextuales y, en general, al mundo en constante cambio.

Esta tesis apoya la necesidad de fomentar la CCI en la educación terciaria costarricense en el contexto del inglés como lengua extranjera, al demostrar la eficacia de integrar la dimensión intercultural en el currículo de idiomas. Estos hallazgos son significativos y, sobre todo, pertinentes para el contexto costarricense, pues se documentó a lo largo de las dos intervenciones que los niveles de progresión y desarrollo de los CCI se incrementaron durante el período de instrucción.

A través de los proyectos, tareas y actividades los participantes del grupo experimental se implicaron en el proceso de aprendizaje de la lengua meta y mostraron su capacidad de interpretar, comparar, diferenciar, identificar y reflexionar críticamente sobre los valores y prácticas de la cultura nativa, meta y extranjeras. Por lo tanto, El aula puede transformarse en una comunidad social en la que, por medio de modelos pedagógicos activos e híbridos, se motive a los estudiantes a experimentar, practicar, improvisar cuestiones fundamentales como el componente intercultural en un entorno seguro y agradable que imite el mundo real. Es fundamental que las instituciones educativas proporcionen una formación lingüística integral a partir de modelos pedagógicos apropiados.

Otra implicación pedagógica importante para el contexto costarricense es la necesidad de extrapolar la inclusión explícita del componente intercultural a otros cursos de inglés que se ofrecen en los campus de la UNA. Los resultados de este estudio abogan por ajustes curriculares para integrar explícitamente los aspectos culturales en el programa de estudios a través de una metodología híbrida para alcanzar los objetivos lingüísticos e interculturales. Un enfoque híbrido parte de una perspectiva del aprendizaje y la enseñanza activa, constructivista y auténtica en la que se motiva a los estudiantes, de forma habitual, para que tengan un papel activo, implicado y autónomo en su proceso. Estos hallazgos sugieren que los cursos de inglés que se ofrecen en las universidades costarricenses y, específicamente, en la UNA, deben reconocer las expectativas y

necesidades de los alumnos de cara a los desafíos y retos del mundo actual y, en especial, capacitarlos para enfrentar su futuro con habilidades y competencias pertinentes que les permitan entablar encuentros comunicativos fructíferos. Asimismo, comenzar un redescubrimiento de su identidad, sus raíces culturales y su voluntad de emprender un camino de aprendizaje a lo largo de la vida que fortalezca estrategias, visiones y comportamientos comunicativos interculturales saludables.

En el caso específico de la Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica, su filosofía educativa se ha definido a través de un modelo pedagógico que delimita y determina principios para asegurar un tipo de educación que la población costarricense merece. La entidad busca promover el respeto a los demás con el ideal de la igualdad de oportunidades y la contribución a una sociedad más justa y equitativa, en la que tanto hombres como mujeres vivan bajo los principios de solidaridad, ayuda mutua y cooperación.

Esta tesis contribuye a la literatura existente al aportar conocimiento y ofrecer rutas y argumentos a favor de facilitar el componente intercultural de manera explícita, integrada e intencionalmente en el currículo de idiomas para mediar una experiencia de aprendizaje holística encaminada a la promoción de la competencia comunicativa intercultural. El papel que se aconseja que adopte el educador de idiomas es el de un mediador, interesado genuinamente en promover el desarrollo y la progresión de los estudiantes en el idioma, lo que significa también mediar el componente intercultural.

Esta investigación es una invitación explícita a abordar las complejidades de la CCI y del aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera o segundas lenguas en el contexto de la educación terciaria de manera práctica, teórica y apropiada metodológicamente para cumplir y preparar a los discentes en sus roles profesionales en el contexto de los retos del siglo XXI. Los resultados de este estudio

sugieren que la adopción de un enfoque híbrido de los principios de enseñanza del AICLE y del ABP es útil para educar al alumnado para que se conviertan en hablantes interculturales, a la vez que se consigue un aprendizaje progresivo hacia el desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa intercultural.

Este estudio demuestra que al combinar los principios de enseñanza de AICLE y ABP, el modelo cambia hacia una mediación innovadora que ofrece a los estudiantes una oportunidad de aprendizaje multidivergente para experimentar de manera intencionada la interconexión entre lengua y cultura. Los resultados cuantitativos y cualitativos de este estudio han señalado que muchos estudiantes del grupo experimental encontraban los contenidos interculturales útiles y relevantes para sus carreras, su vida y su proceso de aprendizaje en la lengua meta. Además, se comprobó que la mediación lingüística intercultural supone una experiencia de enseñanza y aprendizaje diferenciada y atractiva, maximizada por la metodología híbrida, lo que demuestra progreso y desarrollo de la competencia lingüística e intercultural. Los resultados de este cuasiexperimento de corte longitudinal revelan que los estudiantes están preparados para iniciar, consolidar y fortalecer un proceso de aprendizaje intercultural.

## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the development of intercultural communicative intercultural communicative competence through CLIL and PBL hybrid approach at tertiary education in the Costa Rican context. The study describes a pedagogical intervention where two language approaches were combined to mediate intercultural learning. The main aim was to explore the extent to which the implementation of a hybrid approach of CLIL and PBL principles could enhance FL intercultural communicative competence during two compulsory English courses at tertiary education. Evidence and data was sought through longitudinal intervention experiments for two academic semesters. Participants were divided in two groups: the control group, which included 94 participants (n=94) and the experimental group, which included 124 (n=124). A mixed method approach with a quasi-experimental design was implemented during two academic semesters in Integrated English courses offered at Universidad Nacional: Sede Regional Chorotege. Different data collection instruments were used to gather information: questionnaires, Likert scales, formative quiz, and journal entries. Quantitative data analysis was processed through statistical methods such as descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The quantitative data gathered were analyzed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science), while the qualitative data were analyzed using a content thematic analysis with the program (Nvivo) and through scrutinizing the collected sources of information from participants.

The results from both groups were compared to determine the efficacy of the hybrid method used in contrast to traditional FL methods. Findings and results of this study revealed that the experimental group students had a much more positive perception of the inclusion of intercultural matters and their perspectives, which supported the hypothesis that a hybrid approach of principles from CLIL and PBL is effective to foster and mediate the ICC component in the foreign language



classroom. After the interventions, results revealed that –after exposing participants to systematic intercultural learning activities, tasks, and projects under a learning environment of hybrid teaching principles– students’ intercultural communicative competence was fostered and this improved over time engaging learners in a meaningful and dynamic FL process. The experimental group students was observed to have a higher impact on the intercultural dimension of knowledge during the intervention I and on attitude during intervention II. The hybrid method of teaching principles was highly favored on the category of satisfaction reporting an overall positive perception of the integration of the intercultural component through the method’s varied learning activities, contextualized content, material, and resources used in the context of remote learning. These supportive aspects around the study highlight the relevance of the method used to provide learners with a multivariant approach to enhance their FL process at tertiary education where the target language was used to promote learning and personal growth. This study recommends further a systematic inclusion, development and implementation of the intercultural component through hybrid methodologies that use varied tasks and material and holistically put the learner at the center of the learning process.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CA	Critical Awareness
CDF	Cognitive Discourse Functions
CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease of 2019
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EU	European Council
FL	Foreign Language
ICC	Intercultural Communicative Competence
IC	Intercultural Competence
ICDO	International Civil Defense Organization
IS	Intercultural Speaker
MEP	Ministry of Public Education
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PBL	Project based learning
SL	Second Language
UNA	National University of Costa Rica
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

## **INTRODUCTION**

*“Cultural differences should not separate us from each other, but rather cultural diversity brings a collective strength that can benefit all of humanity” Robert Alan Aurthur*

When reflecting on the role education plays in shaping societies in the context of rapid technological and social changes, it is inevitable to notice a pace dissonance on equipping citizens with the tools to influence and adapt to their surroundings. The profound changes, which have taken place in the last twenty years, serve as an indicator of the kind of future changes humanity will endeavor to achieve and will undoubtedly lead to rethinking traditional views and education methods. Such transformations, driven by economic or social forces or by information communication technology, keep changing and revolutionizing the world in a way that requires people to be vigilant and to avail themselves of updated preparation. The growth of international commerce, globalization and technology have shortened geographical distances and contributed to increasing intercultural communicative encounters worldwide. Thus, societies can hardly remain monocultural as the waves of immigration have transformed nations into diverse territories, tinting places with pluricultural and linguistic diversity while increasing the chances for constant intercultural contact with the possibility of either a positive engagement or potential conflict as cultures interact with one another.

In times of pandemic, the chain of events has shown how unprepared nations and individuals face a disruptive hazard such as COVID-19. The whole world has been tested as the virus unfolds fragility and reveals noncooperation in dealing with global issues. The lessons taught are many, but one directly points toward the requirement to enable learners with critical skills and competences to maximize a vision for international-intercultural collaboration, understanding, and empathy to support the compromise required for a healthy coexistence. Learners need to get focused competence training to face future challenges. Therefore, there is a need to foster or

reinforce healthy and effective dialogic practices in a framework of open disposition to help and learn from one another, globally and/or locally.

Education, as a primary pillar of that framework, must guarantee an ongoing, transformational process through mechanisms that ensure progress and foster innovation to cope with the world's demands. The role of education is fundamental in educating citizens to recognize and better respond to new challenges. In terms of better equipping learners, the European Council (2018) has agreed and revised the recommendation of critical competences for lifelong learning, digital competence, multilingualism, learning to learn, citizenship, cultural awareness, languages, and skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, teamwork, communication, negotiation, creativity, and intercultural communication. Policy makers and educators are to reassure the compromise to enhance social and intercultural skills in the context of digital revolution.

Without question, curriculum revision should be a habitual practice to facilitate the development of knowledge, competences, and skills to better communicate, collaborate, and interact with other people and cultures. Acknowledging the need for transformational instruction is crucial to equip future graduates and citizens with practical skills and competencies. In its social role, the university is called upon not only to train a workforce of professionals but also to educate active, mindful citizens aware of the plurality of views and, above all, able to respond successfully to local and global problems. As inhabitants of planet earth, an intercultural outlook can enhance the possibility of building a better world, one framed in mutual understanding, empathy, justice, and respect. These particular ways of thinking, skills, and competences will play a fundamental role in shaping the future that the next generations will inherit.

Since intercultural encounters take place almost daily, language educators in the twenty-first century are called upon to empower student acquisition of foreign language knowledge, skills, attitudes, and cultural awareness to interrelate in today's multicultural, interconnected world.



Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) seems to be a suitable path to facilitate foreign language learning and promote a lifelong learning process during which a profound change in students' perceptions of life can occur, enhancing the capacity to expand on their world views. The recognition of ICC as a pivotal competence is not new; an ongoing debate over the issue has captivated the interest of many leading language educators and researchers in exploring its depth and extent. There is an agreement in the foreign language teaching community on the need to educate foreign language learners to become intercultural speakers who can manage both linguistic and intercultural complexities when communicating with culturally different interlocutors. Byram (2008) describes an intercultural speaker as someone who is able to take an "external" perspective on oneself while interacting with others. Foreign language users must become optimal intercultural citizens in a world of ever-expanding and ever-mixing diversities as part of their communicative ability (Byram et al., 2002).

Language learners should maintain appropriate and effective communication practices with culturally diverse native or foreign/second-language speakers in both face-to-face and virtual scenarios. Such an understanding of cultures would prepare individuals to operate globally in accordance with contemporary and expected worldwide developments while significantly benefiting learners from a social, economic, and personal standpoint. The challenges that have emerged in the foreign language classroom should be addressed by revisiting and updating English language instruction. It is imperative to constantly revise the curriculum to ensure that it is in tune with the real world. In that sense, educators, as agents of change, can facilitate novel practices to mediate an active, experiential, and collaborative learning experience. Meaningful possibilities may arise when using the target language as a vehicle to negotiate varied, intercultural, contextualized, real-life content as opportunities for educating competent, functioning intercultural speakers.

Indeed, such a goal is not an easy task since the implementation of ICC is full of concerns regarding how to address culture and what cultures to integrate into the learning experience. This uncertainty causes both disempowerment and hesitation to capitalize on the intercultural component in language teaching. A way to advance might be found in foreign language education trends that recognize language as a complex system beyond structures and forms, such as content and language integrated learning (CLIL) and project-based learning (PBL) language pedagogies. CLIL and PBL are both described as approaches that bring multiple benefits to the language classroom. PBL (Project Based Learning) and CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) are both student-centered approaches that facilitate learning new content, language acquisition, and the development of 21st-century skills. Both integrate language skills work through a number of task activities and agreed goals in a context of genuine communicative needs encouraging research, skills, and cross-curricular work through content management.

Combining principles from both language pedagogies can offer a platform to meet both intercultural and linguistic objectives. For example, the CLIL dual-focused educational approach of content and language integrated learning promotes both content and language mastery to pre-defined levels (Marsh, 2012). This model adds multiple benefits involving multi-variant learning objectives and experiences that emphasize communication, culture, context, and cognition (Coyle, Holmes, and King, 2009, p.14). PBL is a constructivist philosophy concerning real issues and cooperative work that takes into account student needs. According to Doppelt (2003), PBL is a flexible approach that helps create an appropriate learning environment for students to learn by improving their knowledge, cognitive skills, and thinking. Bulent and Stoller (2005) remark that a commonly reported benefit of using PBL in the English language is the authenticity of the language learning experience which integrates various skills in the creation of a project. In the specific case

of foreign language teaching, a combined pedagogical view may contribute to developing skills and competences that are pertinent in times of unprecedented issues to respond to.

This study investigates the use of two learning approaches (CLIL and PBL) to determine its effectiveness in fostering intercultural communicative competence, seeking to provide learners with opportunities to strengthen linguistic, cognitive, and collaborative skills in the FL classroom. This thesis is divided into three parts: the theoretical framework and literature review, methodology, and data analysis. It comprises ten chapters and opens with a general introduction presenting a holistic picture of the need and significance to explore, teach and conduct research on the fostering of the intercultural communicative competence in the foreign/ second language classroom. In light of the objective of this study, the first chapters present a revision of relevant literature to explore the trajectory implied in the emergence and proposal of intercultural communicative competence (ICC). The notion of ICC and the role culture plays in the foreign language classroom are explored. Thus, one of the most influential models to approach ICC is described to its most essential core notions, objectives, and assessment. Chapter 3 revises, reviews, and justifies CLIL and PBL underpinnings to identify common ground principles in order to build a hybrid methodology to support ICC learning and development. Both CLIL and PBL advantages and potential learning gains are presented to further understand its possible effect on ICC development. Moreover, a brief reference regarding the Costa Rican status of English and ICC in the language classroom is provided. Chapter 4 underlines the research methodology, describing and setting the subjects, objects, research questions, method, and instruments used to carry out this research.

Chapter 5 is devoted to explaining the bases and procedures considered in the design of the pedagogical interventions. It gives theoretical support to elements pondered in the mediation of the

intercultural language experience. Some lesson samples used in the pedagogical interventions are also provided. Chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9 provide the empirical findings and data analysis and also describe the different instruments used to collect data (ICC self-assessment scale, Hybrid approach self-report questionnaire, assessment tasks progression, and English and ICC perspectives questionnaire). Each chapter reports on the data collection, analysis and statistics with its corresponding results, interpretation, discussion, and correlations among the data. Qualitative data, which reflect the experimental group perspectives and reactions towards the pedagogical interventions and the perceived benefits after participating in the interventions, are also provided. Finally, Chapter 10 systematizes the research conclusions, pedagogical implications, future directions, and the study's limitations.

This study aims to contribute to the scarce empirical studies in ICC teaching in the foreign language classroom and provide further scientific knowledge into the growing body of literature that explores the need and significance of developing intercultural competence to educate integral citizens. Enhancing intercultural and communitive bonds across the globe is a fundamental competence that may be the only humanizing tool to ensure a collaborative response to the rising challenges of our times. Language educators can do much more than just teaching a foreign language since they can contribute to filling the gap in education by moving towards ICC mediation.

## **PART 1: THEORETICAL REVIEW**

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE TRAJECTORY**

## 1.1. From Linguistic Competence to Communicative Competence

The available literature on foreign language teaching seems to have taken a dynamic path over the last years. Novel notions and ideas have been the subject of debate and discussion, especially those intended to enrich the teaching and learning experience. The trajectory, teaching, and learning views on foreign language instruction have been fluctuating, motivated by socioeconomic and political forces redefining directions and pedagogical practices in the field. Indeed, the present and the future unveil challenges, demanding individuals, and institutions to change, adapt, and integrate novel teaching and learning practices to develop competencies needed to interact in a fast-changing interconnected world. Transformations in health, work, family, relationships, social interactions, and communication triggered by advances and progress in globalization, communication and digital technologies have created new realities for the present and indeed for the future that demand new ways of addressing education in general and foreign language teaching, in particular.

Technology and communication advances have enabled people to shorten geographical distances between others in real-time interconnecting the world beyond borders. Before the pandemic hit the world, international tourism had grown exponentially, increasing intercultural encounters among individuals from almost everywhere in the world. Hence, Thenceforward, there is a need to foster and reinforce healthy and effective dialogic practices in a frame of positive attitudes and behaviors that enable individuals to learn from one another, globally or locally, in this context of dynamic, diverse intercultural interactions. In its social role, education must ensure to become an agent of change responding to current challenges by playing a more effective, responsive active role in the construction of more balanced, fair societies(Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012).

There are countless unsolved social issues around the globe; for example, regular waves of immigration forced by the poor living conditions in many parts of the world. The sanitary and economic crisis can only be effectively and properly managed when governments adopt a more collaborative, proactive global outlook by recognizing that individualistic approaches do not help to solve collective issues. Educational systems must adapt their vision, mission, resources, and means to offer a new paradigm that can provide citizens and societies with the tools to face these challenges. Global collaboration, cooperation, understanding, dialogue, respect, and empathy can outline a more fruitful path to respond to new changing contexts on a worldwide scale. There is a need to contribute to the formation of integral, active, and mindful citizens aware of their power to promote change toward a healthy coexistence in an interconnected global effort. As inhabitants of planet earth, an intercultural outlook can enhance chances for building a better world framed in mutual understanding, empathy, justice, and respect, which may contribute to reducing the tendency to mere dualities. Promoting and boosting attitudes linked to interculturality is critical, perhaps now more than ever and that is the reason why some efforts have been devoted to developing the intercultural communicative competence (ICC), hoping to make it an instrument to advance in that direction (Dombi, 2021; Fantini, 2020; Gómez-Rodríguez, 2018).

The foreign language teaching and learning process has passed through different pedagogical views over the last decades. Many efforts have been devoted to develop a theoretical framework aimed at understanding how to train individuals to communicate in a nonnative language effectively. There is a widespread agreement to define language as a symbol scheme composed of words coded in speech and visual representations governed by technical forms and norms. However, language in terms of human communication extends its range beyond that operational conceptualization. Language is a collective communicative act resulting from its



members varied practices reflected in linguistic signs. Languages, like cultures, are highly dynamic and evolve over time. Variability and diversity that characterize human reality permeate language embodying particular world visions as operative meaning making (Crystal et al., 2021; Armstrong & Ferguson, 2010).

Conventionally, learning a foreign language was linked to language knowledge; i.e. knowing about the language, the system of structures to produce, understand, and recognize utterances of vocabulary, syntax, and phonetics, which promoted “a process that involved students repeating or imitating new information” (Moeller & Catalano, 2015, pp. 327). It was later argued that the mere management of language knowledge was not sufficient to enable individuals to become competent communicators. Language rules were considered to be useless without the acquisition of the roles of use that allow learner to use the language appropriately. Indeed, there is ample research evidence that learning a foreign or second language implicates the student in a complex multidimensional process in which they are required to learn and effectively manage much more than the technical system that the language encodes (Chomsky, 1965; Widdowson, 1983; Lantolf, 2009; Moeller & Catalano, 2015; Bagiyan et al., 2021).

The process of learning a foreign language was then considered as a complex experience allowing emergent insights that have contributed to its evolution as a research field. A key word in this trajectory has been that of communicative competence. When the notion of communicative competence was first addressed, it was posed to fully comprehend the factors that played a part in developing the ability to understand and speak a particular language effectively. In 1965, the term caught significant attention when Chomsky came out with a theoretical approximation in which he suggested a distinction between competence and performance. That differentiation opened a much more vigorous discussion in foreign language learning.

In his scheme, Chomsky (1965) remarked that competence involves the knowledge shared by two individuals (the speaker and the listener) when conversing. Language is believed to be acquired naturally during communicative acts, enabling individuals to speak, understand, and judge utterances fluently and intuitively. Chomsky's idea of linguistic competence advocates the knowledge an individual has or develops about a language in terms of rules. He sustained that mastering linguistic competence was an ideal goal for language users. His perception was later debated to be insufficient since it involved only grammatical knowledge and disregarded other conditions of use to communicate, engage, and interpret linguistic messages.

After Chomsky had differentiated between competence and performance, many other researchers contributed to the theoretical discussion preparing the ground for the emergence of notions and theory development that would influence language teaching development. The 1970s and 1980s were years marked as flourishing decades in language teaching; new proposals contributed to understanding the limitations to the emphasis exclusively given to the linguistic system. The theoretical discussion pointed to the sociocultural component, which enabled the interlocutors to convey and decode messages in given contexts as tools for effective language use in communicative exchanges. Such contributions allowed reflections that impacted language teaching methods, favoring the shift from an emphasis on proficiency in language forms proposed by Chomsky to a more integral concept that includes other relevant components and competencies recognized as enhancing effective communication.

One of the most recognized contributions in that regard came from Hymes (1972). He debated Chomsky's distinction and outlined the necessity to study language from a more integral perspective by looking at two competencies: linguistic competence, and communicative competence. He relates linguistic competence to the ability to produce and understand appropriate

grammatical structures and defines communicative competence as the ability to build and understand proper sentences for a particular situation (Hymes, 1972).

Hymes' strongest argument revolved around the idea that communicative competence cannot be solely comprehended as the ability to use grammatical competence or forms, but as the ability to use grammatical and sociolinguistic knowledge in varied communicative contexts. He believed that the acquisition of the communicative competence was much more complex since many factors such as behavior, implementation, formality, appropriacy constraints, the who, what, where, when, the how, and the why played a crucial role and endowed interlocutors with the needed resources to maintain fluent and effective communication (Hymes, 1972). In other words, this researcher analyzed the process needed to better prepare speakers to face diverse communicative situations while adjusting to the setting, the participants' purpose, tone, content, and the channel of the communicative act. Additionally, Hymes also specified that learners needed to adopt culturally acceptable ways of interacting with others in different situations and relationships. Linguistic knowledge, according to Hymes (1972), is not enough since the merely isolated understanding of a language does not correctly prepare learners for successful language use. The transformational notion established a connection between competence and communication, accelerating the emergence of what has been recognized as an acceptable approach in the community of language teaching, which sets as a goal the development of student communicative competence.

Hymes suggested that engagement in any type of communication, especially the kind maintained through a foreign language, requires instruction and adjustment to the context, culture, or the situation involved. His work has been considered to offer a more representative and descriptive notion of competence because it entitles the use of linguistic competence in various communicative situations, incorporating the sociolinguistic perspective. In that regard, Hymes is

believed to be the father of the communicative competence concept since he efficiently provided significant insights toward understanding the concept. His perceptions were supported and expanded by many applied linguists and researchers who have contributed to developing the communicative theory in language learning and language acquisition (Hymes, 1972). Hymes's vision of communicative competence is centered on important issues that later led directions toward the need for speakers to adapt their behavior and way of thinking when interacting with others culturally different. This observation pointed toward a new way of understanding communication. The emphasis was not only directed over the message and words, but it was now conceived to be a more holistic process adding a social dimension, ignored in earlier studies.

To understand the meaning of the notion of communicative competence, some significant contributions will be discussed. Savignon (1972) outlined the concept of communicative competence as the ability to function in a genuinely communicative setting through dynamic negotiation or dialogue in which one's linguistic competence must adapt to the informational input, both linguistic and paralinguistic, of the interlocutors. Canale and Swain (1980) proposed what has been a widely accepted concept of communicative competence. They refer to it as the knowledge a person has about the language itself and its use, which consists of three primary components: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence.

These three kinds of competence relate to each other and are crucial for effective language use. Grammatical competence is defined as knowing the underlying grammatical principles, lexical, morphology, phonology, syntax, grammar, and semantics rules (Canale & Swain, 1980). The sociolinguistic competence is explained in terms of sociocultural practices needed to understand and interpret messages in a social context to fulfill communicative functions (Canale & Swain, 1980). The strategic competence is linked to the knowledge of verbal and nonverbal

communication strategies that the speaker may use when communication breakdowns occur (Canale & Swain, 1980).

Later, Canale (1983) added a fourth component, which he called discourse competence. According to Canale, discourse competence relates to the knowledge of combining utterances to achieve certain communicative functions. The competencies described by Canale and Swain gave a much more detailed orientation of what the communicative act entails, putting into perspective the complexity and multicompetence domains required. The four competencies support an interdependence of linguistic and functional components of language in communication, implying the merge of a knowledge system and the skills to develop communicative competence.

The rationale proposed by Hymes (1972), Canale and Swain (1980), and Canale (1983) prepared the field to better understand the elements that come into play when interaction or negotiation takes place. During the 1980s, the communicative competence model emphasized other skills, behaviors, and aspects such as empathy, connection, and interest as influential in strengthening the notion of communicative competence. The communicative competence view is often connected to the tangible and intangible knowledge of the language along with the skills and behaviors that serve to adjust properly during a conversation. It is straightforward that the earlier proposition of linguistic competence from which language teaching and learning relied upon resulted limited and even simplistic compared to the later proposal of communicative competence where individuals are intended to know much more than language forms in order to advance in using the language appropriately in communicative situations. Key to the rise of the communicative approach in language teaching was the conclusion that linguistic competence does not automatically result in communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980). The term gained sufficient attention from proponents whose discussion and research provided valuable

contributions that helped to enrich the concept of communicative competence. One of those contributions came from Van Ek (1986), who suggested a more integrative model in language teaching. His integral view is concerned with six intertwined key domains of communicative competence. This author proposed to study the term of communicative competence by looking at the following:

*Discourse competence* is seen as the appropriate use of strategies to interpret texts; strategic competence, as the correct use of the communicative system and sociocultural competence, understood as the skill to interact with other people.

*Linguistic competence* is described as the ability to produce and decode meaningful and grammatically correct utterances through proper language rules.

*Social competence* defines the skills needed to interrelate with others recurring to motivation, confidence, empathy, and the aptitude to properly conduct in social situations.

*Sociocultural competence* relates to the use of a specific sociocultural frame of reference.

*Sociolinguistic competence* is defined as the knowledge and awareness of connections between linguistic forms and their situational functional meaning.

*Strategic competence* refers to communication strategies used when communication does not flow properly, and meaning is not being understood. Moreover, Van Ek (1986) explored the role of the social and cultural aspects in his comprehensive framework, bringing to the discussion the influence of culture in sociocultural scenarios, urging to recognize the language and culture interrelatedness. He came to acknowledge that an individual cannot become competent in communication if key functional and practical sociocultural aspects are omitted and not integrated as part of their training since such elements are embedded in every language and function as a frame of reference for its interlocutors.

Both of the models described by Canale and Swain and Van Ek considered a division of competences and sub-competences that play a fundamental role in achieving communicative competence. Their models refer to a global, integral theoretical notion of communicative competence, pointing out that the language learner must have skills to get and create meaning by decoding and encoding messages in diverse contexts. Since these models were developed, the subsequent discussion allowed a growing body of literature that explored language teaching outside the scope of a monocultural and monolingual context, generating functional positions for second/foreign language teaching and learning.

This new paradigm involved a shift in the general objective of foreign/second learning from focusing on linguistic competence to communicative competence linked to sociolinguistic aspects. Practitioners and language educators acknowledged that it was not sufficient for learners to become effective communicators just by teaching them how to produce grammatically correct forms and structures if they did not manage or develop the required skills and strategies to use that language knowledge in real and authentic communicative situations. That was a realization that invigorated the debate for more ideas and notions around language functions. The proposal of communicative competence was viewed as a complex and dynamic process that entails language learning, adaptation, observation, development, and assessment. The emphasis on the act of communication meant significant changes in language teaching, such as the nature of tasks and the shift in teacher and learner roles. The teacher-oriented methodology changed to a more student-centered approach, where students' interest was taken into account to engage them to take a more active learning role.

Such perceptions paved the road to reposition and redirecting language learning primary goals. Leading experts in the subject (Byram, 1997; Feng et al., 2009; Kramsch, 1993; Liddicoat et al., 2003) and many others, have sustained that the traditional language learning goals should

not be merely seen in terms of communicative competence as proposed by Hymes. Supporters of a more holistic view find it limited, promote a shift toward the notion of intercultural communicative competence (ICC), and suggest the importance of establishing a link between communication competence and culture. In the words of Kramsch (1993), after years of communicative euphoria, some language teachers are becoming dissatisfied with merely functional uses of language, and some are pleading to supplement the traditional acquisition of communication skills with some intellectually legitimate, humanistic oriented, cultural content. In her scheme, she advocates that cultural teaching and learning should not be addressed as background or factual knowledge but as a “feature of language itself” (Kramsch, 1993, p. 8). The inspiring idea that language is always entrenched in the context of a given culture and one cannot be studied without the other regained strength and captured the interest of many researchers who later supported initiatives for a reconstruction and redefinition of foreign/second language learning and teaching aims. The communicative approach in EFL contexts found voices criticizing and advocating for a more effective teaching and learning model.

### **1.1.1. The cultural dimension in Foreign Language Teaching**

As the communicative competence movement gained force and influence, voices joined to construct a more comprehensive view of the teaching praxis. This included the role of culture in the learning and teaching pedagogy, which invigorated the debate recognizing that successful communication needed to take into account the linguistic and sociocultural dimensions. Consequently, the role of culture in the EFL contexts acquired a central role despite its elusive nature. Linguists and anthropologists have recognized that culture is a complex and defiant term to delimit due to the different meanings assigned from diverse people and environments, which



inspires philosophical quests over what determines life meanings and the nature of humans' practices.

In language education, the interrelation between language and culture has only strengthened thanks to research and the popularized consensus that language learning cannot be approached without paying attention to the cultural component (Nieto, 2001, Tang, 2006; Larrea-Espinar, 2015; Risager; 2011). Larrea-Espinar and Raigón-Rodríguez (2019) explain that from the mid 50's to the early 90's culture in the language classroom was addressed to teach and learn facts about the target language culture embracing a notion of culture as a fixed and visible concept. This notion of culture eluded the inherently holistic nature of the term when categorizing cultures for practical purposes. Meeting an operational intention, ideas that permeate the how to achieve the interconnection of language and culture are ingrained in the definition adopted. Therefore, reflecting on the core properties of the wide variety of definitions available provides the opportunity to progress implicating a merged narrative of language and culture that meets balanced aims.

Understanding culture in the context of language education cannot be perceived as a simplistic, immovable construct. The inclusion of culture in the foreign language has been sustained by the diverse angles linked to the concept weighting the sensible factors that intervene in the process. For instance, Byram (2020) warns about the dangers of presenting culture as if it did not change over time or as if there was only one set of beliefs, meanings, and behaviors in any given country. In the same line, Savignon and Sysoyev (2005) point out that "cultures are never static" (p. 36). In the same vein, Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) define culture as dynamic, emergent, and evolving through the ways in which individuals use language.

Hofstede (2001) has offered a detailed description of the concept. He defined culture as “the collective mind programming that differentiates the members of one group of people from another” (p. 10). He explained that culture encompasses systems of values, which can be understood in a collectivity where worldviews and patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting are acquired. Ting-Toomey (1999) understands culture as a learned system of meaning consisting of patterns of traditions, beliefs, values, norms, and community symbols. For Kramsch (1998), culture is “linked to membership in a discourse community that shares common social space and history and common imaginings” (p. 10). Other researchers have described it in terms of “ideas, customs, skills, arts, and tools that characterize one specific group of people in a given period” (Liddicoat et al., 2003, p. 45). Paige et al., (1999) postulated an attention-grabbing definition of culture learning as “the process of developing the culture-specific and culture-general knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for effective communication and interaction with individuals from other cultures” (p. 50).

Most of the definitions anchor to systems of meanings, beliefs, norms, attitudes, symbols, products, values, processes, and behaviors characterizing culture as a complex system representative of particular lifestyles and world visions and as a live, eclectic, dynamic, and colorful construct. These traits are set in a particular time frame that would keep in motion, shifting and saving world views in collective memory whose promotion, preservation, and socialization take place through language from one generation to the next influenced by social, economic, technological, and political factors.

Cultures seem to have enriched human existence and evolution through collectivity and their nets of partnership guided inside their group’s practices and expectations to behave accordingly to their living reality. The variability and evolution of cultures within communities are

possible due to language, which allows individuals to unconsciously integrate a system of meanings, ideas, values, norms, attitudes, and patterns (input) acquired and created to eventually be manifested in products, ceremonies, symbols, artifacts, and socialized worldviews and values. This acquisition process is pivotal in the way people perceive norms, symbols, and meanings, constituting the ground for systems to emerge, influencing the past, the present, and indeed the future. Through language, individuals find ways to shape their lives, find meaning, inherent identity, connect, belong, and integrate within a community. In a society, collective learning foundations start to manifest, influencing and motivating individuals to act in particular ways.

The bilateral domains of language and culture make evident that language is not simply the expression of thought. The ways in which humans perceive and use language transcend speech. It is the vessel of culture used to deploy a collection of realities, frames of reference and modes of sensing, perceiving, and interacting, and reacting to the world around, thus boosting a sense of identity as well. It is a means of identification which allows one to gain insights into other cultures (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2016). Therefore, its social function is a tremendously influential and useful tool in the immersion of the social and cultural fabrics of individuals and groups. In the words of Brown (2007) it is through language that culture finds a way of expression.

In many ways such conglomerated references revealed that culture is crucial to the language teaching and learning experience. Experts have demonstrated the inseparability and connection of both concepts across different disciplines. It has even inspired the emergence of combined words such as the term languaculture. Agar shaped this term in 1994 to illustrate the definite and essential bond between language and culture. Others such as Savignon and Sysoyev (2005) have explained that accessing language or culture is essential to reach the other. Language and culture are more than just connected since these two core constructs seem to be one whole and, therefore, perceiving

or studying one without considering the other has proven to be a wrongful approach. Risager (2007) remarks that “there is an interdependence, a complex relationship between language and culture” (p. 163).

Kramersch (1998) brought ideas to the field of language teaching linking culture as cross-cultural intentions to understand and meet another culture. Scarino (2010) believed that cultural knowledge has been demonstrated to broaden students understanding of the target language. According to Atkinson (1999), there is no concept more crucial and vital in the field of foreign language teaching than culture. Such affirmations expand the conceptual boundaries and support the advances made in valuing the binomial between language and culture and its implication for teaching praxis.

Language and culture approximations on language learning have been supported by many influential researchers and practitioners (Byram, 1997; Kramersch, 1998; Tang, 1999; Brown, 2007; Kuang, 2007; Savignon & Sysoyev, 2005; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013), who have built a line of work primarily drawing the interrelatedness of language and culture as essential for an integral, holistic process in the EFL classroom and not just as an aspect to bring to class as extra if time. For these authors and many others, it seems clear that language learning and target culture learning cannot realistically be separated (Kramersch, 1993). Thus, those notions lay the foundations for a growing interest in conceiving a more integral view of language learning to attain and adopt the desired purpose of connecting language and culture.

The field has responded to the task of merging both components in EFL contexts in various ways. First, the trajectory has seen attempts to teach culture through the instruction of fixed notions of target cultures, portraying them as factual units of study just to be compared, learned, and absorbed. Some other tendencies categorized culture learning into culture-specific and culture-

general frameworks. A culture-specific framework leads to the attainment of knowledge and skills relevant to a specific culture. In contrast, a general-culture framework deals with knowledge and skills that relate to intercultural phenomena (Lustig & Koester, 1996). Whereas Adaskou et al. (1990) proposed the study of culture in language teaching through four kinds of the aesthetic, sociological, semantic, and pragmatic culture, each describing a functional domain in foreign/second language teaching. Even though these proposals attempted to address the cultural dimension in the EFL classroom, they failed to fully train speakers for effective engagement by framing culture as a fixed and inactive construct (Kramersch, 1993; Liddicoat, 2008; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013).

Many other approaches were built upon the idea of cross-cultural awareness. Seelye (1993) set as an objective to develop one's awareness or mindfulness of different cultures, their world vision, life perception, beliefs, values, attitudes, behaviors, and how they organize their lives. In the same direction, Seelye advised teachers to consider some goals when integrating culture in the language classroom, recognizing cognitive, procedural, and affective skills involved in cross-cultural understanding and communication. These skills are to be engaged through achievable goals promoting knowledge, experience, acceptance, and empathy toward the differences between the target and native cultures (Seelye, 1993). Alternatively, Kramersch (1993) proposed viewing culture as the center of the language experience, allowing language learners to develop a third place, which allowed to regard cultures from a favorable position where native culture(s) and target cultures meet and foster within a given cultural context rather than merely learning about particular target cultures. These ideas have drawn the path towards recognizing the undeniable link between language and culture and the need to adapt and move accordingly to the changing global reality in which the language learning goal of achieving communicative competence would no longer be a

sufficient and ideal target, as Hymes (1972) had once proposed. In that sense, Atkinson (1999) affirmed that after concepts like language, learning, and teaching, there is no more significant concept in the field of language teaching than culture. His argument appeals to ideally direct EFL instruction towards the macro perspective that language skills and culture should be given equal relevance.

The literature indicates that most language educators understand that the process of teaching and learning a foreign language involves much more than just acquiring linguistic competence since the acquisition of vocabulary and grammatical structures fails to provide the sociocultural domains required for real-life interaction and communication in modern scenarios (Yesil & Demiröz, 2017; Whyte, 2019; Kim, 2020). Consequently, a fundamental shift has become quite evident through the last decades. For example, Moore (2006) concluded in his study that almost 80% of the surveyed teachers declared integrating culture teaching in more than half of their instructional time in the new millennium. Progressively, the primary goal in learning a foreign or second language has been redirected toward helping and equipping learners to become effective communicators in a particular language in diverse intercultural environments (Cooperias 2002; Cetinavci, 2012).

The interactive debate on the matter has inspired theory, models, and frameworks addressing the integration of culture within foreign language learning programs and aiming to redefine classroom praxis, the curriculum and language goals in a different direction, one that can comprehensively equip learners to become effective interlocutors/communicators within culturally diverse scenarios. This supports the notion proposed by Kramersch (1993) that culture is the vessel that embodies every kind of communication.

### **1.1.2. Intercultural Communication**

Competence in intercultural communication was considered a critical functional dimension since the 1950s, but it was in the 1980s that intercultural communication (IC) regained noticeable interest due to the evolution of communication and technology. Today the debate around the notion and its implications is very much alive generating several definitions and models linked by central components (Arasaratnam & Doerfel, 2005; Bennett, 1993; Chen & Starosta, 1996; Deardorff, 2006; Gudykunst, 1994). Many have been the scholars and researchers who have explored the term of intercultural communication. Still, Hall (1959) has been recognized as the pioneer who first approached the notion of intercultural communication from an anthropological perspective, inspiring the study, research, development, and proposition of frameworks that have been applied into varied areas of knowledge. Intercultural communication has been categorized as the competence that demonstrates how individuals from diverse cultures communicate with each other. It is a skill that pays attention to communicative interactions stressing the importance of learning, recognizing, tolerating, and respecting cultural differences, supporting the development of intercultural sensitivity, and enabling empathic understanding during the communicative act despite cultural divergence.

Varied definitions found in the literature meet in describing the notion in terms of friendly and conscious intercultural dialogue pinpointing the required conditions for IC to emerge. Intercultural competent communicators seek to perform and communicate effectively and appropriately during interactions between people who hold divergent linguistic, cultural, affective, cognitive, and behavioral orientations while exchanging and sharing identities in a global intercultural society (Samovar & Porter, 1997; Chen & Starosta, 1996; Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009; Arasaratnam, 2013). Similarly, Deardorff (2006) defined IC as the

kind of ability individuals need to develop “to communicate appropriately and successfully in intercultural situations based on one’s intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (p. 247). For Lustig and Koester (2007) intercultural communication is “a symbolic, interpretive, transactional and contextual process where people from different cultures create shared meanings” (p. 46). As identified in the definitions, all share core ideas about the essence of the concept implicating a progressive process that concerns the individual’s cognitive, affective, and behavioral attributes (Beamer, 1992; Hammer et al., 2003), seeking to raise positive attitude and empathy and mindfulness toward other cultures (Gudykunst, 1993; Arasaratnam & Doerfel, 2005). The relevance of developing such competence is grounded on the critical and functional component that communication represents to human existence and evolution.

Accordingly, the study of intercultural communication is framed within the communication discipline, where the concept of communication is understood as the conjoint construction of meaning through purposeful and decoded messages expected to reach significance among interlocutors. Neuliep (2015) defined communication as “the dynamic process of encoding and decoding verbal and nonverbal messages” (p. 17). In this sense, human communication has always been one of the most fulfilling experiences individuals can have as social animals. The foundations of human development proven through history rely on societies’ ability to adopt the means by exercising negotiation and the art of effective communication for progressive understanding and healthy coexistence.

From a functional perspective the benefits of intercultural communication assure a collective and individual wellbeing. Neuliep (2009) states that healthy communities can be built by encouraging individuals to work collectively maximizing goals’ achievement that benefit all civilians regardless of culture accelerating economic benefits as well. In terms of the individual,



Neuliep (2009) sustains that learning about other individuals' ways of life, values, history, and habits can be a source that generates deep learning and a juncture where the self and the other can be discovered or rediscovered. From Neuliep's reasonable assertions one can interpret that a genuine interest in listening and learning about the other can avoid the common misinterpretations and conflict that originate due to cultural and linguistic differences. He claims that individuals can find strategies to reorganize daily encounters. In this regard, he states that, "only through intercultural communication can conflict be managed and reduced. Only by competently and peacefully interacting with others who are different from ourselves can our global village survive" (p. 2). Genuine intercultural dialogue and receptive attitudes toward differences are some of the ingredients intended to achieve fruitful and effective communication.

In general terms, intercultural communication sets as a primary objective to improve the way individuals communicate by self-assessing perspectives, close-minded behaviors to new visions of mutual learning, and consciously accepting that each culture creates its own way of looking at the world and their lives. In that way, IC has been especially relevant by providing individuals with a tool that supports human negotiation and engagement in a context of intercultural-assertive communication; conceptions that have permeated many domains and fields; EFL being one of them.

### **1.1.3. Intercultural Communicative Competence in Foreign Language Learning**

The intercultural dimension reached foreign language learning classrooms through the appealing arguments and benefits behind the ontological core concepts of intercultural communication and communicative competence. The rapid changing contexts, the global interchanges, and the fact that most nations and individuals from diverse cultures have become

more connected have supported initiatives on the need to strengthen intercultural approximations in the EFL context for functional, instrumental, and developmental reasons. Advocates in the field of language education have observed that the objectives of foreign/second language learning have progressively transformed from a focus on linguistic competence to communicative competence to intercultural communicative competence (Yang & Fleming, 2013; Cooperias, 2002) driven by the need to emphasize culture and critical cultural awareness and bring it to a central position within integral foreign/second language purposes (Byram, 2020; Kramersch, 1993; Risager, 2007; Stewart & Strathern, 2017).

The introduction of the intercultural dimension in EFL classes contributed to consolidating novel teaching and learning perspectives that sought advancing in terms of language aims but also at educating that whole learner and also to training them to develop strategies to engage in intercultural situations communicating and behaving accordingly. Learning a foreign language gained instrumental recognition, regarded as a tool to provide learners with more holistic opportunities to study the language itself along with crucial intercultural components that entitle them the ability to display appropriate communicative decisions and behaviors in particular, varied contexts. This perception developed from the notion of communicative competence in which an interlocutor's knowledge of the rules helps in evaluating what to do and how to act in specific circumstances, groups, times, and places (Holmes & O'Neill, 2012).

In intercultural communication, knowledge, skills, critical cultural awareness, and attitudes are essential to maintain effective intercultural communication. These set of dimensions have been extrapolated to the language teaching field claiming to support a new conceptualization of what the new language speaker needs for the new contexts. Therefore, ICC embraces a different view of language teaching, thus significantly contributing to one of the most extended debates addressing

culture and language by promoting a teaching and learning praxis in which foreign/second language and culture are inextricably interwoven. Arguments from communicative competence and intercultural communication served as bases to pursue a multifaceted conceptualization of what is implicated in educating foreign/second language learners as whole beings and competent communicators. These viewpoints consider the process of foreign language learning from a different perspective, which reformulates purposes, aims, procedures, strategies, and roles under a new language pedagogy. Reframing the central role of the learner endowed with knowledge, awareness of both foreign and home cultures, skills, attitudes required to communicate across diverse contexts (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993; McConachy et al., 2022).

Henceforth, the intercultural communicative competence (ICC) emerges as an amalgamation comprising communication and intercultural that highlights the hybrid, holistic nature of foreign/second language learning by touching matters as the self, home and foreign cultures and the world dynamics. An intercultural approach entailed shifting from a motionless approach where fixed facts about a particular culture were studied to involving students in a transformative process that impacts their character, and their communicative skills (Liddicoat et al., 2003). This is an ambitious but adequate path to facilitate foreign language learning and promote a long-life learning process. These ideas find support in the inextricable nexus between language and culture to develop the intercultural communicative competence, which not only affects the ability to function effectively in a foreign/second language but also helps students to develop smarter language and communicative attitudes and behaviors.

Those viewpoints had led to the construction of a much more sophisticated and yet complex term to treat, apply, and operationalize that of intercultural communicative competence (ICC). In this sense, since the late 90s many linguists and researchers have been encouraging empirical and

scientific initiatives for moving from communicative competence to ICC in a straightforward model since the communicative competence approach fails to explicitly integrate the intercultural component. The term communicative competence, was first introduced in sociolinguistics and defined as what an interlocutor requires to handle in order to appropriately communicate in a specific speech community (Hymes, 1972). However, his conception did not include the voices, contexts, needs and diversity of emerging times. In this regard, Byram believed that “successful communication might not only be viewed as the efficiency of information exchange” (1997, p. 3) and suggested the importance of bringing to the foreground the role of contextual and sociocultural dimensions as crucial in the process to develop communicative competent learners.

Supporters of this new teaching philosophy helped providing the building blocks to coin a term that embraces an intimate relationship between language and culture, calling to mediate an intercultural process in the specific context of language learning. Emphasizing the idea that foreign language learning implicates intercultural learning based on the premise that learning a language implies the learning of shared meanings, values, and practices of that group as these are embodied in the language (Atkinson, 1999; Savignon, 1972; Kramsch, 1993,1998; Tang, 1999; Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013; Byram & Fleming, 1998). This argument has been supported on the fact that when people use a foreign/second language to communicate, these interactions are intrinsically intercultural since individuals’ cultural backgrounds (identity, behavior, attitude, values, views) come into play during these engagements.

The literature points to Baxter (1983) as the first researcher who articulated the concept of ICC. He believed that communicative competence needed to be grounded in intercultural contextual interactions for effective communication. Baxter (1983) explained that the concept of ICC leads language educators to see specific communicative behaviors associated with the nature

of culture's norms appropriateness. He also remarked that communication requires a deeper understanding of all the complexities and factors that come into play when communication occurs. Later, the concept ICC was reintroduced and explored in 1997 by Byram, who challenged the notion of communicative competence (CC), which was prevalent in FL education at the time. Capturing the factors involved in intercultural communication, ICC included aspects of CC which Byram adverted to be neglected in previous theoretical conceptions concerned with the ability to use language appropriately according to context and purpose (Canale & Swain, 1980; Halliday, 1975; Hymes, 1972; van Ek, 1986). As Byram claimed, the principles of the communicative competence approach "ignor[ed] the significance of the social identities and cultural competence of the learner in any intercultural interaction" (1997, p. 8).

Byram (1997) explains that foreign language learning encompasses a process based not only on learning grammar, vocabulary, syntax, or managing certain communicative situations. His analysis of Van Ek's (1986) perception of linguistic competence, viewed as "the ability to apply knowledge of particular language rules and conventional meaning to produce and interpret spoken and written language" (p. 39), showed that it needed to be expanded in a more thoughtful, instructive, integral conceptualization by adding deeper functionalities for individuals to interpret and produce a particular language in intercultural environments. Byram expanded Van Ek's notions of sociocultural, social and strategic competences by considering that communication was not limited to the ability to use, understand, and decode language forms with situational appropriateness (Van Ek, 1986), but that the communicative process should incorporate a set of cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions to develop the ability to give meaning to the language produced by an interlocutor, which is taken for granted or negotiated and made explicit with the interlocutor (Byram, 2020). Regarding the notion of discourse competence, Byram (1997)

defines it as the ability to use, apply, manage, discover and negotiate strategies for producing and interpreting monologue or dialogue texts which track the conventions of the culture of an interlocutor. He provides in that way a more detailed construction to the one established by Van Ek (1986), who described it in terms of using appropriate strategies in the construction, interpretation, structuring, and processing of texts.

Accordingly, Byram sets out to develop a new conceptual model that would capture the qualities of a competent speaker framing it as a person's ability to interact and engage with others with the willingness and disposition to accept their world vision and perceptions through conscious reflections and evaluations of what the individual understands as different (Byram et al. 2009). He approached this view as a systemic set of desired qualities/dimensions of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and critical cultural awareness (Byram, 2020). For Byram (1997, 2020) the inseparable connection between communicative competence (linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse) and intercultural competence (attitudes, knowledge, skills of interpretation and relating, skills of discovering and interacting, and critical cultural awareness) constitute a teaching and learning frame of reference to facilitate a process where learners can transform their perspectives, and mindsets towards reflective and critical attitudes, beliefs and opinions while developing the ability to decenter his own world views (Byram et al., 2002). This process has tremendous implications for the individual in their linguistic, communicative, and personal development serving as a structure to potentially support and guide conscious actions and behaviors during communicative engagements. In other words, the patterns, attitudes, and behaviors of the interlocutors meet the expectations of the others involved in the interaction.

To achieve such outcomes intercultural communicative competence requires a three-component framework, where affective, behavioral, and cognitive components are elicited by sufficient knowledge, motivation, and skills "as a pervasive and productive manner for considering

the competencies needed for intercultural communication” (Baker, 2015b p. 110). In this interplay, motivation in the context of intercultural engagements is a key element to make the process flow since it is subjective to one’s sensitivity, empathetic attitudes towards other cultures without it. Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002) contend that “language teaching within and intercultural dimension prepares learners for interaction and enables learners to understand and accept others and help them to see such interaction as a rewarding experience” (p.10). Another angle implies that intercultural language learning develops learners’ understanding of their own language(s) and culture(s), raises curiosity about other cultures and supports awareness of the role culture plays in transforming acquired frames of reference (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013; Mezirow, 2000).

Progressively, foreign language objectives have been changing, stressing the elements that contribute to effective communication while appreciating, reinforcing, and maintaining human relationships. The intercultural communicative approach moves away from other culture teaching models since the whole concept envisions language learners having positive communicative experiences that can potentially impact them in a holistic way. This approach can affect their lives and world vision by pursuing and strengthening tolerance, appreciation, mutual understanding, harmonic collaboration, transparent dialogue, and negotiation changing interactions in the context of today’s global community. Henceforth, from an intercultural teaching perspective, language students can find supplementary opportunities to explore content, language, target culture(s) while developing an appreciation and inner reflection of what is considered familiar in terms of culture, both general and specific, as a base for empathizing with other cultures. Subsequently, one’s native culture should not be a forgotten element but seen as a key-functional aspect in the process of foreign language acquisition. Another argument that supports the ICC construct is that it contributes to readjusting the role of the native speaker towards the model of the intercultural speaker who confidently manages a diverse cultural repertoire and exhibits curiosity for foreign

and native cultures to appropriately engage in today's multicultural world (Kramersch 1993; Risager, 2007; Rivers, 2011; Byram, 2020).

The understanding of the term of ICC has only been possible over a lively construction that envisioned communication as a multivariant act not limited to linguistic forms. In that sense, many initiatives followed defining proficiency in a foreign language linked to the intercultural dimension. For instance, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages since 2001 has included the intercultural domain and listed intercultural skills and awareness as general competences learners need to develop during their formative process to function appropriately as citizens (Council of Europe, 2020). The references and implications since then have grown to influence policy documents, research, practices, and curricula in many countries around the world. Language learning represents higher educational goals that touch the learner at deeper levels, raising their interest and curiosity about themselves, other cultures, and the world real dynamics. The numerous arguments, questions, and discussions over what and how language educators should mediate that transition have lasted for years inciting ICC models and research in educational settings through comprehensive lens within a framework of practical and realistic language learning goals. In this light, the ICC is still a young concept evolving in different modes, in different contexts and at different rates.

#### **1.1.4 Byram's Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence**

To explore the intercultural dimension in language teaching, Byram designed a model dividing the intercultural communicative competence into different dimensions. His model is a set of patterns that includes functional and necessary descriptions and qualities of ICC. Byram's model will be explored to gasp practical ideas into what, why, and how to approach, teach, and assess the



ICC. Byram proposed in the late 90s one of the most influential theoretical models to understand the multidimensionality of ICC in the context of foreign language teaching. Byram's (1997, 2008, 2020) primary objectives have been to redirect the significance of language teaching and learning in close relationship with the intercultural component, which, he believes, has been overlooked by emphasizing linguistic aspects and technical discourse over the sociocultural appropriateness. Byram (1997) thought the pedagogy raised upon Hymes' definition of communicative competence was limited regarding the inclusion of crucial aspects that play a part during intercultural interactions. Byram believed a redefinition of such constructs needed to be included to reshape the learning experience in a foreign language setting.

His blended model averts from the approach of communicative competence and relates them to the notions of linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse competence (Baker, 2015) while adopting strategies from the field of ethnography. In that way, both fields are integrated into teaching intercultural knowledge, skills, and language skills (Corbett, 2003). The model postulates a more rigorous exploration of the factors linked to intercultural communication in the foreign language learning context and how these permeate an individual development. In this context, ICC is understood as the "the ability to ensure a shared understanding by people of different social identities, and the ability to interact with people as complex human beings with multiple identities and their own individuality" (Byram et al., 2002, p. 10). To clarify the terms, Byram (1997) differentiated between IC and ICC by claiming that IC is related to one person's ability to communicate and interact successfully in their own language with people from another culture or cultures, overcoming cultural differences while enjoying the interaction and contact. Alternatively, ICC refers to those individuals who can successfully interact in a second or foreign language and are perceived as competent users by demonstrating a repertoire of skills, abilities, and knowledge

because “communication is more than the exchange of information and sending messages” (Byram, 2020, p.18).

According to Byram (1997), knowledge, attitudes, skills, and cultural awareness can lead students to communicate effectively with culturally diverse others. He sustained that acquiring a foreign language implies acquiring cultural practices and beliefs representative of a particular language since language entails the complexity of those practices and beliefs. Byram (2020) argues that a more appropriate way to treat the culture component in educational settings requires a reformulation of the intercultural dimension, which enables to go beyond the traditional mode of considering cultural aspects as declarative, procedural and permanent. In this light, language teachers in this context play an important role to facilitate the means, activities, and opportunities not only to teach and transmit cultural knowledge but also to facilitate reflection, analysis, and construction and reconstruction of meaning linked to communicative issues and purposes.

In his argument, he envisions a teaching model that combines both independent cultural research, foreign and national culture instruction to help individuals incorporate or reincorporate strategies and new notions into their communicative competence. Acquiring intercultural competence through second/foreign language instruction can initiate a process of rearrangement and enhancement of learners’ intercultural knowledge, attitudes, behaviors that may eventually form the basis for critical cultural awareness. In practical terms, the proposal motivates to continue moving beyond the communicative language objectives and adopt, train, and meet the requirements to ensure foreign/second learners develop ICC as an accurate way to prepare learners for real life. In Byram’s redefinition, he rejected the assumption that competent second/foreign language speakers were those who reach the same kind of communicative competence as a native speaker of the target language. He thought that idea was not a worthwhile goal, but a limited and simplistic

view that disregards cultural/intercultural domains. As a result, Byram (1997) envisioned five domains presented as “five savoirs” that comprise knowledge, skills, attitudes, and critical cultural awareness. Each and all constitute a reference in the development of ICC within foreign language environments.

**Figure 1** *Intercultural Communicative Competence Dimensions*

	Skills	
	Interpret and Relate	
Knowledge of self and other; of interaction: individual and societal	Education	Attitudes
	political education	Relativizing self-valuing other
	critical cultural awareness	
	Skills	
	discover and/or interact	

*Source* (Byram, 2020, p. 44).

These five factors serve as stages for students to approach, react, assess, and dialogically reflect which can be accessed from the classroom and on their cultural surroundings which presents sources for deep and surface culture which pursue pedagogical purposes in foreign language teaching and learning, aiming to guide learners to develop critical competences to value and pursue communication adjustment.

As the word combination of ICC advocates, Byram (1997) acknowledges that it is through language use in the context of social-communicative interaction that a language learner initiates and learns to develop the ability to deal with cultural diversity, conflict, and misunderstandings due to language and culture are which are indivisible. Byram (2008) clarifies that the most appropriate term for the model is that of intercultural speaker because of “the mediating role that language

plays in interactions and the development of linguistic competence” (p. 68). When people interact in a foreign language, they must be able to interpret and understand other cultural perspectives critically while evaluating their own (Byram, 1997). It is by undergoing those kinds of experience that learners may become intercultural speakers, progressively developing attitudes, knowledge, skills, and critical awareness which can be maximized under a holistic mediation of analysis, reflection, and introspection. Rethinking the focus of language instruction results in transformative, practical, and useful learning where the learners’ identity, background and preexisting knowledge and attitudes can be used to capitalize on the learning experience as resources.

Furthermore, he expands the description of competence by rethinking particular aspects that add a broader rank of significance to the development of communicative ability in diverse environments. He believes a language learner should be equipped with skills and abilities to see beyond the language itself and consider the opportunity to learn as well how to manage relationships with others (Byram, 1997). This competency emphasizes the mediation between different cultures, the ability to look at oneself from an “external” perspective, analyze and adapt one’s own behaviors, values, and beliefs to relate to others (Byram and Zárte, 1994).

Figure 2 *Byram' Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence*

IC Component	Description
Savoir être Attitudes	Intercultural attitudes allow the person to relativize their own values, beliefs, and behaviors, see their own culture from different viewpoints, show curiosity, openness, and readiness to suspend disbelief about one's own beliefs and other cultures.
Savoirs Knowledge	Intercultural knowledge relates to that of social group, their products and practices in one's interlocutor's country, and general societal and individual interaction.
Savoir comprendre Skills of interpreting and relating	The ability to interpret an event or document another culture, with the ability to explain, relate, and compare it to documents or events from one's own culture to develop new perspectives.
Savoir apprendre Skills of discovery and interaction	The ability to acquire new cultural knowledge, practices, and the ability to manage knowledge, attitudes, and skills in real-time communication and interaction while developing research skills to explore cultures.
Savoirs' engager Critical cultural awareness	Related to the ability to evaluate perspectives, practices, and products critically in one's own and other cultures and countries.

*Source* Byram (1997, p. 34-38).

The theory behind the model explores the interconnectedness of what he calls 'savoirs' originally conceptualized as a pedagogical mechanism to build, influence and direct educators and learners' intercultural frames and progression. The focus relies on presenting an antagonism to the role of the native speaker, prescribed as a model to foreign language learners. Rather it is intentional to promote within a language learning framework, reflective explorations about the self and others. This kind of reflective instruction is relevant because meeting other cultures or having cultural

engagements without dialogic and a co-constructive meaning intercultural development cannot take place (Kohinen, Kaikkonen & Lehtovaara, 2017).

Byram (2020) recognizes those particular attitudes and skills as a starting base for experiencing fruitful intercultural interactions but remarks that “intercultural interaction cannot be judged only in terms of effective exchange of information” (Byram, 1997, p. 32). Indeed, the intercultural dimension is a key requirement for managing and maintaining healthy human relationships, which are considered to be closely connected to critical cultural awareness and attitudinal factors. Byram (2020) suggested that attitudes are the preconditions for successful intercultural interaction and refers to them as the model’s groundwork because attitudes provide the building blocks that guide the know-how. These attitudes and critical awareness directly influence the foreign language student to become an effective communicator.

Exposing learners to scenarios in which they are given the opportunity to evaluate and self-evaluate certain attitudes toward different people, mainly those identified as harmful such as prejudices or stereotypes, is a requisite to reaching the goal of fruitful, effective interactions. Moreover, developing attitudes under this model encompasses more than just tolerance and acceptance since it implies cultivating those aspects that can trigger mutual understanding like curiosity, openness, readiness to suspend disbelief and judgment about other people’s meanings, beliefs, values, and behaviors (Byram, 2020).

The knowledge domain is described by Byran as the particular kind of knowledge people consciously or unconsciously bring to any encounter. It includes national cultures connecting learners with the national memory of one’s own country to consider other life visions mediated through processes, institutions, social distinctions, and cultural values in one’s own and interlocutor’s culture (Byram, 1997). According to Byram,

Whatever a person's linguistic competence in a foreign language, when they interact socially with someone from a different country they bring to the situation their knowledge of the world which includes in some cases a substantial knowledge of the country in question and in others a minimal knowledge, of its geographical position or its current political climate, for example. [...] Their knowledge also includes the own country, although this may be less conscious, and they may not be aware of its significance in the interaction. Their knowledge of their own country is a part of the social identity which they bring to the situation, and which is salient for their interlocutor. (2020, p. 42-43)

Byram established a division among the skills of interpreting and relating and the skills of discovery and interaction. The skills concerned with interpreting and relating are intended to emerge over existing knowledge, obtained through interaction or working on documents, and may be acquired through formal education (Byram, 2020). These skills enable individuals to interpret, explain, analyze, and relate to a document or event from one's own culture and from another (Byram, 2020). Interpreting documents, incidents or events from the perspective of a foreign culture provides a standpoint of content to strategize the interaction and relation to one's own culture, which may help discover and develop the ability to understand meanings, connotations, recognize unfamiliar phenomena as nonthreatening. The skill of interaction focuses on how to establish relationships, handle real-time communication, and manage communication dysfunctions and mediation in general (Byram, 1997). Concerning the skills of discovery and interaction, Byram (2020) describes it as

the skill of building up using specific knowledge as well as an understanding of the meanings, beliefs, values, and behaviors that are inherent in particular phenomena, whether documents or interactions. [...] The skill of discovery is the ability to recognize significant

phenomena in a foreign environment and to elicit their meanings and connotations and their relationship to other phenomena. [...] When skills have discovery are used in social interaction, constraints of time and much mutual perceptions and attitudes arise as mentioned earlier. The skill of interaction is above all the ability to manage these constrains in particular circumstances with specific interlocutors. The individual needs to draw upon their existing knowledge, have attitudes which sustain sensitivity to others with sometimes radically different origins and identities, and operate the skills of discovery and interpretation. (p. 49)

Byram explains that the ability to stimulate connotations and understanding from social references can expressly be done using different question techniques to establish connections between ideas and perceptions can generate new knowledge. These skills can be acquired through experience, reflection, and autonomous work. In such a way, the individual can operate knowledge, identify, compare, and contrast and ultimately relate to making sense of interlocutors' different cultural meanings. In order to understand Byram's Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) further preconditions of ICC are included as attitudes of curiosity and openness, the readiness to suspend disbelief and judgment about others' meanings, beliefs, and behaviors. Intercultural speakers need the capacity to relativize their own culture, "to dismantle their prevalent structure of subjective reality and to re-construct it according to new norms" (Byram, 1997, 2020). Furthermore, Byram (2020) argued that attitudes, skills, and knowledge operate as crucial components to help students enhance critical cultural awareness. This critical cultural awareness dimension is framed under political education, attempting to enable individuals to critically assess perspectives, practices, and products both from the perspective of one's own culture and other interlocutors' culture. Critical cultural awareness is a fundamental component in building

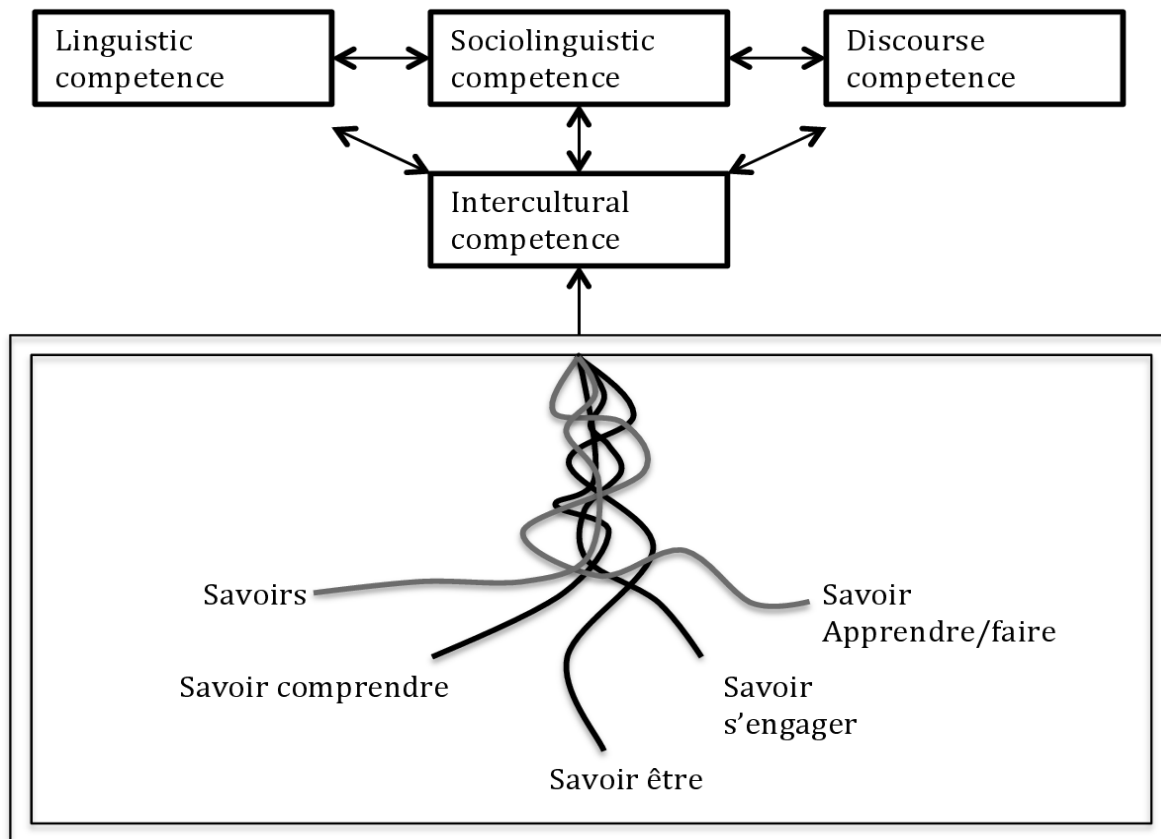


interculturality within EFL contexts since it seeks to move beyond ethnocentrism and presents the opportunity to explore the learner's identity through reflective awareness of the self and the other (Holliday, 2018) under a delineated instructional plan that promotes linguistic, cognitive, and affective dimensions.

Learners need to develop critical cultural awareness to reflect critically on their own social identity, national history, practices, and cultural values, beliefs, and behaviors (Byram, 2020). It is expected, as part of an ongoing process, that the cultural dimension can help to sharpen students' understanding of the role they and others play in society so that they may experience culture differences and similarities in meaningful and non-threatening ways. This allows learners to participate in an inner reflection essential for developing intercultural skills and language strategies since individuals always bring social baggage that naturally influences communication and the kind of human relationships and interactions one can have. This criticality modifies attitudes, knowledge, and skills in significant ways while exposing the central function that language development plays in developing communicative and intercultural competence.

Figure 3 illustrates the interplay of competences and how each cultivates the whole construct of intercultural communicative competence and the locations in which this can be fostered.

**Figure 3** *Dimensions of Intercultural Communicative Competence*



*Source* (Byram, 2020, p. 98).

The comprehensive theoretical model proposed by Byram offers teaching guidance that helps draw a line of work for implementing the ICC component in EFL contexts. It has been designed explicitly for formal educational settings in foreign language education to contribute changing the teacher and learner's roles to meet current demands. Each of the components included are presented in fair understandable and reachable goals and can be considered to generate an interculturally based pedagogy with practical implications for educators and participants in learning, teaching, and assessing the process in facilitating ICC development in language classrooms.

The model also addresses the locations where the intercultural learning can occur, which are the places where educators and learners can be exposed to and gain opportunities to exercise,

practice and develop different roles. ICC, according to Byram, can be developed and acquired in three varied scenarios or locations: classroom, fieldwork and independent learning. Each or in combination these locations serve as an educational platform to mediate ICC in different language learning contexts, diverse levels of language learning and different kinds of language learning programs. What this also means is that the reinforced idea behind the model entitling language educators with enough freedom to create an intercultural learning experience according to their specific learning community by addressing the complexity of culture in ways that respond to particular needs and contexts.

For Byram (2020), the language classroom environment is a potential scenario to put into practice the needed skills to participate, communicate and demonstrate intercultural faculties. He highlights the following of the classroom,

Clearly the classroom has advantages. It provides the space for systematic and structured presentation of knowledge in prolongation of the better traditions of language teaching. In addition, it can offer the opportunity for acquisition of skills under the guidance of a teacher. Thirdly, the classroom can be the location for reflection on skills and knowledge acquisition that has happened within and beyond the classroom walls, and thence for the acquisition of attitudes towards that which has been experienced. (Byram, 2020 pp. 92)

Byram himself has recognized the need to simplify the mediation of ICC due to the general understanding of complexity that surrounds the notion of culture. In that sense, Byram (2002) has claimed that “an Intercultural dimension does not claim to be another teaching method of language teaching but an invitation to a natural extension of what most teachers recognize as important” (p

7). Language educators are given the sufficient freedom to recognize what is relevant according to their context, culture, and community of learners. Their role acquires a fundamental function in the process of mediating ICC as part of an integral and holistic language scope. The language learner is placed as a prominent participant of the learning experience developing learning autonomy through self-reflection, interaction, and negotiation within the classroom and their contextual surrounding while reinforcing their linguistic competence. Language learning can in that way be envisioned in a more comprehensive function that serves the broader purpose of humanizing and educating aware, active, and respectful citizens as inhabitants of a shared planet through language education.

Enhancing learners' intercultural communicative competence is not simple nor is it immediate. As culture and languages are dynamic constructs, learning in the context of rapid-changing societies must become flexible and take part of an ongoing process that builds room for educating the whole student. This is one of the reasons why intercultural learning in foreign language education has been progressively acknowledged. Additionally, Byram's model is an invitation to consider a teaching framework that may shape foreign language mediation by integrating intercultural communication within the philosophy of political education (Barret, 2016; Byram, 2008; Byram et al 2017; Byram, 2020) and exploring the advantages of shifting from the native role model to that of the intercultural speaker as a practical, inclusive, and achievable role model.

The ICC provides integral contributions by benefiting language learning with a nontraditional teaching vision. This vision supports intercultural language objectives that seeks to offer a platform whereby new generations of citizens are better educated and equipped with abilities and competencies to learn, adapt, negotiate, participate, and collaborate in multicultural settings.

A speaker with linguistic proficiency and multicompetences will hopefully be ready to respond to present and future global challenges, be able to participate in a lifelong learning process, exhibit social and cultural mindful mode of being and, last but not least, be open-minded. To meet these aims the conceptualization of the intercultural speaker serves as a stand to continue revolutionizing the language learning classrooms without neglecting linguistic objectives and ensuring learners get to develop language proficiency and other key competences holistically. For this reason, the following sections are devoted to exploring the concept of the intercultural speaker and the pedagogical objectives proposed by Byram to advance in that direction.

## **1.2 The Intercultural Speaker: transforming interlocutors' roles**

Byram's (1997) primary concerns about the role of the native speaker in the foreign language context have received sufficient support over recent years because he unveils the dangers that such a notion implies to learners in the process of acquiring a language and how it might affect not only their language acquisition but their identities. His criticism visualizes the pressure students of a foreign language are exposed to when forced to master the foreign language to the extent of a native speaker, which only portrays a threatening, unfair, and discouraging scenario. According to Byram,

It would imply that a learner should be linguistically schizophrenic, abandoning one language in order to blend into a second linguistic environment, becoming accepted as a native speaker by other native speakers, and then going back to the first. This linguistic schizophrenia also suggests abandoning one social group in its culture and the acquisition of a native sociocultural competence and a new social identity, as a result of 'passing' into another group. (2020, p. 17)

Within the context of Byram's model, which points out the pressures that the native speaker model poses on learners' identity, learners are invited to learn the target language without abandoning their social identity. When learners are persuaded to restrain one's language to perfectly master another in an attempt to be integrated by members of a particular linguistic community, they may undoubtedly feel discomfort and emotional unrest. Kramsch (2001) warned that such a thing should not happen. She believed that learners should go through a smooth process that she calls a third culture, which means learners can access language, knowledge, and behavior from the cultures constituting their identity and make choices if and how they incorporate the new culture into their identity.

The native speaker performance has put higher stress levels and frustration on learners, hindering many of a confident and friendly learning environment to acquire the language. Thus, favoring the high affective filter, which inhibits production. It has also created an emotional imbalance that potentially lowers the learner's self-esteem and even possibly drives the refusal of their social and cultural identity. In that regard, Cook (1999) described, "the prominence of the native speaker in language teaching has created an unattainable goal for second/foreign language learners" (p. 185). Given the elusive model of the native speaker, Byram and Zárte (1994) proposed a parallel to the idea of the native speaker by claiming that a language learner should be offered the opportunities and resources to become an intercultural speaker. Byram et al. (2002) originally introduced the idea of the intercultural speaker to describe the ability "to engage with complexity and multiple identities and to avoid the stereotyping which accompanies perceiving someone through a single identity" (p. 9). Byram (1997) referred to the intercultural speaker as people that get involved in intercultural communication and interaction and is able to use the encounter with an interlocutor from a foreign culture to "discover other perspectives on

interpretation” (savoir être), to “establish relationships of similarity and difference between them” (savoir apprendre/faire) and to “mediate” between them (savoir comprendre) (Byram, 1997, pp. 58, 62). Thus, the individual considered as an intercultural speaker is envisioned to retain, preserve, and excel his/her cultural, social, and linguistic baggage signaling a privileged condition in terms of knowledge access and experience (House, 2007).

Learners of a foreign language will encounter more typical situations where they have to use tools to help them recognize and understand diverse, multicultural relationships to make sense of distinctive attitudes and behaviors. This kind of access can only be understood as positive traits, motivating the learning path to even enjoy seeking multicultural knowledge and understanding via a foreign language. Accordingly, the ideal intercultural speaker reconstructs the far conceptualized view of communication to recalculate its role and extends it in holistic and eclectic ways. The effective speaker needs to rely upon it as a mechanism for the further strategic improvement of knowledge, skills, criticality, behaviors, and general understanding of (inter)cultures and one’s own culture as part of a requirement to cohabiting in this complex interconnected and multicultural world.

Therefore, shifting to the intercultural speaker can be considered advantageous since it would be making a significant change in the learners and their integral education as well as in their process of foreign language acquisition. The whole idea empowers both language learners and educators in significant ways adjudicating language education a much more profound role relevant to a constructive inclusive society. According to Byram (1997), an intercultural speaker needs to be aware of how two people can resolve misunderstandings by becoming mindful of their interlocutors’ identities. He defined the intercultural learner as

A learner with the ability to see and manage the relationships between themselves and their own cultural beliefs, behaviors, and meanings, as expressed in a foreign language, and those of their interlocutors, described in the same language—or even a combination of languages—which may be the interlocutors’ native language or not. (p. 12)

Henceforth, the intercultural speaker is a worth taking purpose for language learners and language educators to pursuit in the teaching learning process. Intercultural speakers combine linguistic, affective, cognitive, and behavioral components to perform successfully and appropriately with culturally diverse people. In his model, Byram (1997) embraced a replacement of the native speaker praised as an ideal goal by proposing the attainable goal of the intercultural speaker. The goals and achievement of IC competence are dynamic in nature due to their core constructs. Byram (1997) considered this intercultural speaker as “the more desirable outcome in language education” (p. 12) since the intercultural dimension enables learners “to manage relationships between own beliefs, values, behaviors, and meanings, as expressed in a foreign language, and those of their interlocutors” (Byram, 2020, p. 46). Indeed, an intercultural speaker is a learner with the ability to effectively self-reflect, learn, interact, mediate in different contexts.

This concept of the intercultural speaker entails the promotion of a conscious language learner whose objective is not at all monolingualistic but holistic since it seeks to get learners involved in a much more profound learning experience that can lead them to become more receptive toward different life modes and to the process of learning a foreign language. Enhancing confidence and triggering interest in intercultural content enriches the process with a much more dynamic notion that it is a lifelong learning process linked to developing a functional intercultural speaker engaged in a lifelong activity. In this manner, the intercultural speaker can develop and show abilities to interact with others, accept other perspectives and perceptions of the world,



mediate between different perspectives while being conscious of their evaluations toward difference (Byram et al., 2001). In the same vein, Byram and Fleming assert that (1998), “this intercultural speaker is able to establish a relationship between their own and other cultures, to mediate, explain, and accept differences conscious of how humanity beneath from it” (p. 8). These authors also stress the autonomy that language and culture education offers in preparing learners to become intercultural speakers as those with “knowledge of one or more cultures and social identities, able to discover and relate to new people from other contexts” (p. 9). Indeed, learning about foreign cultures opens doors and foreign modes into their own contexts to either learn, enhance, appreciate, reflect, understand, or empathized. Byram (1997) gave a detailed description of an intercultural speaker’s requirements regarding attitudes, knowledge, skills, and critical awareness, which are intertwined and define the intercultural speaker.

**Figure 4** *Intercultural Speaker Competences Proposed by Byram*

**Attitudes**

*The intercultural speaker:*

- is concerned in the other’s experience of daily life.
- does not assume that unfamiliar phenomena can only be assimilated through their own cultural understanding.
- actively seeks the other’s perspective
- copes with different kinds of otherness.
- takes into consideration the expectation the others may have about appropriate behavior from foreigners.

**Knowledge**

*The intercultural speaker knows about:*

- events, individuals and diverse interpretations of events, national memory, political and economic factors of each country.
- means of contacts usage to facilitate partnerships across frontiers
- the events and symbols markers of native identity.
- the national memory of one’s country and of others
- perceptions of regions, language varieties and landmarks of significance and how are these perceived by others.
- education systems, religions, institutions where individuals acquire a national identity
- about the social distinction’s dominant in the native and target cultures.

		-the level of formality in the language and nonverbal behavior of interaction.
	<b>Intercultural Speaker</b>	
<p><b>Skills of interpreting and relating</b> <i>The intercultural speaker can:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-read a document or event, analyzing its origins, meanings and values that arise from a national or ethnocentric perspective.</li> <li>-identify causes of misunderstanding or connotations.</li> <li>- use their explanations of misunderstanding to help interlocutors overcome diverging viewpoints.</li> </ul> <p><b>Skills of discovery and interaction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-use a variety of questioning techniques to elicit allusions, connotations and assumptions of a document or event to establish links among them.</li> <li>-can share meanings and values from documents or events particular of the culture of their interlocutor.</li> <li>-use their knowledge of conventions of verbal and nonverbal communication to arrange agreements.</li> <li>-can use sources to understand historical, political, economic, and social relationships among cultures.</li> </ul>		<p><b>Critical cultural awareness</b> <i>The intercultural speaker is aware of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a variety of systematic approaches to place a document or event in context.</li> <li>- their own ideological perspectives and values and assesses documents or events with explicit reference to.</li> <li>- possible conflicts between one's own and other ideologies to establish communal criteria for evaluating documents or events.</li> <li>-strategies to negotiate agreement and acceptance of difference.</li> </ul>

*Source* (Byram, 1997, pp. 57-64).

However, acquiring the intercultural speaker's competence is a complex goal since the competences identified in Byram's model are explicitly and implicitly leading to the hybridity among language and culture in communication. The intercultural speaker is given a role that differs from that of a mere imitator of the native speaker in order to adopt that of an intercultural speaker who is able to manage dynamic, constructive and dialogical intercultural engagements and interactions as well as to become a mediator among diverse individuals and cultures. This also implies constructing a self that can be aware of all the requirements that come into play to acquire

such role. For instance, linguistic and cultural knowledge need to be developed to foster communication, share meanings about the self and the other, understand different lifestyles, learn and uses strategies to negotiate differences with an open attitude and disposition to keep on learning about himself/herself and the world around. Thus, embodying the role of the intercultural speaker is a much more complex, demanding, and challenging role model that that of the native speaker model since it becomes a dynamic process that allies with global aims (Jaeger, 2001; Jackson 2011; Abid & Moalla, 2020).

The shifting from the native speaker model to the intercultural speaker objective should not in any way neglect the linguistic competence and language proficiency expected of the language learner. A proficient language user is believed to be someone whose language skills go beyond pure linguistic and sociocultural knowledge and is able to engage in successful interactions which depend on the ability to conjoint elements brought into the situation, such as knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, skills, and language(s) to negotiate meanings. In a complex world, intercultural speakers serve as mediating agents or negotiators who can interact with speakers of other languages on equal terms while they are aware of their own identity (Byram et al., 2002). This can be accomplished by considering language learners as multicompetent rather than deficient native speakers (Cook, 1999). In other words, this view shift gives the learner a central role in the learning process by enhancing a humanistic and participative role of learners as cultural ambassadors. In the process of becoming intercultural speakers, learners need to transform their mindsets and critically evaluate their own practices, products, and cultural beliefs. Thus, learners who become intercultural speakers become successful in communicating information and developing healthy relationships with people of other languages and cultures (Byram, 2002) by using their knowledge, attitudes, and skills to interact interculturally, identify and mediate misunderstandings.

### 1.3 From Intercultural Communicative Competence to intercultural Citizenship

In times of profound transformations there is a need to develop theoretical proposals that can help cultivate civilians' awareness of the issues that need attention and turn action into a habitual interdisciplinary goal in any educational practice. This idea brings to the foreground the importance of using the intercultural communicative competence to move towards the notion of Intercultural Citizenship. In the context of foreign language teaching, the link that has been established between the development of ICC and intercultural citizenship seems beneficial to help learners respond to fundamental issues about their relationship with nature, the environment, and their peers. In this vein, Byram (2001) claims that, "language teaching as foreign language education should not avoid educational and political duties" (p.102). Such statement has profound implications that affect not only learners and the learning process, but also highlight the political and cultural responsibility of education as a practice to improve societies and its citizens. In this regard, Porto et al. (2018) explain that:

Intercultural citizenship education acknowledges the instrumental value of learning one or more languages but crucially focuses on its educational worth and potential. It is a development in which the role of foreign language education in citizenship and political and moral education is seen as an extension of the scope of citizenship education. (p. 485)

It needs to be clarified that this responsibility should not only rely on the shoulders of foreign language education but needs to be shared as an interdisciplinary axiom across different disciplines and curricula. It is undeniable the effect that this notion can have on educational institutions, especially universities whose task should be also aligned to that of training and

educating capable and mindful professionals ready to contribute to economical growth and social development.

Capitalizing on this idea means contributing to moving forward towards nontraditional objectives in EFL contexts. Assuming this sort of teaching endeavor in the foreign language classroom complements the general aims of teaching to develop intercultural communicative competence by drawing attention to civic action in the community (Porto et al., 2018). Converging these two notions of interculturality and civic action favors not only the possibility for learners' deep engagement within their own community but also stimulates participatory meaning-making encounters thus creating a language environment that goes beyond the classroom. Dynamizing EFL aims by merging language, culture and civic action is a decisive educational function with numerous applications both on theoretical and practical levels supporting cross-curriculum collaboration, language learning and skills advancement.

The fusion of language learning and citizenship education serves to structure rewarding learning opportunities to mediate authentic language learning while educating the learner as an active citizen involved in his/her community. This entails learning to learn reciprocally from others, and assisting society by responding to regional needs as part of their learning process in the classroom. Thus, intercultural citizenship reinforces ICC's objectives with a focus on the potential the learner has on acting over his/her surroundings while touching on relevant social issues such as human rights (Byram, 2008, 2014; Porto & Byram, 2015; Porto, 2019).

In this sense, political education throughout intercultural citizenship may empower the intercultural speaker with a sense of global citizenship (Humes, 2008). Thus, learners are encouraged and helped to develop key abilities, intercultural attitudes, knowledge, and skills by bridging the community, its problems, and actors in the equation. As a result of this contact, Porto

(2014, 2019) supports that citizenship education underpins progress toward developing cultural awareness, critical thinking, comparative interpretation, and reflective skills. A valuable contribution to the field is the acknowledgment that language education keeps on evolving and contributes to instructing beyond the scope of the language *per se*, which builds upon Barnett's (1997) idea of "transformative critique" pursuing personal and social transformation driven through intercultural dialogue.

In this perspective, transformative discourse targets the individual to impact collectivity. Learners' understanding of the mechanisms at play in the language process raises their awareness of how the target language can be used as vehicle to equalize intercultural, language and political education discourse. The position pinpointed here relates to some of the specific IC contributions that can be explored within the EFL classroom that contributes to building a culture and community-sensitive pedagogy grounded on an intercultural language curriculum. Byram's model of ICC intercultural communicative competence proposal outlines teaching objectives for the EFL classroom which can be used as a guideline to facilitate a contextual intercultural learning pursuing learners' implication within their societies as empowered, aware, and capable citizens.

#### **1.4 Intercultural Communicative Competence Objectives**

The ICC model proposed by Byram constitutes one of the most widely referenced (Peng et al., 2020) and used theoretical frameworks for the teaching and learning of ICC in educational contexts. Several studies on ICC development in educational contexts take core notions of reference from Byram's model (Lu & Corbett, 2012; Muller-Hartmann, 2006; Sercu, 2007; Woodin, 2001). The growing transformations have certainly drawn a more substantial interest from language educators, practitioners, and researchers to explore classroom engagement and mediation

through Byram's ICC model. This may be endorsed because his model has been a well-justified and well-defined framework description of objectives, and goals, aiming to guide learners through a learning experience that enhances and promotes intercultural knowledge, intercultural criticality, attitudinal, cognitive, and behavioral changes in educational settings and draws connections to the community by envisioning students as a source of action and change.

The model comprises an explicit and comprehensive framework that invites language educators and learners to embark on an intercultural, collaborative, creative, active, and contextualized foreign language mediation. The ICC building blocks can be interpreted in terms of pedagogical goals and objectives that can systematically allow the language educator to plan foreign language tasks to integrate the intercultural dimension and develop a rational standpoint for the learning experience (Byram, 2009). The objectives guide the process of teaching and assessing ICC, meeting linguistic and educational objectives. Bennett (2013) agreed that the change in foreign language objectives leads to a shift from traditional teaching to a focus on ICC for meaningful language use and relationship making. Similarly, Byram's objectives represent a starting point to ensure language teaching critical functionality in acquiring skills, attitudes, and knowledge. Critical cultural awareness is viewed through objectives to build a practical guide in language education. The attitude dimension is linked by Byram (2020) to curiosity, openness, and readiness to suspend disbelief about one's and other cultures. In order to develop the intercultural dimension this author points out the necessity to provide learning opportunities to engage learners in achieving the following objectives:

- Interest in discovering other perspectives on the interpretation of familiar and unfamiliar phenomena both in one's own and in different cultures and cultural practices.

- Willingness to question the values and presuppositions in cultural practices and products in one's own environment.
- Readiness to experience stages of adaptation to and interaction with another culture during a period of residence.
- Readiness to engage with the conventions and rites of verbal and nonverbal communication and interaction. (pp. 62-63)

In a classroom environment, these attitudes can be observed in students' disposition to improvise when they use the language, ask questions, or talk about what they have learned from diverse sources about other cultures.

The objectives proposed to mediate the knowledge dimension follow criteria for managing knowledge of interactions, social processes, groups and their products, symbols, and practices:

- Historical and contemporary relationships between one's own and one's interlocutor's countries.
- The means of achieving contact with interlocutors from another country (at a distance or in proximity) travel to and from, and the institutions that facilitate communication or help resolve problems.
- The types of cause and process of misunderstanding between interlocutors of different cultural origins.
- The national memory of one's own country and how its events are related to and seen from the perspective of one's interlocutor's country.
- The national memory of one's interlocutor's country and the perspective on it from one's own.



- The national definitions of geographical space in one's own country and how other countries perceive these.
- The national definitions of geographical space in one's interlocutor's country and their perspective from one's own.
- The process and institutions of socialization in one's own and one's interlocutor's country.
- Social distinctions and their principal markers in one's own country and one's interlocutors.
- Institutions and perceptions influence daily life within one's own and one's interlocutor's country and conduct and influence relationships between them.
- The processes of social interaction in one's interlocutor's country. (Byram, 2020, p. 63-64)

According to Byram (1997), the key knowledge a language learner needs to have is the awareness about the fact that one is a product of one's own socialization, which is essential for understanding one's reactions to otherness and comprehending how parallel but different modes of interaction can be expected in other cultures.

Objectives regarding the skills of discovery and interaction account for determining novel knowledge from cultures and their cultural exhibits as to use the knowledge, attitudes, and skills in concurrent communicative interactions. Such objectives are presented as follow:

- Elicit from an interlocutor the concepts and values of documents or events and develop an understanding susceptible to other phenomena.
- Identify significant references within local and alien cultures and elicit their significance and connotations.
- Identify the similar and dissimilar processes of interaction, verbal and nonverbal, and negotiate an appropriate use of them in specific circumstances.

- Use in real-time an appropriate combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes to interact with interlocutors from a different culture, taking into consideration the existing familiarity with the country and culture and the extent of the difference between one's own and the other.
- Identify contemporary and past relationships between one's own and the other culture and country.
- Identify and make use of public and private institutions that facilitate contact with other countries and cultures.
- Use in real-time knowledge, skills, and attitudes for mediation between interlocutors of one's own and a foreign culture. (Byram, 2020, pp. 65-66)

According to Byram (1997), these are the skills that people need to understand new cultural environments. Developing these skills allows much more effective interactions with people with different cultural affiliations. Byram (2020) noted that, through foreign sources (newspaper or television), one can develop these skills by discovering the lines of thought, power, and influence underlying those events:

- Critical cultural awareness objectives intend to guide students to critically evaluate explicit criteria, perspectives, practices, and products in their own and other cultures. Some of the objectives are defined in these terms:
- Recognize and interpret explicit or implicit values in documents and events in one's own and other countries.
- Make an evaluative analysis of the documents and events, which refers to a clear perspective and criteria.

- Interact and mediate in intercultural exchanges under explicit criteria, negotiating where necessary a degree of acceptance of them by drawing upon one's knowledge, skills, and attitudes. (p. 66)

The model is based on a theoretical body of work that describes the main ICC scopes and fundamental issues in achieving the ICC goal in educational contexts which can be utilized to guide ICC pedagogical mediation to initiate the path for learners to discover and self-discover home and foreign world views as to gain general understanding on the crucial position of interculturality development in the language classroom. Byram has emphasized that critical cultural awareness allows self-assessment and evaluative outlook as a viewpoint to see one's own experiences over other cultures. Some remarks that make Byram's (1997) model appealing are the outline of educational objectives and the clear definition of the roles of the teacher and learner since he proposes an attainable language goal abandoning the view of the native speaker as an ideal goal in foreign language learning to introduce the notion of the intercultural speaker as a more comprehensive role with instrumental functions. The value associated to the inclusion of intercultural objectives in the foreign/second language classroom should be weighted in respect to contextual factors and a comprehensive educational relationship of classroom teaching dynamics and factors. Conscious efforts to introduce, teach and assess the intercultural component enhance its potential for a differentiated learning experience and positive language learning outcomes.

### **1.5 Assessing ICC: A Formative Process**

Assessing ICC development is an complex task that is intertwined to the learning process. Supporting competent intercultural speakers and citizens to help them become engaged in a lifelong learning process is essential but difficult. The rising interest and importance of ICC in educational

settings certainly comes with challenges due to the fact that the implementation and assessment of intercultural learning objectives need to be adapted to given contexts. Assessing ICC requires a deep-thinking task for language educators. Deardorff, (2006), Byram (1997), and others have concurred that measuring the outcomes of ICC dimensions places assessment as a pivotal part in the language learning process. In a challenging scenario in which ICC outcomes and results may not always be observable or evident, alternative assessment is pivotal. Even influential scholars question the fact that ICC can be explicitly tested (Kramsch, 1993). According to Coombe (2007), assessment describes a process in which information is gathered from a variety of sources that go beyond just the act of assigning marks. Indeed, the challenge educators regarding the uncertainty of how ICC should be evaluated cannot be underestimated. As a complex phenomenon, ICC and its various domains (knowledge, attitudes, skills, and awareness) and language proficiency in the target language should be addressed and assessed framed as part of an ongoing process that nurtures from diverse sources.

Assessing the intercultural component in the foreign language classroom presupposes gathering data through valuable reports as indicators of the learning progress. These data need to be analyzed by the educator to identify strengths and weakness and to support teaching decision making. Thus, globally as part of educators' task is to monitor the level of achievement of the objectives and learning goals established during the process. As part of any educational process assessment it is pivotal to determine the achievement of objectives and the kind of progress made. Intercultural communicative competence assessment, as part of a complex phenomenon and of a long-life process, should not attempt to evaluate student outcomes solely in terms of grades or merely rely on quantitative methods of evaluation. Language teachers willing to introduce an

intercultural component in their language classrooms need also to consider the rationale on what and how to assess ICC.

The assessment methods to evaluate the intercultural component are still under debate since many scholars agree that traditional testing or holistic assessment does not meet the goal of assessing the multidimensionality of this component (Deardorff, 2009). That is why, scholars and practitioners have supported a multiperspective assessment methodology (Deardorff, 2009; Griffith et al., 2016; Byram, 2020) or alternative evaluation (Fox, 2008; Gipps & Stobart, 2003) as the most suitable methodology for assessing intercultural learning (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Scarino, 2010). Qualitative assessment is also suitable because it places emphasis on the process rather than on quantifiable outcomes and envisions a teaching and learning process from the learner's perspective, which provides daily evidence of the student's participation and goals measurement in much more integral and holistic ways throughout the academic mediation (Cubero-Vásquez & Villanueva-Monge, 2014).

The assessment of the ICC dimensions can be a complex and demanding task which can be conducted based on the educator's experience and moving progressively from simple to more structured ways of ICC assessment. Initially, it requires placing sufficient emphasis on formative and supportive guidance within a friendly, nonthreatening, and transparent learning environment to motivate learners to thrive and enjoy the process. In this light, the educator and the learners become inquirers of the learning experience, learning from one another and from the intercultural sources at their disposal. The educator observes and provides feedback on students' products and outcomes, but students are also to be entitled to assess their peers' progress and their own through self and peer evaluation.

In that sense, learning forms a symbiosis where, during the process, one reciprocally benefits from the other because assessment increases students' self-awareness of their progress and motivates them to become responsible for the development of their intercultural communicative competence. ICC assessment enables English language educators to evaluate intercultural communicators' ability to apprehend, respect, and interact with people who hold different cultural affiliations different from theirs and assess their views and depictions of causal relationships with others from foreign cultures (Byram, 1997). In order to assess intercultural dimensions Corbett (2003) suggests that assessment needs to be conducted progressively at different moments throughout the learning experience. To assess the knowledge, skills and attitudes dimension he claims that pre and posttests are a good way to determine the initial level and (final) global advancement of the students in those specific components.

For instance, assessing intercultural knowledge intends to lead students to adjust to social and cultural environments, that is, it helps integrate practices in the foreign language classroom to enable them to efficiently use their intercultural communicative competence to meet the ultimate purpose of interacting, adjusting, integrating, interpreting, and negotiating when needed in realistic intercultural contexts. When assessing intercultural attitudes, students are to portray levels of critical awareness towards other viewpoints, lifestyles, beliefs, and values beyond their own. A way to assess learners' orientation towards other cultures can be done through observation of performance. The educator can assess learners' oral and behavioral skills when interacting with others (Gu, 2016) even within the classroom activities and reflections. It has been observed that assessing awareness and attitude is more challenging than assessing knowledge and skills (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006; Wisniewski -Dietrich & Olson, 2010). The abstract nature of the former dimensions makes it problematic to quantify progression and verify how much of a change has

occurred in reshaping and incorporating new perspectives into their process of becoming intercultural mediators. This issue can be resolved on a basis of trust, giving learners enough responsibility to self-assess their process and progress as thinking and rational individuals, capable of inner awareness in relation to others.

A complementary perspective in relation to assessment is provided by Gu (2016), who divides intercultural communicative competence assessment tools into direct and indirect. Some of the direct tools he describes are psychometric testing, which are useful to analyze certain intercultural traits. For example, intercultural sensitivity inventory allows teachers to evaluate students' ability to assess levels of sensitivity toward other cultures. These kinds of inventories are structured with cultural questions or items inquiring how the learner would react to a given situation and in a different context or culture. This technique also assesses and reveals learners' open-mindedness and behavioral reaction depending on whether they belong to an individualistic or collectivist culture. Moreover, if interest is placed on knowing levels of sensitivity towards other cultures, the intercultural sensitivity index test can be used. This index test reveals the learners' ability to show cultural sensitivity in different cultural contexts by measuring the learners' interactional engagement, respect for cultural differences, and interactional confidence. Besides, the intercultural development inventory is also available to analyze English students' orientations toward cultural differences, cross-cultural sensitivity, and linguistic comprehension. These tools mentioned above are commercially available online and are intended to indirectly examine students' intercultural traits and abilities to interact and modify their attitudes in cross-cultural scenarios through their responses to a series of questions and situations.

Some of the direct assessment methods generally recognized to assess intercultural learning are learners' self-reports, journals, compositions, research, critical incidents, portfolios, task

performance, interviews, projects, class observations, formative tests, questionnaires, self-assessment scales, content tasks, role-plays, mini-dramas, or critical incidents. These place focus on performance and on the abilities exhibited that can be accounted for skills development or behavioral change. ICC assessment can be conducted through eclectic combinations of tasks and creative techniques to determine progress and advancement. For instance, language educators can assess learners' ability to use the foreign language with fluency and accuracy by using learners' journal entries, reports, and compositions and at the same time evaluate students' ICC development by understanding the intercultural patterns in their work as evidence of their developing perspectives and reactions around ICC in the context of foreign language learning.

Additionally, some other useful techniques for ICC assessment purposes are students' portfolios, which provide students' records and evidence of development based on assigned tasks and thematic reflections along a course (Grefersen-Hermans, 2017). Students' articles provide ICC assessment techniques that can be used to ask students to elaborate on their cultural knowledge development and observe their ability to relate, understand and react toward other cultures. Research project presentation is also suitable to assess learners' performance in aspects such as verbal and nonverbal communication. The educator can associate the observations with the students' levels of intercultural communication competence (Fantini, 2020) or, its specific components which would depend on the task assigned objectives. Presentations also give insights into the students' ability to communicate in the target language.

Critical incident tasks are highly accepted in intercultural learning due to their potential to present brief descriptions of situations in which learners are exposed to misunderstandings, problems, or conflicts arising from cultural differences between social or work interactions (De Frankrijker, 1998) and are guided to reflect and provide possible resolutions. Likewise, self-



assessment reports are another assessment technique that can give the EFL instructor insights on ICC improvement while being able to identify the areas that need further improvement. In this light, students' interpersonal reflections can provide valuable information and details on their ICC progress (Lazarević, 2018). Finally, formative tests and questionnaires can be used to observe and identify what learners have learnt about new cultures and their own. Some sort of summative evaluation goals can also be assessed through self-awareness inventories and psychometric tests (Arasaratnam, 2013).

Other techniques are categorized to be useful for assessment purposes. For example, the ones that entail direct performance assessment techniques. These are considered more advantageous tools because they allow the language teacher to assess challenging ICC constructs and traits such as changing views, understanding, perception, attitudes, knowledge and emerging skills and awareness. Direct techniques assess intercultural communication competence in a broader spectrum that includes ICC dimensions, intercultural awareness, knowledge, attitude, intercultural skills, and intercultural sensitivity (Lazarević, 2018). When planning for a comprehensive assessment, learning activities and tasks should also be considered sources that provide valuable input to assessing the ICC learning process whose outcomes can be used to reorient, adjust, and improve the intercultural language learning process. When these kinds of classroom tasks are used as means of assessment, rubrics can be designed to favor a kind of assessment that focuses on expected levels of achievement. Combining varied assessment techniques results in more efficient and accurate ways to assess ICC in EFL contexts providing learners with feedback, support, and guidance during the foreign language learning process while recollecting insights on the efficacy of the intercultural learning that is contributing to generate deep learning. Hence, classroom practice offers opportunities to gather insights into how language

educators can upgrade and gather experience to continue working towards better ways of facilitating and assessing the intercultural component.

### **1.6 Critical discussion of Byram's model: Addressing Some Drawbacks**

Despite, Byram's model popularity and influence in the field of foreign language teaching for more than two decades, the model has faced certain criticism. One of the issues critics have identified as problematic is Byram's perspective on culture within the framework (Risager, 2006; Hoff, 2020; Matsuo, 2012). The model presents "a static and simplified notion of national cultures misinterpreting contemporary patterns of life as restricting the roles of associating culture to country in the description of savoirs and objectives" (Hoff, 2020, p. 58). In this regard, Byram openly advises against reductionist interpretations (Byram et al., 2017; Porto, 2014) and suggests the adoption of a complex perspective of culture within the teaching model to be operationalized under a contextualized approach. Hoff also directs criticism about the "overly idealistic, and to some extent, naïve, picture of interculturality through its emphasis on harmony and agreement" (Hoff, 2014, p. 515).

Furthermore, the framework has been criticized for not clarifying the extent to which each of the intercultural dimensions influences the other since they are not operationalized. Diaz (2013) argued that Byram's skills dimension and attitudinal dimension present several challenges. According to this author, the development of Byram's ICC framework is problematic since it does not clearly draw any relationship between each of the dimensions that can be operationalized in the model, specifically due to the nature of certain dimensions, such as attitude, which are abstract notions that can hardly be objectively measured. Moreover, Coperías-Aguilar (2002) noticed that the ICC conceptualization fails to propose competence development levels that can provide

language educators with tools to measure ICC progression. As a result, the level of language competence development that Byram proposes to achieve in his ICC description has been argued not to be objectively evident within a model which poses great challenges in the quest to provide certainty and objective measures of ICC development. The criticism around the model intensifies the debate addressing the critical issue of culture in the foreign language classroom contributing to generate insights to approach the model weakness within its theoretical framework. Byram himself has responded to this kind of criticism and has openly clarified that the framework proposed is a model for teaching where guidance is offered so that educators may base their pedagogy and teaching practices on a needs analysis design.

## **CHAPTER 2 CLIL & PBL MODELS**

## **2.1 Methodological framework: Content and Language Integrated Learning and Project-based Learning**

As discussed in the previous chapter, developing intercultural communicative competence in the language classroom is not an easy task since it requires considering a variety of factors. Essential factors to take into account are related to intercultural communicative competence (ICC) views and perspectives, the context, the participants, views about other cultures and one's own culture, and the selection of appropriate methods to maximize the chances for enhancing ICC and language skills. Providing better and more appealing learning opportunities to achieve language learning objectives (performance and competence) is a crucial task in foreign language education.

A teaching method is outlined as a set of principles and instructional strategies that direct, motivate, and stimulate learning, change, and development in terms of cognition, language, content, and culture throughout the educational process in a given scenario. The objective of a method serves to delineate the route and the constituents that would direct the teaching and learning destination. It is in that broad perspective that the claim of combining different learning methods is expected to deploy a wider repertoire of learning strategies, techniques, and principles to be merged into the mediation of the learning process to influence the teaching environment, the learner, the educator, the process, and the context. Developing a combined teaching model to learn a foreign language might prove to be more beneficial and effective than one single approach to mediate the complexities that language teaching demands. Combining two methods to teach English as a foreign language could boost learning in diverse ways while finding opportunities to integrate the intercultural component inherently and undeniably linked to language. The academic effort of merging more than one approach eclectically places a practical value on alternative ways of perceiving the use of methodologies that may be worth trying for the community, the teacher,

and learners. For instance, integrating several methods might boost autonomous learning as well as the acquisition of new skills and ICC. Two language learning approaches that can serve the purpose of fostering cultural and professional skills within the foreign language classroom are content and language integrated learning (CLIL) and project-based learning (PBL).

CLIL and PBL share key theoretical principles that support a dynamic, authentic, real life and engaging pedagogy in the context of foreign language learning. These methodological principles can be enhanced by implicitly and explicitly structuring a direct teaching style that centers the learner in a participatory and autonomous role seeking learning progression in key areas, such as language, content, and culture. A combination of PBL and CLIL can effectively be used to acquire language and cultural proficiency through a variety of tasks and project activities. It is suggested that a comprehensive mediation of teaching principles serves the purpose of learning efficacy on key and functional areas (Cubero-Vásquez, 2021). These two learning methods are supported by a rationale that highlights task diversity and positive outcomes from which learners can take advantage and, as a whole, adopt a more progressive view on language teaching, language acquisition and language learning. An overview of the CLIL and PBL approaches is provided to identify the most relevant principles that serve as a hybrid pedagogical framework to support the mediation and development of ICC in the foreign language classroom.

## **2.2 Content and Language Integrated Learning: Overview**

CLIL is an alternative innovative foreign language method that has developed into an inclusive educational approach that seeks to equally and carefully merge both language teaching and content teaching with clear learning objectives within foreign language contexts. CLIL is a learning methodology developed by David Marsh in 1994 (Coyle et al., 2010) which has been described by Coyle et al. (2010) as a “dual-focused educational form of instruction in which an

additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language” (p. 1). This method has been depicted as dynamic, flexible, and complex in nature because it encompasses all levels of education where content, subjects, and foreign languages are integrated, seeking to achieve educational outcomes in varied contexts (Coyle, 2006, p. 3). CLIL is a comprehensive approach that takes theoretical notions from other language teaching pedagogies that share similar views about the importance of moving language education to a different level where fundamental notions of learning (language forms, language use, cognitive development, critical skills, and content learning) can be integrated while studying a foreign or second language. The primary objective of the CLIL approach is to direct learners into the acquisition or development of a foreign language while addressing and facilitating content learning. The versatile theoretical underpinnings under CLIL provide a modern coherent pedagogy for the language learning community that can fulfill different needs in different educational contexts. It has been found that some language educators use it in different ways depending on their context or local environment. For example, some are likely to use it as subject teaching, while others would use it for language teaching.

### **2.2.1 Origins of CLIL**

The beginnings of CLIL go back to the mid-1970s in the European context, although the term was not coined until 1994 by David Marsh. The approach development was motivated by the need to achieve much more ambitious and practical modes and views in foreign language teaching and learning. The initial objective was to propose a new notion to approach language learning that could complement the existing techniques available at the time. It unfolded in the European context of the 1990s when the European Union noticed the necessity to explore different pathways to adapt its educational narrative to prepare citizens better to respond to the demands of the times. CLIL

has found support because it addresses the notion of multilingualism as a fundamental goal in accordance with the policies of the European Union. Indeed, as David Marsh remarks,

CLIL was implemented in 1994 and launched formally in 1996 after years of interdisciplinary and trans-national expert dialogue. It designated a distinct range of methodologies that suited contexts where education was given in a language that was not generally the students' first language. The need for multilingualism (the ability of citizens to speak different languages) acted as one of the pillars for the European integration; education then became a focal point for innovation, particularly concerning adjustment to the demands of the emerging information age. (2012, p. 394)

CLIL appeared to implement proper and more effective educational practices that could touch different academic levels and diverse learners. In 2010, the European Council targeted fundamental principles in European education such as "improving quality, providing universal access, and opening up to the world" (Marsh, 2012, p. 135). From that moment, the experience of CLIL in Europe was sustained over positive results that contributed to strengthening the approach as an innovative foreign language learning method with the potential to overcome the adverse outcomes and perceptions of traditional educational methods.. CLIL was, therefore, envisioned as a reform scheme intending to overcome the obstacles identified in traditional EFL methods in order to achieve the goals of multilingualism in the European Union.

Marsh (2012) explained that the integration of learning goals advocated by CLIL is "connected to the notion of relevance to achieve meaningful learning as a pragmatic necessity for changing times" (p. 135). Another advantage of this method is that "the origins of CLIL were essentially organic and are directly linked to the adaptation of educational life during the rapid emergence of the information age as it permeated home, school, and working life" (p. 394). In



short, CLIL emerged in 1994 supported by specific reasons such as “language learning, nonlanguage content, purposeful learning, improved learner motivation, enhanced school profile, and innovative educational teaching and learning” (Marsh, 2012, p. 136). It set off as a new educational trend to offer a platform to embrace the acquisition of content, cognitive skills and language in rich, varied learning environments.

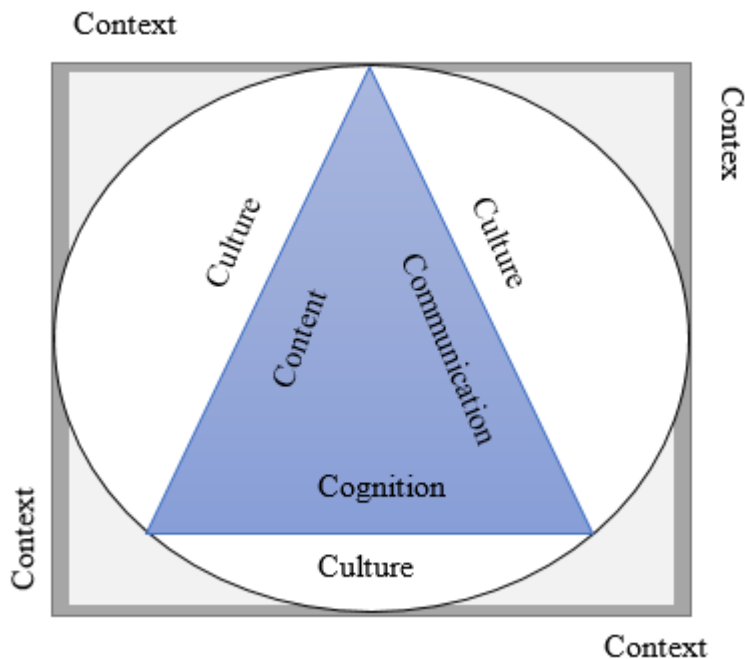
### 2.2.2 The CLIL Syllabus

CLIL implementation is somewhat flexible and may be adapted to specific contexts, requirements, and needs. Some of its proponents claim that it can be implemented in a classroom in different ways if certain conditions are met. In CLIL learners require continuous exposure to engaging materials and tasks with the potential to tap into deep understanding and practical use to provoke structural cognitive changes during and after their learning experience (Coyle et al., 2010). The learning tasks are expected to be related to content or subjects linked to the specific curriculum and have the aim to provide learners with an education that enhances cognitive skills and competences.

The CLIL framework has been recognized to integrate four building blocks or dimensions commonly referred to as the holistic 4C model. It entails merging content (subject matter), communication (language), cognition (thinking processes), and culture (intercultural awareness) (Coyle et al., 2010), which delimits substantial differences from other less integral approaches. Coyle (1999) proposed an intertwined correlation of the four dimensions in a CLIL syllabus to illustrate the path that each key block is projected to play in the learning process. The combination of the four dimensions is considered to contribute to achieving genuine progression in new skills, cognition, content understanding, and knowledge. This interrelation determines the scope of the approach as complex but flexible. Coyle et al. (2010) remark that this model stands under a

framework (Figure 5) that seeks to enrich the classroom experience with a range of opportunities to develop language, content, communication, and knowledge without falling into a conventional repertoire of either language or subject teaching. In that light, the effectiveness of CLIL practices is maximized when these dimensions are carefully thought of, planned, and connected (Coyle et al., 2010).

**Figure 5** *The 4 C+1 Conceptual Framework for CLIL*



*Source:* Coyle et al., 2010, p. 41

The graphical representation clearly illustrates how each dimension stands and interrelates, while it highlights the importance of culture and context to help students acquire content, communication and cognitive skills. The implementation of the CLIL framework in the EFL classroom has many advantages (Coyle et al., 2009) because it invites the learners to take part in the learning experience. Taking into account the four dimensions of the CLIL framework implies

a broader view of foreign language education since students are expected not only to develop communicative language skills, but also to learn content and culture while they develop their cognitive skills. Marsh (2012) describes each of the four dimensions (Table 1) of this framework in which context is perceived as the wrapping that encompasses content, communication, culture and cognition.

**Table 1** *CLIL Dimensions by Marsh*

Communication	Cognition	Culture	Content
CLIL claims to provide the students with a practical, interactive language using kind of learning. As its nature sees language as a conduit for communication, culture is valued in its social, personal, and practical role for negotiation underlying that to progress in the target language needs practice, interaction, and use without rejecting in any way the role of grammar and lexis. (Marsh, 2012, p. 805)	The symbiosis of language and content learning is highly established. It serves as a platform to reinforce the development of higher-order and lower-order skills by using classroom activities that enable learners to reflect, analyze, solve problems and challenges in many daily-life situations. CLIL is not about the mere transfer of knowledge but the creation of new knowledge. Taxonomies can serve as a reference for planning in that direction. (Marsh, 2012, p. 811)	Content and language unequivocally lead to culture. Culture is a cord that links any topic or theme. CLIL has set as a core principle to develop cultural understanding and awareness of what is involved in language and content. It offers the possibility of pluricultural understanding by exposing learners to explore the “other” and the “self.” (Marsh, 2012)	The content scope is defined in the CLIL context as thematic corps (knowledge, skills, and understanding) that learners are to acquire. CLIL works with content seeking deeper learning. CLIL reinforces the role that content plays in developmental cognitive skills by supporting construction and reconstruction of knowledge, not mere accumulation of it. Linguistic content is also linked to content knowledge to reinforce language learning. (Marsh, 2012)

*Source.* Marsh, 2012.

The framework proponents highlight the enormous complexity of interconnecting each dimension to achieve holistic goals in EFL learning. At the same time, they consider that in order to achieve the major objectives of CLIL the four dimensions should serve as guiding directions to educators in their teaching practices. According to Coyle (2006),

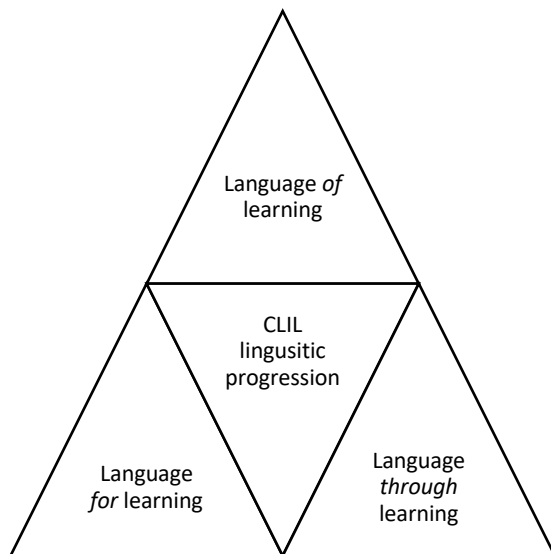
Educators, learners, practitioners, and researchers are collectively exploring the interrelationship between subject matter (content), the language of and for learning (communication), the thinking integral to high-quality learning (cognition), and the global citizenship agenda (culture) -which constitutes the four Cs. The 4Cs framework suggests that it is through progression in knowledge, skills, and understanding of the content, engagement in associated cognitive processing, interaction in the communicative context, developing appropriate language knowledge and skills as well as acquiring a deepening intercultural awareness through the positioning of self and “otherness,” that effective CLIL takes place. (p. 9)

As Coyle points out in the above quotation, for any CLIL programme to be successful the four dimensions need to be addressed together. Therefore, interconnecting each of the 4Cs requires careful consideration when planning to reassess actual progression within the framework. It needs to be remarked that the context is crucial in the learning process as it is clearly related to the production of culture and will contribute to integrating all the dimensions in a natural way.

### **2.2.3 The Language Triptych**

Another idea under the CLIL approach is that knowledge and culture are ingrained in language as language is considered a requirement to access knowledge (Coyle et al., 2010). The literature around CLIL is clear in highlighting the pivotal role that language plays in advancing gradually in both content learning, language learning, and language usage. This understanding led to another fundamental principle envisioned by Coyle (2006), recognized as the language triptych. The triptych (Figure 6) is a representation that illustrates the role that language plays in CLIL classrooms. The three perspectives are viewed in terms of the language *of* learning, language *for* learning, and language *through* learning (Coyle, 2006).

**Figure 6** *Coyle's Language Triptych*



*Source:* Coyle et al., 2010, p. 36

The multifunctional nature of language had been acknowledged before in the sociocultural theory proposed by Vygotsky (1978), whose major claims emphasized the impact of social interactions and cultural environment on learning. The triptych intends to guide the enhancement on the view that language can be both a tool and an object of learning through three interrelated

vehicular functions. First, CLIL offers an integral context for learning, understanding, and using the language while other cognitive transformations are incidentally triggered. Second, the CLIL framework requires dialogic practice, talk, and interaction different from traditional language classrooms.

In a CLIL setting the student is seen as much more than a vessel to be filled with content or language forms. Language learners are seen as creators of the learning reality by using and transforming what is at hand to learn. Language help learners to understand how linguistic competence will be developed to support and advance their content and cognitive skills. Language functionality works through three goals, as established by Coyle, which broaden the framework. It expands on a teaching style that is driven to move core and varied synergies into the learning process that may not only impact the kind of experience offered to learners but, more importantly, intends to provoke an awareness behind the what, the how, and the why of the language to be learned and used in the classroom. Coyle et al. (2010) advocate that using the language triptych provides a basis for mediating, organizing, and interconnecting language and content objectives:

If content determines the language needed in CLIL, then the language of learning, for learning and through learning, is a more relevant analytical approach to determining the language to be taught in CLIL classrooms rather than through grammatical progression. The language learners need to access basic concepts and skills related to content that determines the language of learning. Language for learning focuses on the language required to enable individuals to learn in a foreign language environment—how to operate in a group discussion, develop learner strategies, summarize, hypothesize, and ask cognitively challenging questions. Language through learning is predicated on the notion

that learning cannot occur without the active involvement of language and thinking. (Coyle, 2006, pp. 10-11)

For strategic planning and carefully working toward divergent progress, teachers can benefit from the learning experiential perspective of making explicit the interrelationship between content objectives and language objectives represented in the language triptych, which intertwines cognitively demanding content with language learning (Coyle, 2002). In other words, a language analysis allows an improvementn of class dynamics to access concepts and skills that language students require to perform in real language use environments.

#### **2.2.4 CLIL in the Foreign Language Classroom**

Marsh et al. (2001) suggest that CLIL is supported due to the varied benefits resulting from its theoretical and practical implementation in educational contexts. Most of the reasons appeal to the integration and connection of context, content, language, learning, and culture. Such associations mean students can get better instruction and tools to respond and interact in interconnected economies, social contexts, and the job market. CLIL also responds to the need to include accurate, useful, real-life content and information that can meet the objective of real applicability and proficiency development. Coyle et al. (2010) remark that learners who are part of this divergent, integral, situational learning access an articulation for practical outcomes that entail language, cognition, culture, and content. CLIL demands an active linkage to learners' cognitive thinking and scaffolding. CLIL is effective in improving students' language proficiency when learners are consistently exposed to cognitively demanding tasks.

Many of the reasons for introducing CLIL point to the role of language in the acquisition of content knowledge and cognitive and intercultural skills. CLIL students are expected to advance

in their language learning process in a way that is not limited to a single goal. On the contrary, it intends to grant an integral process where core skills in the target language (language skills and culture) and language knowledge awareness is strengthened. From a broader perspective, CLIL has an essential influence on learners' intercultural understanding by introducing and developing in learners an experience that advocates for a comprehensive view of language as linked to culture, self-directing their cultural attitudes, views, beliefs, and behaviors. When focusing on culture, CLIL students cultivate awareness and tolerance toward people from different cultural backgrounds. Intercultural awareness is fundamental to CLIL (Coyle et al., 2010 p. 42). CLIL also enhances students' motivation, self-confidence, and learning strategies to continue their learning progression. Marsh et al. (2000) contend that CLIL programs can develop active learning and a feel-good attitude among students. Some of the significant principles for learning have been identified by Coyle et al. (2010) as described below:

- Content is related to reflection and learning enabling learners to construct proper content interpretations, knowledge, understanding, and skills ( personalized learning)
- The thinking process meets linguistic demands
- Language is studied and acquired in correlation to the context and its variables
- Interaction when learning content is fundamental
- Intercultural awareness is fundamental
- Language learning and language acquisition are incidental
- CLIL's pedagogical principles are addressed as task-based language learning
- Content leads to cognitive engagement and higher-order thinking. (p.42)



### 2.2.5 Advantages of Using CLIL

The CLIL methodology has numerous objectives, including enhancing the learning curriculum, systems, productivity, and school performance. Thus, instead of a monolithic view of the learning experience, CLIL proposes a multilingual approach from which learners may rank at higher proficiency levels in interpretation, critical thinking, and cognitive abilities. Dalton-Puffer (2007) identified some benefits in higher academic achievement when contrasted with traditional learning classroom students. She also noticed positive performance levels in how communicative competence develops receptive skills and students' positive attitudes toward learning itself, where students with average language learning aptitude benefit as well.

Regarding the culture dimension, Marsh explained that building intercultural knowledge and understanding results in achieving positive outcomes, enhancing, and facilitating communication skills, cultural and linguistic accommodations, and adaptations that prepare for interacting in intercultural situations. It instructs how the language is used in intercultural engagement. It boosts students' interaction with different people in multicultural contexts. According to Marsh (2012), CLIL is viewed to have helped learners integrating global internationalization by preparing and developing skills related to the socio-economic changes and the market needs, which contributes to an overall improvement of school profiles (Marsh, 2012).

Another advantage advocated by CLIL supporters is the inextricably pedagogical purposes to enable students to learn and develop meta-language and systematic conceptualizations of how meanings are construed through the target language. Alongside the processes of language and meaning making are the conditions introduced to rehearse interaction and language used in real situations for real communication. The content dimension enhanced by context positions language within an interactional confluence of language and content, engaging students in learning about the

language while focusing on a process of meaning making, negotiation and co-construction. Therefore, CLIL promotes studying and reflecting from different angles, which provides the scenario for a range of learning possibilities, thus entitling learners to experience deeper understanding of the content constructs articulated in connection to reality and encoded in alignment to communicative aims and styles in order to effectively exchange meaning.

Most of the arguments supporting CLIL advocate that the framework favors the integration of varied dimensions of learning regarding content and language. In particular, its rationale suggests that the implementation of this method fosters: a) linguistic competence; b) cognitive flexibility; c) constructivist pedagogy; d) sophisticated level of learning; e) understanding of concepts to facilitate associations; f) task authenticity; g) intercultural awareness; h) communication; i) natural language learning; j) purposeful use of the target language; k) focus on meaning rather than form; l) sufficient exposure to the target language (Marsh, 2012; Dalton-Puffer, 2007). In sum, according to these authors, the advantages of implementing CLIL in the EFL classroom are manifold as this method addresses cognitive, affective, linguistic and cultural aspects and considers learning as a multidimensional experience.

Marsh (2012) remarks that a clear advantage is the vital role that culture plays in CLIL environments by embracing the learners' development of cultural awareness, skills, and attitudes as a crucial formative component in training for interactional settings. In the CLIL framework intercultural awareness is central since it intertwines culture, language, context, and content, because it considers that these dimensions need to be viewed as inseparable and as supportive factors of one another (Bruton, 2011). The intercultural dialogue becomes food for reflection through the learning experience and is expected to enrich discourse and help at developing functional strategies for learners to explore and reflect about cultural matters.

As the focus of CLIL moves in broad and diverse directions of learning it is deduced that educators are called to examine their teaching views to better equip learners with the learning experience intended under a CLIL pedagogy. Overall, the CLIL approach presents the academic community with a comprehensive framework, both challenging and motivating, supported by a holistic and constructivist model in order to set a context for meaningful content, meaning and language use (Dalton-Puffer, 2007). This approach can be categorized as an ambitious learning philosophy which calls on developing multidisciplinary capabilities in the teacher and the learner and may contribute to reconstructing traditional notions about language learning.

#### **2.2.6 The Teacher Role in CLIL Contexts**

One of the most relevant characteristics extracted from the CLIL approach is the intentional shift in the roles of the educator and the student. As in other modern learning pedagogies, the central role is given to the learner. In this sense, Marsh et al. (2001) summarized the fundamental abilities a CLIL educator needs to have in terms of language, theoretical knowledge, methodology, environment, material, and assessment (Table 2).

**Table 2** *CLIL Educator's Competences*

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Expected Ability</b>
Language	-Sufficient target language knowledge, language use, and language comprehension as pragmatic skills for CLIL. -Stimulate learner input and output in an acquisition-oriented mode
Theory	-Comprehension of the distinctions and similarities between the notions related to language acquisition. -Identify the conceptual relations between different subjects to make learning interlinked, relevant, accessible, and effective.
Methodology	-Identify linguistic difficulties and use communication/interaction methods that facilitate understanding meaning. -Use strategies for correction and effective language usage. -Use dual-focused tasks to provide language and content. -Select strategies to enhance interaction and autonomy. -Use varied strategies to strengthen the use of socially oriented language
Learning environment	-Work with students of diverse linguistic/cultural backgrounds. -Use technology to enrich the learning environment. -Use Socratic philosophy to incite self-confidence and a desire for learning.
Materials development	-Adapt, select, and use complementary materials and resources on a given topic. -Consider semantic, textual, syntactic, and vocabulary features. -Utilize an integrated framework and interdisciplinary approaches.
Assessment:	-Develop and implement evaluation and assessment tools.

*Source:* Marsh, 2012, pp. 164-166.

Even though the role of the educator must guarantee that all the needed conditions are met for the learners to gradually achieve the varied multifocal objectives before, during, and at the end of the learning experience, the essence of a CLIL mediation relies on planning and constructing a theoretical guide from which to build the learning interactions. What is more, the affective domain in learners is to be positively reinforced to empower students in achieving their goals while working to overcome their weaknesses. In the words of Mehisto et al. (2008), educators should carry out the task of “creating a safe learning environment and high expectations for all, stating that it is paramount for teachers to believe that all of their students will succeed and to make this belief

visible to each student” (p. 105). This is perhaps one of the most critical tasks educators in CLIL classrooms are to pursuit.

### **2.2.7 Recommendations for Designing CLIL Units**

CLIL requires teachers to participate in nontraditional planning styles to pursue the global goals intended in CLIL learning. According to Coyle et al. (2010), implementing theoretical ideas to changing traditional practices requires time, patience, and professional support. CLIL is a flexible approach that considers different contexts; due to its singular nature, some fundamental principles need to be explicitly addressed to keep their structural consistency. The model views language as a tool in constructing and reconstructing knowledge in a context of familiar or local development for learners to feel at ease. This perspective of foreign language learning has an impact on the design and implementation of CLIL units.

Coyle et al. (2010) proposed a six-stage process to help educators to integrate CLIL practices and prepare and develop a CLIL-like process-oriented mediation. It is suggested that flexibility and adaptability of context must be part of the process from the beginning. Coyle et al. (2010) stressed that the stages suggested provide a starting point for CLIL classroom practices that progressively can move to holistic planning. The first recommendation is to create a shared vision for CLIL, which implies agreement on the reasons behind the use of CLIL in the classroom. The next stage suggested aims at establishing a personalized context that can mirror the context in which their learners operate. Subsequent stages refer to planning linked to the 4Cs and CLIL principles theory and focus on preparing the unit, monitoring, and evaluating CLIL units. According to Coyle et al. (2010), “the need for a continuing quality audit to monitor and evaluate

the effectiveness of the CLIL program is fundamental to successful classroom teaching and learning” (p. 49).

Educators using CLIL need to be familiar with the content and the target language objectives. Coyle et al. (2010) states that the triptych is essential for designing the learning experience and may help to understand what, how, and why the language is needed when working with content. Educators following this methodology are required to make sure that the language objectives are met, and the content load is adequate to also favor incidental learning. Assessment becomes pivotal to the process and, for this reason, it needs to be conducted through different learning moments: before, during, and after in order to gather valuable information and data to support decision making about the learning process regarding to content, meaning, language forms, functions needed to meet language use requirements and facilitate content and knowledge construction and interaction. Research has suggested that educators may experience certain limitations when teaching CLIL specially during the tasks related to lesson planning, preparation, implementation, and assessment (Oattes et al., 2018). In terms of CLIL assessment, major proponents recommend educators establish clear learning objectives while studying and selecting a mixture of formative and summative evaluation. As Coyle et al. aptly remark,

Assessment lies at the heart of the question of how to define the level of content language integration, because, intimately, no matter what is taught and how it is taught, the mode of assessment determines how the learners perceive the teacher’s intention and of course also shapes performance data. (2010, p. 112)

The CLIL method takes advantage of the multiple possibilities of assessment forms that can range from formative to summative evaluation to determine the level of progress and achievement of content and language objectives. Assessment in its fundamental function influences the whole CLIL learning experience since it determines the efficacy of the methodology and its

effect on learners regarding all the aspects that CLIL cover. An advantage of assessment within this framework relies on the fact that learners can be aware of the multiple skills and competences that can be fostered through the methodology that focuses on the interrelationship of the 4 C's in a given context. Since content and language skills need to be assessed, it is advisable to consider some principles supporting the use of alternative assessment methods. For instance, Coyle et al. remark that “learning objectives that take on 4Cs approach that include content, skills and language, use a mixture of formal and informal assessment in a form of task-based, familiarize students with the assessment measures, content knowledge should be assessed using the simplest form of language, language should be assessed for a real purpose, orally based assessment requires to give time students to think, and students need to be given responsibility for their assessment” (2010, p. 129). In sum, assessment in CLIL is aligned with the 4Cs objectives included in the syllabus since this method uses a variety of tools and tasks to evaluate student progress in terms of content, language, cognition and culture.

### **2.3 Project-Based Learning: Overview and Origins**

Project-based learning (PBL) is the result of abundant research to provide learners with optimum learning opportunities that meet the projected standards and to involve educators in using a wide range of theoretical learning views that can train in responding to current and future needs, interests, and demands. PBL has been categorized as a comprehensive instructional methodology that contextualizes learning as interrelated to functional, practical, real-life projects. Various definitions around the method expose how its related notions, extensions, and features construct the experiential nature of PBL. Project based learning has been defined by Thomas as “a curriculum development and instructional approach that prioritizes student-centered instruction by assigning

projects” (2000, p. 1). In addition, Thomas believed a project implies a process in which challenging questions or problems become the core of study and actively engage students in designing, decision making, problem-solving, inquiry, and realistic, useful product creation. According to Bell (2010), PBL “is a student-driven, teacher-facilitated approach to learning where learners pursue knowledge by asking questions that have piqued their natural curiosity” (p. 39). In synthesis, PBL can be conceptualized as a systematic teaching and learning process aimed at creating, producing, and conducting project-inquiry activities (Markham et al., 2003; Gras- Velázquez, 2020; Stoller & Myers, 2020).

Descriptions of the model are grounded on the basis of engagement, authenticity, and pragmatism as core factors linked to the approach. PBL advocates for a pedagogy in which the use of engaging questions, tasks, or problems in academic content is evidenced throughout the project process while students are expected to actively work, both cooperatively and autonomously, to determine, understand, and commit to a functional goal with practical use through extended inquiry. Learners involved in this kind of process have the chance to construct a product/event while accessing content, which subsequently results in higher levels of academic achievement, deeper learning, self-efficacy, skills development, and curiosity (Bender, 2012; David, 2008; Goldstein, 2016; Pan et al., 2021; Choi et al., 2019).

The extensive literature around PBL suggests it functions as a bilateral model. Both the educator and learners participate in a dynamic learning experience in which roles are different from those of conventional teaching styles. The building blocks of the theoretical proposal of PBL have progressively and deliberately altered the standard teaching roles to a more engaging, authentic learning approach that supports experiential knowledge and skills acquisition for real-life situations in rapidly changing contexts. The conceptualization of learning through experience for



fundamental purposes is a relatively old approach. It is believed to be interrelated to ancient ways of practical teaching and learning, that of knowledge acquisition by observing and doing. By the early 20th century, some proponents infused debate over establishing specific educational shifts to purposeful learning. Those ideas are still part of a very active discussion today.

For the last three decades, PBL has been widely known and relied on as one of the most popular teaching methodologies educators can use to engage students in more practical, authentic, autonomous, and collaborative work. Although its constructs touch on fundamental learning notions, the academic community seems to agree on viewing PBL as a teaching method that is complementary to more dominant, central educational approaches. [Exploring its origins would serve to understand its nature and purpose.](#) The fundamentals of PBL can be traced back further to great philosophers and educators. De Graaff and Kolmos (2007) claim that there is a Confucian vision on education built on the initial features of PBL, but a much modern connection of the method is believed to be linked to pragmatism. One of the well-known advocates of pragmatism is the educational philosopher John Dewey (1935), an American educational reformer who promoted the need to shift education modes of teaching to a more practical application of knowledge to everyday life. He believed that the traditional vision of education lacked a reasonable value and that “education must be conceived as a continuing reconstruction of experience” (p. 5). His argument explored two elementary premises of experience, which he called continuity and interaction and added that educators “needed to ensure valuable experiences and interaction as a construct of social control” (Dewey, 1938, p. 59).

PBL reassembled Dewey’s approximations into a procedural agenda with realistic, collaborative, and social engagement experience to be developed in project-based classrooms. Consequently, PBL is a practical manifestation of Dewey’s thinking because the method provides a process where the language learners learn from social experience (Bender, 2012; Larmer &

Mergendoller, 2010). The initial ideas around learning as a valuable experience also introduced interest in exploring further the notion of learning by experiencing. Experiential learning results from the interaction between humans and the environment (Kolb & Kolb, 2012). Based on Mezirow's (1991) ideas, experiential learning requires processing experience and goes beyond knowledge acquisition to ensure transformation and change of particular thinking patterns and attitudes. Experiential learning theory unlocks the value of the environment, surroundings, and context and contributes to formal education. It claimed the need to expose learners in constructing and reconstructing knowledge in an active context and a socially relevant educational corpus.

Scholars from diverse interdisciplinary fields have long supported the need to picture a more practical route for teaching and to learn through envisioning theoretical constructs with the possibility for real impact on individuals as part of society. The common elements from experiential learning seem to elicit active thinking, feeling, perceiving, doing, solving, and constructing. Likewise, learners are expected to deal with knowledge while experiencing it rather than just transmitting and memorizing it. The discussion around impactful learning became a stand for the PBL emergence. Learning by doing has a significant influence on the constructive ideas of the PBL approach.

### **2.3.1 PBL Theoretical Framework: pedagogical background**

The PBL theoretical framework supports a shift in the way teaching and learning are seen traditionally by proposing a mediation through task authenticity that can serve students in developing abilities for a better adjustment to real-life challenges, work, and demands. Some of the significant purposes projected around PBL intend to stimulate students' abilities by exposing them to problems to solve, situations to inquire about, or questions to answer. According to Mikulec and

Miller (2011), PBL engages students in varied multiphase projects that relate to the students' needs, the context, and the educators while providing the environment for accomplishing an authentic, meaningful task which results in a tangible product.

PBL shifts away from a teacher-centered learning process toward a student-centered one, where learning becomes experimental, tactical, and an incidental enhancer of interdisciplinary skills such as creative and critical thinking, content knowledge, problem-solving abilities, research, and inquiry skills, cognitive skills, cooperation, creative collaboration, communication, data, and resource management. The PBL framework is driven by an authentic purpose, inviting educators to view different learning scenarios where students can take a practical learning experience to gain ownership of their learning process and control and decide much of what happens along the way.

This autonomy grants students individual responsibilities to plan and self-direct their own learning pace, procedures, methods, the what, and the how regarding their matter of interest. This entitlement over the process becomes a driving force and provides motivation for learners, primarily because it is conducted in close communication with the educator and in full collaboration with their peers. As a result, students find a way to direct their learning upon their interests which is sustained by cooperative and collaborative projects. The level of engagement and autonomous participation in PBL is a remarkable feature of the approach, often reflected in the student's commitment to their process and progress when selecting the purpose, objectives, directions, guiding steps, and assessment for the project. The degree to which students have their way and ownership depends upon factors such as the project focus and objectives, the length, scope, and the participants' level of experience with PBL (Bender, 2012; Markham et al., 2003).

Moreover, PBL involvement creates the context for technology use. Students use technological tools to support their inquiry by accessing data and accurate information. In this regard, Bell (2010) considers that technology fulfills an important role in the PBL classroom as a

tool to help students organize and conduct their project work. Since PBL experiences revolve around a central problem or driving question, students need to consider multiple content areas, data resources, technological tools, and skills to succeed in achieving the project goal. For Simpson (2011), PBL helps to promote meaningful learning environments through student-centered and challenging questions while developing multiple and alternative perspectives around a task, problem, or challenge.

Therefore, students are offered a practical platform to develop 21st-century skills and expertise in particular areas of interest. According to Harmer and Stokes (2014), the framework of PBL prepares learners for work-based skills for the 21st century as it mediates on practical project management tasks and real-world problems. Twenty-first-century skills have been identified as the relevant skills that can aid individuals in their immersion in an interconnected world as well as competencies that allow them to act appropriately in challenging situations. Creative and critical thinking, communication and collaboration, self-management, technological literacy, and intercultural communication have been identified as essential 21st-century skills which can be practiced and developed through TBL. Learning in this particular way fosters students' creativity, soft skills and knowledge transference to new daily circumstances (Barron & Darling-Hammond, 2008; Anazifa & Djukri, 2017; Younis et al., 2021)

Most experts agree that the project learning method advances conventional teaching styles by giving learners options to actively construct knowledge, considering their interests, individual differences, and a correlation between their academic learning and real life. In addition, presenting learners with an actual use for their learning process boosts positive attitudes toward the learning process goals and lifelong learning. Even though PBL can be viewed and implemented in different ways due to its contextual and situational nature, a consistent equivalent of its views in practical and theoretical approximations is notable among the academic community; such characteristics

intersect across the available literature around the model. Larmer and Mergendoller (2010) summarized some of the main pedagogical principles underlying PBL:

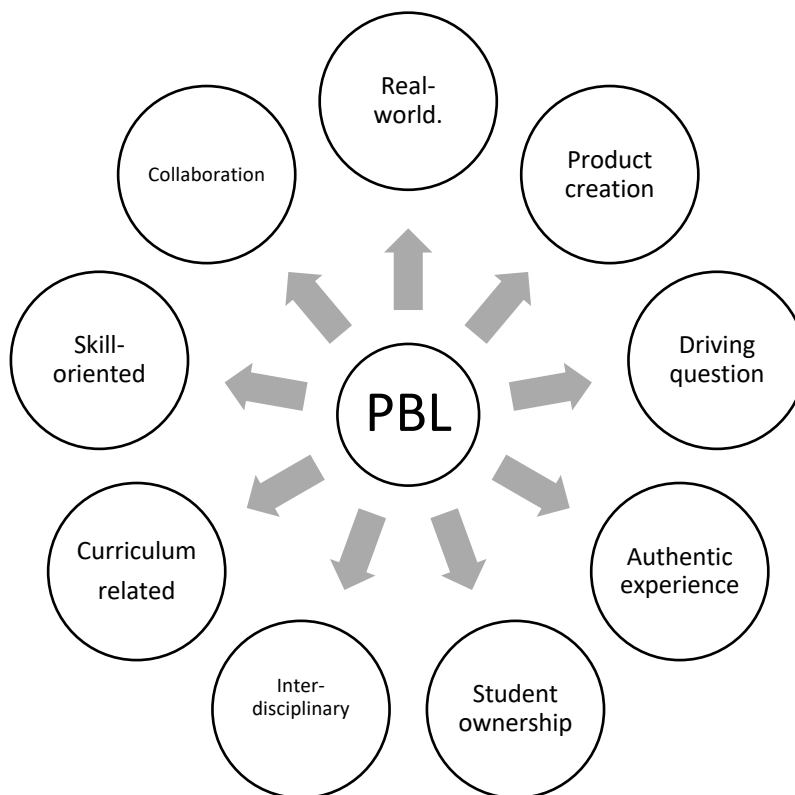
- Engages in meaningful and significant learning.
- Leads to relevant content material to meet the challenge or problem.
- Introduces concept reflection originated from learners' interests, context, and preferences.
- Implicates cognitive tasks and in-depth learning that results in a project.
- Fulfills contextualized educational purposes via meaningful projects. (p. 2)

Other characteristics are highlighted by Simpson (2011), who contends that PBL is guided by standard features developed over time, where students in a centered stance pose challenging questions, problems, or topics, compelling them to go through planning, task completion, and presentation. In such a process, underlying skills such as cognitive, social, and organizational are acquired and then reinforced by sustained inquiry, authentic resources, technologies, and feedback from peers and facilitators. According to Thomas (2010), projects are central to the curriculum and are framed within five criteria: centrality, driving question, constructive inquiry, autonomy, and realism. Projects guide learners to acquire key knowledge and concepts and are centered on a theme that drives learners to productive investigation, knowledge construction, and data collection. These given characteristics have framed the methodology as promising in terms of pedagogical use and alternative to traditional models.

In an attempt to expand the characteristics of PBL, Larmer and Mergendoller (2010) described a six-criteria framework which guides high-quality project-based learning: intellectual challenge and accomplishment, authenticity, collaboration, project management, reflection, and public product. In an extended view, the Buck Institute promoted eight gold standards for PBL to consider key knowledge, understandings, and success skills: challenging question, sustained

inquiry, authenticity, student voice and choice, reflection, critique and revision, and public product (Larmer et al., 2015). Immersing students in constructivist tasks under projects enables students to work, learn, and acquire knowledge that potentially expand their opportunities to develop and strengthen skills development and thinking skills. As Figure 7 shows, the most important characteristics of PBL are described in terms of the driving question, learning experience, student ownership, valuable interdisciplinary curriculum, collaboration, skill-oriented, product creation, and academic connection to society. Most of its primary features pursue the mediation of knowledge, content, and skills anchored to the real world. Thus, learning results from students' needs and interests, enabling learners to gain new experiences.

**Figure 7** *PBL Nature of Learning*



*Source:* Design based on Thomas, 2000 and Larmer & Mergendoller, 2010.

### 2.3.2 Stages for Implementing Project-Based Learning

Scholars have agreed that in educational settings PBL requires careful planning and organization in order to integrate the curriculum requirements within a pedagogy with clear goals. Considering those essentials, scholars proposed several stages for successfully developing a project. It is in the interest of this study to explore such proposals to adopt teaching principles for addressing language and intercultural purposes in the EFL classroom. For instance, Fragoulis and Tsiplakides (2009) state that a project in the educational context requires to be implemented in several stages. The process begins with the speculation stage involving students in theme/topic agreement and decision making. The second stage relates to the actual designing of the project. At this stage students are prompted to consider how the project activities, roles, and responsibilities will be carried out within the group. A third stage requires the implementation of the actions already planned and organized, concluding with self-assessment and revision intended to reflect upon learners' decisions, product, achieved objectives, and socialization. This simplified multi-stage process model entitles learners with enough autonomy to direct and redirect their decisions toward knowledge construction throughout the project process.

Similarly, Alan and Stoller (2005) proposed a 10-step model for conducting projects in the foreign language classroom. During the first steps the students and educator have to agree on a theme based on a driving question while theorizing about the possible outcomes. Then, the students plan the organization of the project while the teacher designs strategies to prepare students for the demands of the information gathering. In the fifth step, students gather the information required to carry out their project. The sixth step requires the instructor to prepare students to compile and analyze data. In the following step students collect and analyze the data gathered. In the eighth step the instructor prepares learners for the target language demands. Finally, in the final two steps that

culminate the project execution focus on the final product presentation and the overall project process evaluation. Stoller (2006) briefly described the sequence of this model as “information collecting, processing, reporting, and evaluation” (p. 27).

The stages required to conduct a collaborative project invite learners to explore content related to real word related themes and topics while challenging their abilities to produce and construct something. As this is a student-centered methodology with sustained engagement among peers, it provides students with sufficient opportunities to develop their skills in varied areas. This is the significance that lies within the model making it appealing across diverse disciplines, the EFL field being no exception. The potential use of project-based learning in the foreign language classroom translates into opportunities of overcoming traditional methods of language teaching. By involving learners in learning moments that require preparation, development, implementation, assessment, and reporting and by creating the conditions for deeper, active, and transformative learning which involves the learning community, the educator and the community itself become valuable resources in the learning experience. That is the rationale that makes PBL principles appealing to be used in this study. Learners can experience the target language in a classroom environment that requires them to engage with their peers to undertake a project task with enough freedom to support their independent learning.

### **2.3.3 Project-Based Learning in the EFL Classroom**

In the context of the technological revolution and the future of artificial intelligence, educators and learners are changing roles to ensure the development of competencies and skills to face real-life scenarios. The available literature suggests PBL advocates for some specific teacher-student roles.



The educator:

- acts as a guide, a coordinator, and a facilitator;
- supports and participates in the learning process;
- offers resources to guide students through the project experience;
- helps learners in creatively managing content and using technological tools;
- takes part in regular training development and improvement;
- explains the reasons behind project learning (what, why, purpose);
- adapts teaching styles to the teaching context and the PBL stage;
- awakens interests, curiosity, and content discovery;
- plans effective strategies for learning to occur;
- embraces a positive attitude to facilitate the whole process; and
- leads students to regulate their learning by a holistic assessment.

The learner:

- participates actively in the process when using PBL;
- manages and reorients their roles and responsibilities;
- keeps an open mind and embraces peer and self-correction;
- commits to a project goal and successful conclusion;
- ensures to have equal involvement in the project process; and
- shows responsibility, effort, dedication, and a positive attitude.

The educator acts as the facilitator and process consultant of the learning experience, guiding and assisting the students in their exploration, research, synthesis, reflection, and product creation. In this sense, the teacher's role changes from that of a knowledge transmitter and major

knowledge source to that of a process coach and facilitator, supporting students throughout the whole experience not only by providing feedback, but also acting as a motivator in their process of personal and academic growth. This shift demands that students play a substantial reactive and receptive role empowered by teaching practices that offer freedom to create and construct knowledge which derives from students' independent study and research. Consequently, students themselves become crucial assets to the learning community.

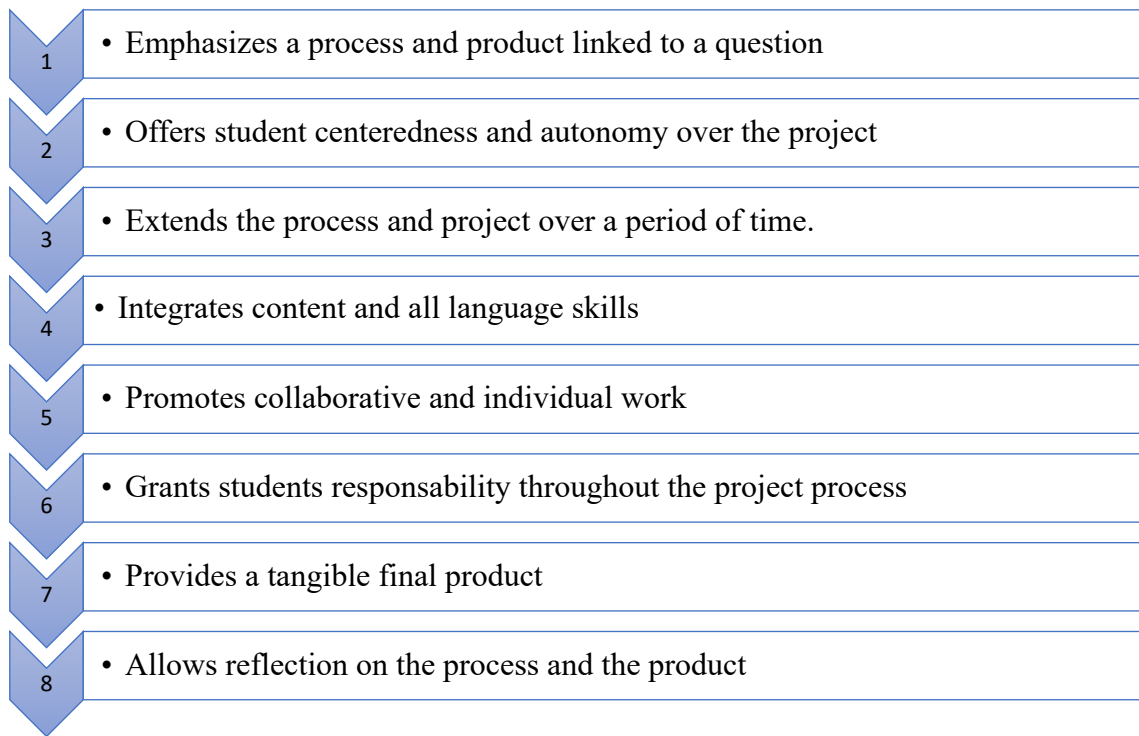
PBL in the language classroom has many potential advantages and the positive benefits of incorporating this method in the EFL classroom need to be explained. PBL is a flexible method in language instruction due to its theoretical ideas that contribute to learning motivation, pragmatism, development of multiple skills, meaningful procedural learning, and ownership (Malkova & Kiselyova, 2014; Kettanun, 2015; Potvin et al., 2021). Moreover, some of the findings linked to PBL in language teaching point to the consolidation of language learning through varied tasks and activities, sufficient language skills practice, and improving linguistic aspects (pronunciation, grammar, syntax, and vocabulary) within English as a foreign/second language learning contexts. The whole process becomes a natural context for students to incorporate a variety of language skills.

Fried-Booth (2002) claim that language tasks arise naturally from the project itself and acknowledge that the process toward the final product grants learning moments for students to develop and strengthen self-confidence and positive attitudes toward learning. According to Beckett (2002), PBL was first applied in a second language settings more than two decades ago to provide “learners with opportunities to interact and communicate with each other and with native speakers of the target language in authentic contexts” (p. 54). Another notable positive feature of this method lies in the fact that through the project process and by working with content, “language

learners have a vehicle to receive comprehensible input and produce comprehensible output” (Beckett & Miller, 2006, p. 4).

Beckett and Slater (2005) also contend that projects’ key components are grounded in an instructional method that concurrently promotes language learning, language acquisition, content knowledge, and functional skills development while fulfilling the primary goal of providing comprehensible output throughout the project process. According to Stoller (2006), some critical criteria for PBL comprise ideas linked to features about the project and the process since a project is process and product oriented. The process engages learners in active and autonomous participation throughout the experience. Thus, this researcher indicates the need to integrate and support language and content learning so as to encourage collaborative work toward a shared goal while calling upon students’ responsibility for their own learning. There is an emphasis on language and the final result or tangible product which concludes with the learners’ reflection and self - evaluation on the process, the product and the new knowledge acquired. Stoller (2006) remarks that the implementation of PBL in the language classroom is characterized to follow specific directions to facilitate the model implementation while enhancing language learning and acquisition. The principles closely correspond with PBL principles that other experts have described in the model and are sequenced in Figure 8.

**Figure 8** *PBL Principles*



*Source:* Stoller, 2006, p. 28.

Based on this sequential process, Stoller (2006) reports that the language classroom, learning goals and dynamics within this methodology can result in an enhanced authenticity in the way the target language is used. Besides, Stoller highlights that the model’s connection to real-life increases the opportunities for learners to develop a more profound sense of autonomy, creativity, critical thinking, and lifelong learning as well as enhanced self-esteem and positive attitudes concerning language learning since genuine and real opportunities for integrating all four language skills are given.

According to Bell (2010), the benefits obtained from implementing PBL in the foreign language classroom are linked to the kind of learning experience generated sustaining a pedagogical structure based on contextual and meaningful learning, optimal environment to language practice, active engagement during the project performance, increase in students’ interest,

motivation, participation, enjoyment, collaborative skills, and actual application of social knowledge. In this vein, Levine (2004) contends that, aside from the opportunity to develop their language skills, students engage in practical communication scenarios to fulfill the need for authenticity and meaningful tasks with real purpose and benefits. Because the language is being used and practiced in a relatively natural context concurrently, they can examine and reflect on the project tasks from different perspectives.

Another benefit manifested by Hedge (1993) is that projects in a language classroom context meet “different linguistic objectives and strengthen communicative competence” (p. 276). This kind of variation in the learning process can be linked to an enhanced language learning motivation. Hedge explained that projects as realistic English language tasks are likely to integrate language skills through varied activities. The student-focused process allows students to investigate, negotiate, hypothesize, debate, experiment, and plan by asking their own driven questions

Similarly, many scholars report the benefit of increased social, cooperative and group cohesiveness. Simpson (2011), for example, claimed that PBL can transform language instruction practices by enhancing communicative competence, language proficiency, cognitive skills, collaborative learning, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and self-assessment in terms of the content acquired and the process experienced. It is noteworthy how project tasks can be put to use in the language class to maximize the achievement of diverse objectives as projects “involve a variety of individual or cooperative tasks such as developing and implementing a research plan through empirical or document research that includes collecting, analyzing, and data reporting” (Beckett, 2002, p. 54). It is in this light that the methodology supports a meaningful teaching practice with consequential effects. The multifaceted nature of project-based learning and its potential to resonate with students’ satisfaction, pace of learning, styles, needs, context, and interests under an

authentic, motivating and actively engaging process constitute appealing principles to invigorate the EFL teaching practice. The learning principles that can help in achieving an intercultural language experience seem appealing and can hypothetically encourage learners to work actively, autonomously and collaborative through project tasks that include the intercultural component and contribute to building their intercultural communicative competence.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **CLIL & PBL HYBRID APPROACH**

### **3.1 CLIL and PBL principles: a hybrid approach to promote foreign language learning**

In an attempt to meet educational goals for moving forward in the context of the 21st century, educators and researchers have long embarked on the quest to explore and implement different teaching methods, models, and strategies that contribute to better teaching practices and to a better understanding of the factors that come into play in the dynamics of teaching and learning. Pursuing learning experience efficacy where learners can grow academically, professionally, and as human beings, and where the learners are aware, connected, interested, mindful, and actively involved is a constant and permanent quest in educational settings. The need to change teaching practices has always been motivated by the rapid local and global transformations and the fact that generations have also changed to develop different needs, preferences, and drives.

According to Kahn (1990), educators have always been interested in designing new curricula or modifying the current ones in order to design syllabi that focus on acquiring competences and skills. For Luther (2000), new methods of learning are required to emphasize collaborative learning, explicit course criteria of competency and dynamism where students are led to cultivate higher-order thinking skills, critical thinking, and a sense of learners' community to support each other and understand the complexities of knowledge issues and problems, recognizing the importance of alternative approaches to solutions while interacting in a respectful learning environment where they see themselves as enthusiastic participants.

Selecting a teaching method needs to be a well-informed and reflected task in which the curriculum, context, global scenarios, social and technological issues must be considered. The available literature has led to considering the combination of several methods as an alternative for meeting this objective. Building contextualized practices by combining learning approaches,



methods, or principles to potentially enrich the learning experience, which happens to be unique to the context and the participants involved, may be the best way of achieving multiple learning goals. Context –interpreted as the system of relations, factors, and connections in one’s immediate surroundings, settings, or environment– plays a crucial role both in the choice of the appropriate methodology and in its implementation to achieve the desired goals.

From this perspective, context becomes axiological to teaching and learning. Glickman (1991) considered, “[e]ffective teaching is not a set of generic practices, but instead is a collection of context-driven decisions about teaching” (p. 6). Many scholars have long debated the effects of the environment or context in interaction with the learner ( Vygotsky, 1978; Dewey, 1938; Bruner, 1966). Context is considered relevant to any learning practice because it helps learners to understand the information and promotes its application, scaffolding and knowledge connections (Gao, 2010; Hunter & Daw, 2021; Joseph & Nation, 2018). If meaning is especially significant because “meaning is linked to the brain’s crucial element in functioning better when exposed to cognitive and affective challenges” (Yelon, 1996, p. 3). Consequently, contextualizing learning contributes to portraying relevance, significance, and validation of the teaching experience for actual use, thus allowing learners to see the importance of reaching the set objectives.

For the aims of this study, two teaching methods are explored in context to enhance intercultural communicative competence and language progress in the foreign language classroom. CLIL and PBL principles advocate for language enhancement, skills development, culture awareness, real-life meaningfulness and a learning experience based on achieving crucial competences. Merging teaching and learning principles to facilitate classroom tasks may result in suitable conditions for learners to develop EFL communicative and intercultural competence. As a rationale supporting the combination of both methods, it can be claimed that PBL can be

maximized by devoting more direct teaching to building a base for content, cognition, communication, and cultural connections through the project stages of learning by doing. Alternatively, CLIL's model of the 4Cs can be highlighted and strengthened by integrating projects related to specific content areas into the learning process. As suggested here, the theoretical principles from both approaches are to be used according to the specific teaching context needs, curriculum, population, and educational level. In tertiary Costa Rican education, English as foreign language courses generally take a language-oriented approach. Consequently, it is suggested that by merging CLIL and PBL learning principles, a learning framework for fostering the intercultural communicative competence may accrue considerable learning benefits.

Advances in neuroscience are helping to understand how the brain functions and how humans learn. Contributions from research in the field have had significant implications for educational purposes to such an extent that it has motivated the emergence of young/new disciplines such as neuroeducation and cognitive neurolinguistics. Findings have contributed to modifying premises about the impact of neural processes on learning, opening new paths to identifying the mechanisms that support learning and how the brain processes specific skills and abilities in order to know the factors that play a role in such complex processes. For instance, researchers have found that the brain's ability to rewire itself is sustained throughout life, developing new connections that restructure the brain stimuli. Outcomes and connections from neuroscience and cognitive psychology have not only provided insight into the mechanisms that support learning but have also explored the relationship between second/foreign language learning correlations with brain processes shedding some light on how brain structures adapt to and activate with linguistic stimuli (Steinhauer et al., 2009; Roberts et al., 2018; Hennig et al., 2021; Zheng et al., 2020).

Consequently, brain-informed teaching practices can accelerate or derive learning by activating the brain regions involving memory since any kind of learning requires memory (e.g., prefrontal cortex, amygdala, hippocampus, frontal lobes, cerebellum). Learning and memory need the formation of new neural connections (Morris et al., 2006; Roediger & Karpicke, 2005) and in the particular case of language learning, scientists have learned that language activates different parts of the brain, using both hemispheres and other brain structures that involve short- and long-term memory (Schoenemann, 2009; Li et al., 2014; Bialystok, 2007). These observations have profound effects on interpreting what is implied in the process of learning a second/foreign language and suggesting the intricate coevolution and construction of language and the brain in which the cognitive and the social domain interplay for a communicative purpose (Li & Jeong, 2020; Dong & Li, 2014; Filipini & Pedroso de Moraes, 2020). Further interpretations about the brain and language relationship are offered by Schoeneman (2009), who explains that language changes the brain by triggering anatomical variations in its structure:

Because an individual's linguistic ability is a function of (and is constrained by) their own brain circuitry, understanding language evolution (and language itself) ultimately involves understanding how the repeated complex communicative interactions of individuals influences not only cultural change but also biological change...which means the coevolution of brain and language. (p.164)

This clarifies the comprehensive correlation between the brain and language and the impact language has on the brain. In the context of second/foreign language learning, evidence suggests that particular brain structures play an essential role in understanding and generating speech. For

instance, the capacity to process foreign languages has been linked with the enhancement of self-regulation and the ability to cope effectively with situational events (Kleese et al., 2015). Neuroimaging studies have offered evidence reporting differences among bilingual and monolingual brains suggesting that bilingual brains process the environment differently, showing enhanced and stronger functional network activity within the neural circuits that influence cognitive control which has been correlated with efficiency (Della Rosa et al., 2013; Grady et al., 2015; Jeong et al., 2015; Morales et al., 2015).

These variations in the brain have been suggested to occur when there is a communicative intent in speech production (Jeong et al., 2015) and input is promoted in natural learning conditions (Nergis, 2011; Plante et al., 2015). The role of memory is fundamental in the context of a second or foreign language. Ullman and Lovelett (2018) explain that learning, storage, and the use of language depend on procedural memory (implicit and unconscious knowledge) and declarative memory (explicit, conscious knowledge). These memory systems interact and articulate conjointly, requiring repeated input, exposure, and direct, explicit practice to process stimuli. CLIL and PBL learning principles focus on giving the learner doses of novelty, meaningful interactions, purposeful communication with sufficient practice and exposure to the target language by way of a variety of sources and strategies to strengthen language learning and skills development. These methods combine implicit and explicit learning of content, language and culture since learners are exposed to large amounts of input and are forced to produce output during the carrying out of tasks, activities and projects.

### **3.1.1 Learner centeredness**

The combination of CLIL and PBL teaching principles offers multimodal opportunities to activate brain structures that can help meet learning aims by placing particular attention on the learner as a whole. Some important benefits of using these two approaches are those related to the role given to the learner. Considering the learner as the leading actor of the educational activity results in multiple gains (Choi et al., 2019; Kashiwagi & Tomecsek, 2015). In CLIL, research has pointed especially to self-efficacy, autonomy, and self-assessment (Goris et al., 2019; Borowiak, 2019; Maschmeier, 2019; Banegas, 2021). PBL also contributes to enhancing student autonomy by creating products/events and engaging students in collaborative tasks for informational and discussion purposes (Almulla, 2020; Mansur & Alves, 2018). Working on such tasks lead students to discover their potential to interact with content through projects relying on principles of freedom and choice. PBL also empowers them to explore their previous knowledge and trust their peers by sharing knowledge in the pursuit of a common goal (task or project). The more the students engage in the task/project, the more agency, autonomy, and sense of responsibility for their own progress and process they can develop. In a learner-centered methodology of CLIL and PBL, students are prompted to actively make use of the content or information using the target language while making sense of both language and content and relying on learner-learner interaction.

A combination of both methods provides space for autonomous learning where learners assume responsibilities for their learning. Meaningful interactions incite students' autonomy among themselves and even within the community. This results in the development of habits and the acquisition of strategies for lifelong learning since CLIL and PBL help students become autonomous by self-directing their learning goals. Furthermore, merging these two approaches creates the conditions to socialize by adding novelty to the units, content, product, or projects to be undertaken, thus enhancing, as neuroscience has suggested, the social domains in the brain that

correlate with memory. The principle of learner-centered instruction demands a learning framework that is dynamic and enjoyable (the teacher, material, learning activities), seeking a narrative of authenticity and active learning. As these two models advocate learner-centeredness, both serve to organize a classroom experience based on experiential language acquisition and learning with sufficient emphasis on using the target language to convey purposeful messages and meanings.

### **3.1.2 Language and Purposeful Communication**

Neurolinguistic research has also provided indicators for promoting and acquiring communicative skills in foreign/second language contexts and pointed out the advantages of creating opportunities for learners to use the target language spontaneously and naturally with a direct communicative and practical purpose along with an explicit understanding of how the language works, its rules, forms, and vocabulary results in observable learners' skills development (Netten & Germain, 2012). Earlier studies were prompt to advise on the role that the limbic system plays in second/foreign classrooms by emphasizing the need to design tasks that trigger learners' need to communicate (Paradis, 1994). In the context of second/foreign language development, "learners need varied opportunities to produce language" (Musumeci, 1996, p. 314) within meaningful and purposeful contexts. The contributions of CLIL and PBL learning principles is that they directly address those communicative drives by targeting a language pedagogy intertwined with authentic tasks, communicative ends, active involvement, and real language use in realistic contexts where language becomes a vehicle to perform, learn, and work content aiming at critical competence development.

In this process, the discovery of the mirror neuron has also revealed the fundamental effect that social interactions have on language learning (Pulvermüller, 2018). The mirror neuron has been particularly linked to how the brain access, classifies, processes, and tags information from visual stimuli to form a kind of symbolic and intentional reference from what is seen. That means that visually collected information resonates with the individual who unconsciously understands and gets the intentions associated with the perceived actions.

Studies have found CLIL to favorably affect fluency and authentic communication (Goris et al., 2019). Equally, PBL's foundations are experiential, which elicits pedagogical drives and principles that support the engagement of learners in collaborative, purposeful, and real communication (Haines, 1989; Levine, 2004). Blending tasks under a hybrid model of CLIL and PLB principles gives educators criteria to sustain an informed pedagogical mediation thus engaging learners in an ongoing learning process based on meaning negotiation, meaning construction, and genuine language use.

The regular use of language within comprehensible language forms creates the required neuronal pathways for natural oral communication and successful language learning (Paradis, 2009). This means that the use language with a purpose is essential to develop a system for effective communicative interactions. Learners' interactions in the EFL context are also relevant to the activation of brain structures since human brains are highly social and the language learning experience is also socially constructed when processing meaning with others (Li & Jeong, 2020). In both methodologies the communicative objective is not simplistically limited to the act of training to sustain a conversation. The CLIL approach uses language to acquire content knowledge while PBL confers language learning relevance through authentic and constructive tasks designed a particular objective. That is to say, language in PBL is used progressively along with the process

of inquiry on a community or contextual basis in order to attain a goal, which is materialized in the performance of the final task. Both CLIL and PBL pursue genuine language use in which authentic language activities motivate learners to meet various communicative functions (Feddermann et al., 2021; Llinares & Pastrana, 2013; Martínez-Agudo, 2019; Haines, 1989; Levine, 2004).

In CLIL language is learned and practiced based on the idea of functionality. According to Coyle et al. (2007) in CLIL language meets three purposes since it focuses on the language of learning (the language needed to access the body of content), the language for learning (the language that grants functionality), and the language through learning (the language acquired). Language is used as a vehicle to serve multiple purposes (Marsh & Frigols, 2012), thus enhancing communication derived from working these three different vertices. In this light, regarding language acquisition/learning, a concurrent beneficial relationship is noticed between PBL and CLIL. For example, oral delivery and practice are a constant in both models since learners get various invitations to improve and use the target language differently.

Working with projects and meaningful tasks focused on relevant content suggests a suitable course of action to facilitate a considerable number of opportunities for the students to receive rich, varied, and interesting input to support output and sustained language production in a great variety of themes. In the PBL learning experience, students work through projects to nurture their knowledge and real-life communicative and intellectual skills thanks to negotiation and decision making. According to Thomas (2000), PBL allows learners to be interested in topics or ideas, to train their opinions while learning to negotiate, thus contributing to language development in several ways during the project stages. In this model, all language skills are exercised and enhanced, including vocabulary and structures (Stoller, 2006). For PBL, balance between the process and the product is important to make sure that attention is directed to the four skills and



that fluency and accuracy are considered throughout the project. Moreover, studies reveal that CLIL has proven to favorably affect receptive skills, vocabulary, fluency, and morphology while other language areas are less affected, such as syntax, writing, pragmatics, and pronunciation (Dalton-Puffer & Smit, 2007).

Implementing a combination of both approaches would mean varied task opportunities to meet language challenges and gain communication efficacy in the target language. Interactions within an organized language learning experience based on a hybrid approach contribute to fostering students' acquisition of grammar forms, vocabulary, sentence structure, fluency, pronunciation, and pragmatic competence by accommodating communication gaps, building understanding, and adjusting acquired notions. Then, a combination of CLIL and PBL can potentially improve learners' productive articulateness, fluency, and accuracy (Yufrizal et al., 2017). Marsh and Frigols (2012) state that language appropriateness is vital to meet the linguistic demands of content because students are encouraged to use the language while adjusting language domains. PBL learners need support and guidance for the emergent linguistic requirements of language that will be encountered during tasks, activities, and processes. In PBL problematic language areas are addressed to prepare students to meet language challenges and are accompanied along the way. In that way, the combination can favor and accelerate the learning of different kinds of learners, the ones who focus on how language forms and those who would incline toward language meaning (Dale & Tanner, 2012). Thus, it can be supportive when students have different levels of proficiency, different learning styles, and ability levels.

Both learning approaches have a theoretical framework that support a holistic role of language linked to various learning gains, but learners require a friendly environment to receive, process, understand and produce language. This seems to be related to the adjoined principles of

each model. Language learning and language use through CLIL and PBL communicative principles is tremendously appealing in the field of language learning/acquisition due its focus on know-how and know-why. A combined framework may help promote real, consequential outcomes toward developing communicative skills adapted to particular purposes and goals. Apart from these linguistic and communicative achievements, the combination of PBL and CLIL provides an integral framework for fostering learners' diverse developmental stages (Diez-Olmedo, 2020) and managing content to generate teaching and learning effectiveness.

### **3.1.3 Content**

CLIL is a content-driven approach, where content relates to the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and curriculum-related elements. This advancement is also reflected in learners' performance when portraying their own interpretations and construction of knowledge from what is absorbed from stimulus and the environment. In CLIL, outcomes are not exclusively connected to the level of engagement in communication and participation in the learning tasks since students are motivated to learn content as food for thought. As outlined by Eslami and Garver (2013),

Teachers cannot assume that because a student can speak with them in English also means that they can understand and perform at the same content level [ . . . ] by focusing solely on linguistic needs English language learners do not receive the content-area instruction they need. (p. 2)

Content in CLIL can be treated as subject objectives or theme-based in which language, content, context, and culture are inextricably connected. As previously mentioned, CLIL learners

have the opportunity to access a cross-curricular approach to knowledge constructed through the 4Cs framework: context, communication, content, culture, and cognition (Coyle et al., 2007; MacGregor, 2016). From this sustained connection, the design of the learning experience should be carefully planned to balance those domains in concordance with the level of achievement demonstrated by learners.

Project based learning pedagogy deals with content in multiple practical, useful, and real ways by focusing on the learner's active cognitive involvement in addressing and solving problems or in creating products, in collaboration with peers and the educator, which directly relate to content processing, reflection, creation, and active participation. PBL has shown efficacy in helping learners achieve learning objectives, get deeper content understanding, apply knowledge, and improve academic performance. This is related to the quality of time devoted to establishing connections through familiar sources of information, content exposure and the input examined through their observations, questions, and independent inquiry. Project activities and the whole process conducted take on what Krashen (1985) believed to be an important factor in second language acquisition, the comprehensible input. For instance, with projects input is received through receptive skills, reading or listening, elicited with sufficient support from the educator for students to be able to make sense of it. Aside from this, content is a constant source of learning in PBL. Throughout the process, learners acquire new vocabulary and redefine ideas or find themselves enhancing and expanding their particular views around themes.

In terms of CLIL, Dale and Tanner (2012) claim that integrating content and language brings various benefits to English language classes that match those related to PBL. CLIL can benefit from PBL in approaching more direct attention to the what, why, and how of content-based learning of tasks and projects, motivated directly by learners' interests and needs so that content material can also be developed through the process of conducting projects. Content in both models

is structured around contextual real-life scenarios and knowledge is acquired through content research, interdisciplinary areas, negotiation, and collaboration (Sánchez-Palacios, 2017). Moreover, content is worked on and processed through flexible content-driven tasks (Marsh & Frigols, 2012). It seems that integrating both approaches for experiential language acquisition and language learning would signify advances in using language to process and convey messages and meanings strengthening pragmatic competence. It appears that language stands on content and content reinforces language skills advancement through meaningful, interactive, communicative, and constant exposure to the foreign language (Lialikhova, 2019; Pérez Cañado, 2018).

Content in CLIL and PBL relate in the sense that content is used with clear educational aims seeking learners' advancement in knowledge construction and skills development in connection to the curriculum-related elements to be applied in their immediate reality (Pascual Peña, et al., 2017). This kind of advancement is also replicated in learners' personal growth and interpretations of content input in connection to the world dynamics since content is structured around real-life issues, which, at the same time, contributes to successfully maintain, retain, and recall content information (Ravitz, 2010). As a result, higher and sustained levels of language learning engagement, content understanding, and knowledge retention are accomplished.

### **3.1.4 Cognition**

Cognition is understood as a mental and thought process by which knowledge is gained, retained, and used, and for this reason it is considered a cornerstone dimension in the learning process. The process of learning has traditionally been theorized to be comprised of three stages: encoding, storage, and retrieval ( Craik & Lockhart, 1972; Tulving & Bower, 1975; Gilbert et al., 2021). Encoding is the initial exposure, register or learning of the information. Storage denotes the

process of preserving the information through time and retrieval is related to the act of consciously accessing the stored information to fulfil a need. Helping learners to effectively comply with the process of learning a second/foreign language should consider multidivergent and interesting strategies that can have a positive effect on memory encoding, retention, and retrieval. Challenging and cognitive demanding tasks facilitated through different sensory (auditory and visual) input contribute to activating learning though processes that can sustain language skills development in both the first and second language learning (Rastelli, 2018). In order to assure relevance, these kinds of tasks need to be grounded in social interactions to augment recall and prolonged long-term retention (Li & Jeong, 2020). Therefore, fostering cognitive skills is a basic priority for any curriculum and should become an educational goal in the context of the 21st century. Knowledge and skills of a foreign language will not have space to develop if consistent cognitive activation opportunities are not offered. Therefore, engaging students in challenging cognitive tasks to foster metacognitive skills is essential.

Chomsky (2006) advocates that language is a system of interrelated cognitive structures, an organ of the mind. Chomsky's view of language evokes the complex design of thought, language, and mind. Taking this into consideration, holistic approaches that explore the cognitive domain can bring depth to the learning experience. The approaches of CLIL and PBL presented before consider those axioms. The CLIL framework establishes a link between language, thinking, and understanding. Similarly, PBL learners undergo a thoughtful process in which their cognitive skills are activated, thus promoting a higher level of thinking. Kraft (2000) contends that the PBL model leads learners to in-depth understanding while undertaking projects and socializing with a variety of ideas and statements (Fajar et al., 2020).

In the learning process, students develop autonomy and collaborative skills through classroom activities that require researching, designing, planning, collecting, negotiating, discovering, proposing, solving, reasoning and exercising critical and creative thinking skills by exploring issues and solutions in cooperative modes (Aristizabal, 2012; Younis et al., 2021; Guo et al., 2020). In groups, students frequently often benefit from group cohesion, getting useful discernments, and perspectives about their partners/members' ideas and feelings (Lobczowski et al., 2021). This collective learning enhances the ability to reflect and shape their own viewpoints and conclusions.

Developing higher-level cognitive skills within this framework increases students' capability to apply their learning to real-world contexts (Thomas, 2000; Aránguiz et al., 2020; Khataibeh, 2021). Providing meaning and space for thinking and thought processing is fundamentally important for learners to foster their cognitive skills (e.g., comprehension, retention, learning how to learn, analysis, application). Solomon (2003) claims that, through teacher guidance, students “gather evidence from a variety of sources to synthesize, analyze and derive knowledge from it” (p. 20). According to Coyle et al. (2010), cognition in CLIL is vital to addressing content because it provides the basis for advancement in comprehension and understanding of both language and content. CLIL learners have shown high proficiency levels in interpretation, abstract thinking, concept formulation and awareness, critical thinking, and memorization abilities.

The CLIL approach suggests to use as a guide Bloom's (Bloom et al., 1956) taxonomy of educational objectives or its revised version by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) for designing and offering effective instructional units in order to perform the six cognitive actions for knowledge acquisition organized from simple to complex or from lower-order to higher-order thinking or from

concrete to structured cognitive tasks. Any of those taxonomies may help learners clarify what to do with the content regarding remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating.

According to Cronirno and Inesti (2019), data driven activities support CLIL language learning since they contribute to language skills development and thinking skills stimulation. Designing opportunities for learners to get involved in their own explorative and reasoning goals also requires regulatory skills to allow them to self-assess their advancements, limitations, or struggles (Efklides, 2006) in order to support those cognitive processes. The educator is a great source of support for the materialization of that outcome. For that reason, “it is extremely important to invest in action plans that sustain an experienced and trained teaching force that knows when and how to develop thinking skills” (Campillo-Ferrer et al., 2020 p.6).

Furthermore, Dalton-Puffer (2013) envisioned an alternative model of language cognition oriented to a “zone of convergence between content and language pedagogies” (p. 216). The model was categorized into classifying, defining, describing, evaluating, explaining, exploring, and reporting. The argument around the alternative lies in the notion that cognition is not merely engaged in during communication but also when language is used. This indicates that the mental process undergone when constructing the idea intended to be conveyed demands considerable cognitive effort. During such mental activity of thought and speech process, language conceptualizations occur (Swain & Lapkin, 2013, p. 105). As illustrated in Table 3, the cognitive processes are related both to aspects of the language used as well as to content and knowledge. Dalton-Puffer’s (2013) formulation of cognitive discourse function (CDF) has been comprised as cognitive intentions into seven communicative, cognitive-linked functions, as observed in Table 3.

**Table 3** *Seven Cognitive Discourse Functions*

Communicative intention	Label
I tell you how we can cut up the world according to certain ideas.	Classify
I tell you about the extension of this object of specialist knowledge.	Define
I tell you details of what can be seen (also metaphorically)	Describe
I tell you what my position	Evaluate
I give you reasons for and tell you causes of X	Explain
I tell you something potential	Explore
I tell you about something external to our context	Report

*Source:* Dalton-Puffer, 2013, p. 234.

CLIL and PBL intensify the cognitive processes towards raising content awareness and scaffolding, nurturing higher and lower thinking skills through the various content tasks and project activities. The combination of these functions can help to outline content and language activities for a more focused and delimited integration in order to activate cognitive related skills. This may be done by resorting to variants of sources, such as the language itself, projects, the community, content, and culture complemented as well as by using Bloom's taxonomy reach diverse cognitive activation. CLIL and PBL foster skills essential to the learner's integral development (Plaza-Vidal, 2020) because they are required to contribute to the further advancement of students' learning and acquisition.

### **3.1.5 Context**

The combination of PBL and CLIL principles provides an enriched learning environment with a number of possibilities to foster language learning and acquisition while training learners to develop competences and skills needed to adapt, respond, participate, and interrelate in modern



societies. Both models conceive language learning as holistic, flexible, authentic, and multi-developmental placing the learner as an integral individual with the potential to grow and develop in key areas of life and work. The context in which an educational process takes place –understood as the variables and conditions that tend to permeate formative objectives– is critical in any learning experience. Moreover, it can be broadened significantly from the specific conditions outside the educational scopes by implementing a CLIL and PBL approach. The field of language education can be highly supported and nurtured by providing a meaningful context (Krashen, 1985), since language operates through context (Lier, 1996), which allows language to construct meaning. In light of this reference, CLIL-based units claim to portray a recognized connection between language learning and context to accommodate learners with a pertinent and realistic anchor between content and language while seeking for meaningful and natural interactions throughout real-world relevance in questions, tasks, and challenges to facilitate practical knowledge (Klimova, 2012). Project activities that resemble that objective also provide a meaningful context to foster the acquisition of the target language and culture. In CLIL, thinking skills like analyzing, reflecting, and evaluating abstract solutions to specific issues intermingle content and context (Coyle et al., 2010).

Similarly, PBL highlights the importance of the context in which students are expected to become active participants who are involved in their immediate reality. In PBL, learners are explicitly encouraged to identify, propose, solve, or approach specific context-related issues, concerns, or problems. The evidence available suggests that PBL is an instructional model that generates connections between the context and the learning experience. In the case of a foreign language, the target language can be used due to contextualized contact or by observing the community. Consequently, learners' roles are reconstructed by having students become managers of their learning process, which requires educators to design and plan the instruction to address

different levels of complexity by acknowledging learners' drives, questions, needs, and interests for effective student involvement.

Context is highly pondered in the PBL model because it engages learners in projects outside the classroom where they can authentically explore connections, interactions, and phenomena from real-life situations to concretely enrich the learning experience in the classroom. PBL is favorable to having students contribute to their community and fulfill a sense of purpose as well. Projects use a model that resembles real-world dynamics thus promoting learning objectives of practicality, authenticity, and meaningfulness (Railsback, 2002; Kettanun, 2015; Malkova & Kiselyova, 2014; Pan et al., 2021; Potvin et al., 2021). Connections with context, reality and community contributes to, as John Dewey advocates for, experiential learning and reflection on experience. This kind of experience serves to build communities of practice between all the participants of the learning process and the community members (Wenger, 1998).

Therefore, the symbiosis here can be built by having CLIL-based units supplementing classroom dynamism when addressing context-based projects. That is to say, by organizing units in which content is learned through contextualized projects thus maximizing the role adjoined to context. The combination of CLIL and PBL can be advantageous if explicit genuine tasks help students establish a connection with the community to experiment and put into practice knowledge, language, and skills such as collaboration, project planning, decision making, and problem-solving while fostering social skills required to interrelate in real-life situations.

CLIL and PBL in the context of foreign language learning respond to what modern societies and learners need and demand in terms of the current times, technological revolution, key knowledge, skills, competences, and professional training. A modern current of initiatives has placed a deliberate emphasis on the kind of skills required in the workplace framed in actual

economic dynamics. For example, Partnership for twenty-first century skills (2015) has contemplated some skills as requirements for interacting and fitting in today's world fluctuations such as learning and innovation; critical thinking and problem solving; creativity, innovation and collaboration; culture and communication. These skills are linked to ideas of productivity, knowledge advance, and active collective work expected to be integrated in educational curriculums across the globe to facilitate career readiness, and professional and personal development. Oudeweetering and Voogt (2018) have identified six dimensions to adapt classroom work to 21st century competences: “digital literacy, innovative thinking, critical thinking and communication, (digital) citizenship, self-regulated learning and (computer supported) collaboration” (p. 130). It is suggested that future employees should learn how to learn and accommodate their educational traits to the world changes and that initial developments of such qualities must begin in educational settings and continue to develop as part of a lifelong learning habit or permanent self-learning.

Recalibrating certain aims when educating the future workforce would mean advances preparing for the global shift and in narrowing the gaps between classroom work and the real world (Kelley & Knowles, 2016; van Laar, 2020; Stehle & Peters-Burton, 2019). Holistic and constructivist pedagogical and methodological adaptations and modifications need to be considered to include these aims in the curriculum. PBL and CLIL as constructivist pedagogies respond positively to the objective of training for the 21st century competences. For example, PBL operates through inquiry and collaborative project creation process in which learners are driven to build up knowledge, digital literacy, problem solving, thinking and communicative skills (Bell, 2010; Yulhendri et al., 2021). Similarly, CLIL is based on the increasing need to train resourceful and skilled students for the marketplace and for life in general. Students are motivated to use a

foreign/second language to learn about various subjects, themes, or issues leveraging language and content skills advancement. In this sense, CLIL learners are educated to become life-long learners trained for internationalization and equipped with practical skills, and foreign/second language cognitive, communicative, and cultural capabilities (Cummins, 2000; Marsh, 2012; Nieto, 2016; Muñoz-Benito et al., 2020; Zanoni, 2021).

The symbiosis of CLIL and PBL principles may upgrade the pragmatic idea of training to adopt lifelong learning skills and competitive skills for the 21st century for the present and the future requirements in more flexible and responsive learning systems. Moreover, with this framework students are trained integrally on teamwork, problem-solving, research, time management, information synthesizing, digital literacy, and creative and critical thinking. CLIL and PBL can cultivate, through varied content tasks, a symbiosis to enable learners to construct knowledge and acquire key competences such as intercultural communicative competence, which may contribute to fostering and improving the acquisition of the target language by engaging students in communicative tasks where culture finds a niche as well. CLIL and PBL in combination may better prepare students for future employment in the context of globalization and the changing global and local scenarios but, most importantly, can potentially educate learners to become active citizens who articulate issues that require attention and action in their context or community by using effective communicative habits.

### **3.1.6 Culture**

A symbiosis of foreign/second language teaching methods can mean a deliberate instrumental use to achieve intercultural communicative competence objectives while strengthening the process of language learning and acquisition. Many language-driven approaches

have been clear to construe the need to address the cultural component in language education for many decades now. The cultural domain in the context of EFL refers to constructing intercultural knowledge and understanding for effective intercultural communicative skills and a wider cultural context to understand local and foreign frames of references. A combination of CLIL/PBL models places culture as a core principle that directs the language teaching and learning. The first does it by placing the component of culture as a pivotal dimension within the model underpinnings while PBL implicitly integrates the community within the classroom dynamics. The debate, though, hinges on what, how, and why do it since the culture domain has been found to be problematic and complex to integrate withing the EFL language context.

Incorporating culture needs to be done regularly and with the aim to explore the realistic possibilities to adapt the curriculum explicitly and implicitly to the demands and axioms of this critical component for learners to be able to enhance communication efficacy in a framework of intercultural encounters. The culture dimension is addressed in CLIL through contextualized themes and the 4Cs Syllabus contributes to a certain extent to address the emergent questions of what, how, and why of its integration. However, the stated cultural dimension in CLIL constitutes a pillar that is still in need of reinforcement for both explicit and implicit teaching and research (Porto, 2018; Cucchi, 2021; Gómez, 2020). A good way of including the intercultural dimension in the EFL classroom, as proposed in this research, is to approach this dimension under the theoretical and practical framework presented by Byram (1997, 2020). As the intercultural domain is suggested to open more opportunities for exploring culture in its broad intercultural nature, this framework may offer a structured platform to cultivate learners' intercultural communicative competence and its influencing factors, knowledge, attitude, skills, and critical cultural awareness. To facilitate ICC in the classroom, learning opportunities need to be practical, authentic, and flexible, but they also need to be set up under a hybrid approach of learning principles to offer the

required keys to effective communication. A combination of CLIL and PBL will provide the opportunity to implement Byram's framework to teach the intercultural dimensions in a natural, real-life context.

### **3.1.7 Affective Domain**

CLIL and PBL in a merged scenario seem to offer enough collaborative opportunities for learners to construct knowledge, reinforce social relationships, cooperate within the community, acquire the target language in natural-like manners and experience positive learning. In PBL students learn through projects, which contributes to experiential learning, thus motivating learners to learn and produce with granted freedom. This classroom practice enhances motivation and personal competences that support language learning (Malkova & Kiselyova, 2014). Moreover, since projects are connected to their interests, drives, and needs, PBL dramatically amplifies learners' self-confidence, enjoyment, intrinsic motivation (Dörnyei, 1994), and positive reinforcement. Students perceive the positive effects of PBL in their collaboration and active participation associated with the project process where learning is categorized as active, entertaining, and motivational (Sánchez-García & Pavón-Vázquez, 2021).

CLIL-like lessons are also related to students' positive attitudes and higher levels motivation toward learning. Lasagabaster (2011) points out that the students enjoying a CLIL experience are significantly more enthusiastic, empowered, and confident after achieving and completing their academic tasks. Generally, it has been observed that CLIL experiences in the classroom can impact the process by enhancing the affective dimension (Lasagabaster, 2008) and developing a more positive attitude towards the methodology (Hartiala, 2000). In fact, they can nurture a feel-good attitude among the students (Marsh, 2000) since, however modest the

proficiency level attained may be, eventually it may positively affect the students' desire to learn and develop their language competence. PBL and CLIL are believed to have positive effects on learning English as a foreign language including the affective dimension.

The following table highlights core learning principles adjoined to each of the models in fundamental components that play a role in pursuing successful language learning experiences.

**Table 4** *CLIL and PBL Symbiosis*

<b>Key Components</b>	<b>CLIL</b>	<b>PBL</b>
Learning Principles and Notions	4Cs model and language triptych Deep learning Second language acquisition theories	Experiential Learning (Learning by doing) Active Learning Constructivism through the project process
Learner	Learner-centered	Learner-centered
Teacher	Facilitator, guide	Facilitator, mentor
Learning experience	Student-centered tasks Knowledge construction Direct teaching Technology use Cross-curricular and interdisciplinary Constant interaction. Increases motivation, autonomy, and cooperation Authentic and active learning Learning how to learn Multiple focus Integrated learning	Increases academic achievement Students understand, apply, and retain information. How to learn is emphasized Experiential and goal-oriented atmosphere The project process is explored from different perspectives Inquiry sparks curiosity and ongoing reflection. Authentic experience Increased motivation and personal growth. Community connection Interactive learning Long-term learning and retention
Context	Context supports real world connection Natural language acquisition and communication	Context relates to community engagement

	Training for job internationalization	Context is learners' primary source of knowledge Projects connect to the real world.
Culture	The cultural dimension is essential. Raises intercultural understanding native and target language and cultures are considered Awareness of content and language as a contribution to citizenship	Implicit culture Community involvement Knowledge and understanding of other cultures
Language	Foreign language is fostered through content. Language is functional Language acquisition occurs naturally. Language learning becomes concrete. Production and output expected Reading, listening, vocabulary is enhanced Various communicative tasks Meaning rather than form is emphasized	It is used in varied ways for real-life purposes. Listening, speaking, reading, writing, and vocabulary are improved Language is functional. Language studies for linguistic demands. Students are driven to share findings Comprehensible input
Communication	Effective communication	Purposely communication
Cognition	Promotes cognitive effort—scaffolding.	Stimulates creativity and critical thinking
Content	A cross-curricular approach to knowledge Concepts are instructed via a foreign language interdisciplinary content Comprehension of various concepts Content is viewed through diverse standpoints	Content is involved in the project Learning consolidation The content topic is needed for meaningful understanding and reflection
Competences and skills	21st-century skills Critical thinking Thinking skills: higher and lower Problem-solving skills Interpersonal skills Cultural awareness and citizenship Digital competence Skills for future employment. Deal with challenges Learning to learn independence Cooperative and collaborative skills	Decision making, innovation Creative and critical thinking Curiosity, reflection, autonomy Deal with challenges, questioning, and problems. Inquiry and research skills Cooperative and collaborative skills Higher order thinking skills Decision-making and leadership qualities. Interpersonal and social skills Digital competence
Assessment	Formative and summative assessment	Formative and holistic assessment



		Group, peer, and self-assessment
Teaching ICC	Comprises the culture component	Projects are community-driven

*Source:* The Author based on Coyle et al., 2010; Marsh & Frigols, 2012; Stoller, 2006; Fried-Booth, 2002; Thomas, 1991; Morsund, 2002.

Nowadays it is crucial to implement methods that take into account all the elements involved in learning in general and in language learning in particular. When exploring the potentialities of CLIL and PBL, it is noticeable that both attempt to provide novelty and significance to the learning experience. Incorporating their principles can be suitable to structure a workable approach of varied learning tasks that may result in observable learners' development in knowledge, skills, attitudes, language, and intercultural. The combined CLIL and PBL framework provides a dynamic, engaging learning experience in the context of language learning that can be connected implicitly and explicitly through a direct teaching style that seeks learning efficiency in a triad of components: language, content, and intercultural communicative competence. These two approaches may serve to contextualize units for foreign language teaching and learning and provide learners with real possibilities of using the target language while moving language learning to a more committed compromise toward intercultural communicative competence and other key functional skills required for this century's transformations. Achieving this kind of professional profile requires the introduction and integration of the intercultural dimension, acknowledged as a lifelong process that takes time, practice, reflection, and regular exposure. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Note: An article covering some sections on this topic was published as part of this thesis: Cubero, K. (2021). Theoretical Proposal: Exploring the symbiosis of CLIL and PBL to foster an intercultural learning experience in EFL. *DEDiCA. REVISTA DE EDUCAÇÃO E HUMANIDADES*, 19, 267-288. ISSN: 2182-018X

### **3.2 ICC within the CLIL-PBL Framework**

Combining CLIL and PBL principles contribute to setting a learning situation to acquire language and authentic knowledge in which educators act as significant mentors. These two models intersect to achieve various learning objectives (Sánchez-García & Pavón-Vázquez, 2021; Aziza, 2017), posing a singular opportunity to infuse intercultural communicative competence into the learning experience as instrumental to the attainment of curriculum goals, global competences, and citizenship while also looking at the learning experience in terms of language, communication, content, context, cognition, and interculturality. A combined approach allows a repertoire of activities to boost students' development of critical cultural awareness intercultural and language skills in which language learners are to become active, reflective, and sympathetic as they eclectically advance in crucial learning goals (Cubero-Vásquez, 2019). Critical cultural reflections can be stimulating for students when mediated by teaching strategies that enhance students' autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Vieluf & Göbel, 2019).

To attain these ambitious objectives, learning about the intercultural component should be presented explicitly and implicitly, offering students opportunities to reconnect and rediscover their native culture and the multiple intercultural lenses to life. Teaching practices under the eclectic use of content, language, and project tasks suit the learning purpose of fostering ICC in the foreign language context. Holistically, language education is to be viewed integrally as transformative learning that can favor humanity, revindicating the right to a healthy coexistence and global collaboration (Cubero-Vásquez, 2020). Educating in those areas suits the purpose of contributing to building peaceful societies by forming solidary, active, reflective, and understanding citizens. Postulating a dynamic learning environment that supports learners' intercultural competence relies

on incidental learning emergent under an eclectic pedagogy where teachers and students work together with a common purpose and interest, learning from one another and collaborating to seek a transformation, first of the individual and then collectively as part of a community and the world. In a specific instructional view, the process of designing a pedagogical mediation to introduce an intercultural language experience in English as a foreign language is a journey that demands language educators' creativity, disposition, and training.

The experience of the author in teaching English for more than 15 years has sparked the need to join the increasing movement towards shifting language pedagogy for a more holistic view of language teaching. A holistic view of teaching should not be conceived as rigid or structured. As the learning process involves individuals, a number of factors need to be considered throughout the process. As pointed out earlier in this dissertation, the demands of modern societies require learners to be able to interplay effectively in a multicultural and diverse world where differences in lifestyles and world views influence communicative interactions. In order to ensure these interactions sustained via a lingua franca (English) are fruitful, language learners need to take part in a learning environment that triggers much more than the language itself.

In this sense, advocating for a hybrid approach to mediate foreign/second language learning intends to open a discussion and explore the possible learning opportunities that learners and educators can obtain from an approach that serves the demands and requests of societies in terms of language, skills, competences, and knowledge. A recurrent remark in educational reports supports the urgency to propose pedagogical models and manifestos that incorporate the deemed crucial 21st-century skills into the learning process to enable students with tools to face the complexity of the modern world (Kennedy & Sundberg, 2020; Haug & Mork, 2021). Besides, renowned, and influential organizations around the globe such as UNESCO, OECD, UN, ICDO

have recognized the impact that fostering 21st century competences to communicate and collaborate interculturally has on students' advancement.

A combined approach of teaching and learning principles from CLIL and PBL provides educators with a route to delineate a new perspective of what it means to use the language to learn and what it takes to learn the language seeking to achieve ambitious objectives for developing students' intercultural communicative competence. This study has theorized that both models place the learner as the center of the learning experience under constructivist perspectives and purposeful communicative intentions, thus setting an ideal learning environment. The core principles of each model rely on functional traits that favor the quality of language instruction. The combination of these models prepares the arena for learners to explore their capabilities in a wide range of domains: linguistic, communicative, cultural, cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral.

Since language and culture embody a corpus of many complex domains, efforts to address them eclectically and systematically on a supported theoretical and empirical methodological axis are to be made to achieve positive outcomes and progression within the foreign language classroom that integrates the four language skills. Effective communication in a foreign/ second language involves different factors and requires cognitive processes to progress, which cannot be fully attained without working on the intercultural competence.

Within this hybrid framework, language is used to explore content, culture, and the language itself. The ICC dimensions (knowledge, attitudes, skills, behaviors, and culture criticality) intertwine to set the grounds for successful participatory intercultural dialogue and engagements, contributing as well to building the basis for educating the intercultural citizen (Byram, 2020; Porto, 2021). Preparation in intercultural competence entails learners a motive to communicate and engage in intercultural contexts confidently and empathically as cultural

participants (Byram et al., 2002; Bennett, 2009; Gregersen-Hermans, 2017). Besides, the value placed on developing the intercultural competence within the foreign/second language context relies on enabling learners to explore beyond their frames of reference and immediate familiar notions inciting curiosity towards cultural diversity and life's tapestry of pluralistic views and ways.

To achieve these intercultural-language goals in FL/SL contexts, the language educator plays a crucial role in planning the teaching and learning logistics to accomplish the task. To do so, teachers are required to broaden their personal and professional learning views in order to foster intercultural learning in their classrooms (Byram, 2020), reevaluating their language teaching methods (Tolosa et al., 2018) and questioning their concepts and interpretations of culture and interculturality in the classroom. This implies rectifying and adjusting previous notions of language teaching and learning in order to take a transformational stance that influences both the teacher and the learner. Peiser (2015) has pointed out that a reconceptualization of language as a tool for intercultural instruction is difficult to do in practice. Therefore, language educators need to anchor their teaching beliefs on new approaches and find support to build their self-efficacy to facilitate intercultural language classroom activities (Romijn et al., 2020). Implementing a hybrid approach to mediate intercultural learning is theorized to be a meaningful classroom experience for both teachers and students. It allows a reconceptualization of foreign/second language teaching so as to ponder and allocate learning factors related to culture and context within the classroom narrative. Teaching dynamics, learning notions, participants interactions (teacher-student and student-student) are meant to be changed to attain the most benefits for learners as future professionals and intercultural communicators through a lingua franca.

PBL and CLIL can empower learners to acknowledge the relationship between language and culture in the learning process. Foreign language learners can academically profit from comprehensive knowledge concerning target and home cultures through input from varied contextualized resources and material carefully selected by the teacher in order to nurture intercultural communication, sensitivity, awareness, and a more realistic sense of the world. (Cubero-Vásquez, 2019; Cubero-Vásquez, 2021; González-Rodríguez & Borham-Puyal, 2012; Corino & Onesti, 2019; Mahan, 2020). As experts have recognized, this goal is not simple to achieve. The road to studying this dimension in the language classroom must be first informed as a lifelong learning process that requires following a line of work. Byram contends that

aside from presenting facts, information, or approximations toward cultures, an emphasis should be driven to a method that prepares learners for encounters with foreign cultural practices, beliefs, and social identities such complexity requires learners to undertake analysis, reflection, and a comparative approach. (Byram, 1997, p. 20)

These regular intercultural approximations enable students to address crucial communicative issues in the foreign language and learn strategies to respond to the number of challenges that may arise in standard conversations with culturally different people or even with members of a shared culture. Learners need to know how hidden cultural codes operate within certain groups to adopt the tools to address them during potential communicative acts.

The combination of CLIL and PBL may increase the chances of achieving learning objectives. A CLIL & PBL model can naturally integrate the intercultural dimension. CLIL pursues to build up and raise intercultural awareness and cultures exploration through content and language

by theoretically proposing the culture dimension through the study of the self and the other as fundamental to developing intercultural attitudes, understanding, and citizenship (Byram et al., 2002; Coyle et al., 2010; Holliday et al., 2010). According to Koro (2018), CLIL makes an important contribution to learners' intercultural awareness through the use of cultural content throughout the language instruction. From this perspective, CLIL explicitly promotes intercultural connections through inquiry and reflective tasks on the values, traditions, and behaviors of the target culture. Cultural differences are brought to the front by acknowledging a multicultural context where learners are seen as cultural individuals who provide learning material. The varied content themes and topics embedded in culture allow the establishment of classroom practices to study, visit and revisit cultural perspectives, standpoints, and life approaches stepping towards students' ICC advancement.

As for PBL, projects are driven by real-world connections exhibiting by default contact with the community and reality; (Beckett & Slater, 2005; Stoller, 2006; Butler & Christofili, 2014; Guo et al., 2020; Kettanun, 2015). Therefore, both explicit and implicit culture introduction can occur by examining their society and surroundings while making students participants in collaborative learning via inquiry and the creation of a product (Pan et al., 2019) under a classroom environment of sufficient autonomy and collaborative efforts. Cohesive group work facilitates learning from one another while directing action and energies to attain a common academic goal worked through a foreign language, thus motivating students to be more independent and active thinkers.

The community-based experiences gained in PBL through the study of home and target cultural aspects such as history, practices, stories, norms, values, world vision, and symbols contributes to foster student ICC. The use of contextualized, adapted, authentic, or digital culture-

rich content material are means to rediscover and acknowledge one's own identity, beliefs, and system of values. Mikulec and Miller (2011) remark that projects implemented within the classroom are plausible to stimulate communication in many different ways. Stimulating discussions, conversation, and perceptions exchange activate students' reflective skills and knowledge of various topics, including those related to home and foreign cultures. Gómez-Parra (2020) suggests that the intentional planning of intercultural exchanges, narratives, and debates on the basis of healthy and close interaction and communication between teachers and students promotes intercultural learning inside the classroom.

Language learners can benefit from the integration of both method since they provide an intercultural contextualization over conversational practices offered by the regular and systematic schemes to engage and interact with peers and educators on real-life topics and issues. Some research on PBL linked to intercultural issues supports the method's appropriateness to enhance cultural matters, stressing its utility and potentiality to involve students in intercultural communicative activities and learning and assessing cultural themes (Nguyen, 2021). Thus, PBL students can take advantage of authentic learning opportunities to acquire intercultural knowledge, understanding, and strategies to experience successful intercultural communication while strengthening intercultural attitudes, curiosity, and openness towards learning more about other cultures (Piboon, 2015; Ta, 2021).

Project and task-based class activities can be used to explore the linguistic and non-linguistic constructs of language and culture, seeking rapport for effective communication where learners can use strategies to readjust cultural knowledge, skills, attitudes, and awareness and notions linked to the other and the self. This symbiosis can excel the need to adopt strategies that help shape better communicative engagements, with tools to interrelate with people with different



cultural affiliations. outcomes in communication, understanding, empathy, and respect toward other people's way of life. Therefore, a framework that amalgamates PBL and CLIL can effectively be employed to foster cultural proficiency and intercultural communicative competence through task-based or project-based work focused on engaging topics. It would suggest a comprehensive mediation with authentic projects and tasks designed to entitle learners to go through autonomous research, coordination, production, and socialization while exploring intercultural-related topics. Experimenting with eclectic and alternative language teaching approaches is viable to motivate educators and learners to work progressively towards achieving language and intercultural learning goals.

A hybrid approach, due to its eclectic nature, may better support the development of multidimensional activities aimed at fostering language and culture learning dimensions while acquiring the target language. However, in order to achieve these holistic goals, educators need to explore each model's theoretical foundations. Upon their expertise, they will be able to make initial reflections about their own systems of values and beliefs about their teaching praxis and their notions about intercultural issues. In a democratic learning environment, teachers must recognize the sensitivity linked to culture learning and the precautions to be taken when reflecting, learning, and working with intercultural matters. Moreover, they need to operate their teaching in balanced modes, planning for language, content, and culture in meaningful and authentic ways. Villabona & Cenoz (2021) remind educators that the foreign language serves as a vehicle for learning language, culture and content. Therefore, language cannot be isolated when teaching content and culture since all the implicated domains sustain each other.

A hybrid approach of CLIL and PBL provides teachers with a structure to better address those complexities. The dynamic nature of culture requires an alternative teaching methodology

with ample recognition and background to help learners become active participants within the learning community. Planning on the basis of a hybrid approach presupposes the organization of a learning scenario aiming to attain language and intercultural goals that can potentially influence the learner to change perceptions, augment knowledge, progress in linguistic abilities, foster attitudes, skills, and cultural criticality while adopting strategies to act and behave accordingly. The diverse lens of culture addressed during the instruction is expected to help learners progress on their intercultural proficiency and cultural intelligence, which also reduces foreign language anxiety (Presbitero, 2020).

Language activities infused with intercultural components need to begin from day one of any given foreign language course and provide a careful and rewarding teaching and learning experience by acknowledging students' needs, background, and learning context in order to select the most appropriate activities, tasks, tools, resources, material, content, and project ideas for that particular group of learners. The CLIL framework is multilingual and multimodal, while the PBL method is experiential. The merging of both principles within projects and tasks reinforces the pedagogical purpose of having students participate in real, authentic, meaningful, collaborative, and purposeful communication. The project process provides sufficient language input through receptive skills presenting various opportunities to use the language to develop productive skills for various communicative and intercultural purposes (inquiry, proposing, socializing, solving, reflecting). This wider spectrum of the communicative functions contributes to improving their pragmatic performance and cognitive skills through the process of inquiry, learner-centeredness, collaboration, and authenticity of tasks and projects. Learners are guided to develop thinking skills while working with both language and content while reinforcing acquired language, knowledge, and skills.

This is clearly an ongoing process that requires time, structure, patience, and regularity for language learners to take part in assigning and transferring meaning construction in the classroom as they explore the midpoints between the self and other through practices that imply identification, comparison, and reflection (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). CLIL and PBL may amplify intercultural language progression as learners explore the links between the language and culture in the classroom and initiate their intercultural experience by (1) developing their cultural knowledge; (2) examining behaviors, attitudes, world views, practices, and products; (3) demonstrating their understanding of domestic and foreign cultures; (4) raising cultural critical awareness about others' life views; (5) boosting confidence in their ability to mediate among cultures; (6) encouraging students to discuss intercultural ideas and (7) developing sensitivity, flexibility, and openness when interacting with diverse people. This kind of exposure helps learners redefine familiar notions while the ground to develop intercultural citizenship is nurtured as a responsive perspective in today's society.

In this regard, the synergy between CLIL and PBL principles in a classroom moves away from a conventional one, thus underpinning new directions and practical considerations that systematically introduce intercultural connections while studying a foreign/second language. The classroom environment highlights key particularities that play a role in structuring the desired learning principles into a dynamic intercultural engagement through language and content tasks, projects, and class participation. The following is a proposed agenda for language educators to promote when mediating ICC through CLIL and PBL hybrid approach in a language class:

- Facilitate intercultural and purposeful content culturally to the language of instruction
- Provide sufficient and diverse language input
- Propose connections among the content, the context, and local and foreign culture

- Encourage continuous language input and output attending grammar and vocabulary needs
- Facilitate learning strategies and content for cognitive activation and scaffolding
- Mediate a multi-instruction through autonomous and collaborative tasks and projects
- Promote active thinking process to support knowledge construction and reflection
- Give opportunities to engage in real-world and practical tasks and projects to experience learning
- Connect learning to students' own concerns, interests, and cultural identity
- Design tasks and projects for purposeful and practical language use
- Link intercultural global citizenship and ICC components
- Guide learners to see beauty in diversity.
- Design a multidimensional learning environment
- Express and share positive attitudes toward target and home culture learning
- Listen and observe students' responses, reactions, and own views
- Motivate learners through attractive input and content
- Promote respect, understanding, empathy, appreciation, and self-discovery
- Lead students to establish connections between their context and reality
- Converse and reflect about worldviews in reference to the local community
- Design holistic learning instruction with multiple authentic and contextualized material
- Enhance the M-learning experience
- Encourage all the participants in the learning process on a regular basis
- Motivate students to overcome their weaknesses and highlight their strengths
- Contextualize the projects, tasks, and homework assignments
- Have students express their voice, ideas, interest, and needs
- Provide proactive and varied lesson activities that stimulate interaction
- Integrate into projects and tasks connections to intercultural global citizenship
- Encourage project tasks and products to be connected to ICC
- Guide learners to adopt a comparative approach to study other cultures
- Combine CLIL and PBL principles into the classroom experience

- Empower and engage in proactive learning
- Adapt and enrich instructional cultural content (Young, 2009, p. 45)
- Adjust a unit based on students' reaction and response
- Use digital tools to add dynamism to the experience
- Support learners as much as required
- Reflect about local cultures without falling into prejudice and generalizations
- Explore the national memory with a sense of learned lessons
- Have students study the process that all cultures have taken to build roots and identity
- Observe language and ICC progression
- Use and combine formative, summative, and holistic assessment tasks to provide feedback.

As advocated here, the theoretical principles from both approaches should be used accordingly to the needs, curriculum, objectives, population, educational and linguistic level of the teaching context. Consequently, building a hybrid model based on CLIL and PBL principles represents a valuable contribution to foreign/second language research and practice due to its emphasis on language as a vehicle to explore and develop language learning and intercultural communicative competence sustained on other learning benefits. Educators play the role of facilitators and mediators, guiding students to achieve linguistic and intercultural learning objectives while facilitating and supporting learners' language, content, and intercultural needs.

From a pedagogical view, invigorating the teaching praxis with intercultural discussions and reflections offers exceptional opportunities for learners to foster their ability to communicate in intercultural situations. Individuals are invited to reorganize, reevaluate, and rediscover new cultural viewpoints, thinking patterns, world views, knowledge, and attitude, strengthening their own identities concurrently. The readjustment of those perceptions enables learners to recognize bonds, roots, and beliefs system as a frame to perceive, tolerate, accept, empathize, and respectfully

and harmonically cohabit within modern-interconnected societies. These abilities are crucial to developing students into lifelong learners, citizens, and agents of change.

### **3.3 English Learning in the Costa Rican Context**

Regarding the state of English learning as a foreign language in the Costa Rican context, its introduction dates back to the 1800s during the construction of the railroad and the United Fruit

Company's expansion and growth in Costa Rican territories, which led foreign workers from Jamaica and Caribbean islands to arrive in the country. These workers would then stay and attain Costa Rican citizenship, leading to bilingual status among their descendants (Aguilar, 2005). Since then, over the years, English has been considered to serve as a beneficial tool for broadening the vision, plans, and policy and motivating English-speaking' global citizens among the Costa Rican population. The Costa Rican government has placed English on the country's agenda to ensure English literacy. This motivation has always been guided by productivity, global trade, and economic currents, sustained in factors governed by the global market such as international investment, commerce, tourism growth, and job requirements.

One of the first efforts took place in 1825, when English was introduced formally into the Costa Rican curriculum by executive order (González, 1978). By 1900 English gained in importance because the country was already engaging in commerce with foreign countries such as the United States and England. (González, 1978). However, the implementation of English teaching began with many limitations in terms of resources. It was only offered in the country's capital, most of the teachers did not have pedagogical training, and the methodology was focused on grammar and memory. It was in the mid of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that English teaching in the country headed towards a dramatic shift due to the need to expand English instruction. As a result, more

English teaching schools were created ratifying English as an integrated subject in the curriculum (Arroyo, 2013).

Further important initiatives were taken in 1957, when the University of Costa Rica offered an English teaching program and English teaching was, for the first time, professionalized. Later on, the National University of Costa Rica opened an academic program in language teaching and English translation (Cordoba et al., 2005). These programs directly implied formalizing English teaching with a direct educative message and opportunities to the population. The 60's and the 70's were contextually marked by a sense of economic growth linked to exports and industrialization. Therefore, it made much more evident the need to boost English learning in the country. The MEP (Ministry of public education) in the early 70's reexamined the English curricula and promoted specific changes in the way lessons, material, objectives, tasks, and assessment were mediated. Still, it remained limited in coverage until the 1990s.

When the needs for English-speaking citizens escalated (Cubillo et al., 2015), driven by international investment, global neoliberal tendencies, and the raising of the tourism industry, certain curricular modifications were undertaken. In 1994 English teaching at the elementary level was introduced as part of the policy "*toward the 21 century*"; which led to the implementation of English as a basic subject in twenty-seven schools, this time targeting rural and touristic areas in the country; a number of private bilingual schools and a diversification of English training programs at tertiary education materialized as well (González, 1978). By 1997, English was part of a mandatory subject in elementary schools (Arroyo, 2013).

English trajectory in Costa Rica strengthens with the expansion of English teaching lessons to more than 1500 schools around the country. That marked the beginning for setting in the population perspectives over English learning needs. More recently, in 2008, the government officially declared English learning and teaching a matter of national interest. This intention was

supported by the creation of the Costa Rica Multilingual Foundation, which was in charge of supporting directions and actions around English learning instruction across the country. Later on, the official project “Costa Rica Multilingual” aims to ensure that every high school level student achieves oral communicative competence in the language to match the global standards (Angulo & Miranda, 2014).

In general terms, English learning in the Costa Rican context begins at early stages, initiating in preschools and going on in all schooling levels, elementary and high school. In 2018 the government again presented a new and refreshed initiative called Alliance for Bilingualism. It was launched as a national strategy to intensify English learning coverage in CR significantly. This Alliance sets in action a collaborative synergy and work between different public institutions such as the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of labor and that of Science, Technology, and Telecommunications, among others, as well as with the private sector, where companies, and institutions collaborated to promote and support the six initiatives for the universalization of English learning at different educational levels with the aim to reach around 125 thousand students.

Educators play a fundamental role in enhancing their students’ proficiency in the language. Consequently, the Costa Rican government has also set up hefty measures to assure teachers have mastered the language and pedagogy to teach at those early stages. The focus in the public schools and high schools is mainly channeled on the four language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. In addition, some private institutions have more comprehensive English curricula ranging from bilingual instruction to international curricula with broad English exposure.

Hence, many students continue studying English at the university level due to national job demands and global trends. According to Solano-Campos (2012), several English teaching programs are currently being offered in Costa Rican Universities. These programs aim at targeting varied and different purposes; some are specific English teaching majors for instance, in translation



studies or English literature. Specific English-related majors offer courses that can take on varied academic content material and strengthen listening, reading, writing, speaking, and other particular courses where culture, social and historical issues are studied through the language. Other majors just offer some integrated English as a complement in the curriculum, which is generally focused on linguistic elements and the four language skills.

Under this context, through different initiatives, investments, resources, and educational reforms, English came to be established in the country as a potential and beneficial tool for interacting in constantly changing scenarios, local or international. The government believes English proficiency will strengthen Costa Rica's development in three main areas: tourism, exports, and foreign investments in the context of a globalized economy (Civinini, 2018). Indeed, these areas overlap with more opportunities for job immersion as a strategy to reduce the gap of unemployment, an issue recently exacerbated by the 2020 pandemic.

In this regard, Abarca and Ramirez (2017) conducted a study to estimate the job market benefits concerning bilingualism in Costa Rica for the 2005-2017 period. They found that for all wage earners, English speakers have a monthly wage that is 20.6% higher than their non-English-speaking counterparts, while for private-sector workers, the premium estimated is 28.4%. They also found that English speakers related works are granted other job benefits. The research uncovers the need as well for English speakers to meet the job market criteria, that is to say, that even though the country has directed efforts to attract foreign investment and promoting actions and devoted resources to enhance and expand English learning in the last decades, the results of such initiatives do not translate in higher percentages of a bilingual working population. They continue to claim that it constitutes a warning for revisiting and designing better educational policies regarding second language skills and, in a broader sense, competence development in Costa Rica (Abarca & Ramirez, 2017).

Currently, the country has a moderate English proficiency level (Education First, 2020). Even though Costa Rica has taken steps and actions to make the English language a matter of national priority, the intended goals of language proficiency in the country according to global standards and demands have not yet been achieved. The advance that the population can do to reach better levels of English command would mean more opportunities of job immersion with competitive wages and perks, more chances to better communicate and interrelate in the context of global flux. It becomes clear now in the context of a pandemic, changing global economies, sociopolitical and cultural structures, tourism, international relations, international investment, international scientific research' interest, and job requirements demand English proficiency in the Costa Rican population. In this context, Costa Rican Public universities are called to develop a kind of EFL instruction that entitles learners with language mastery linked to the development of competences to approach their studies, future lives, and careers successfully. In this sense, educators and university authorities should promote a shift towards better designed university foreign language courses. EFL courses should not simply focus on learning a language but integrate the development of essential skills/competences to face future professional challenges.

Teaching a foreign language in a globalized world is now perceived as an essential skill, almost a must to interact in today's modern life. Dynamic scenarios present educators with the challenge of addressing critical issues. Students' needs, preferences, and requirements have changed. Educators should be willing and prepared to lead a learning process that does not solely target an objective or content, but instead views language teaching as an integral process placing importance on developing skills and competences. In the specific case of English language teaching, meaningful possibilities arise when using the language as a vehicle to mediate relevant content to use the construction of knowledge to stimulate a transformational learning experience.

### **3.3.1 The need for intercultural communicative competence: the Costa Rican context**

Education as a fundamental pillar must ensure a continuous and transformational process with mechanisms that may continually shift according to what the world demands. In Costa Rica, steps have been taken in the context of EFL teaching with the promotion of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) as a fundamental goal to pursue. Recognizing the need to develop ICC in a continually changing and challenging world becomes necessary. Even though this position is not new, there has been an increasing debate over the subject in recent years, leading language educators and experts to consider research lines and teaching initiatives into the implementation of ICC in formal education. Intercultural learning must be considered an essential part of any educational curriculum, especially in English as a foreign language teaching field, where there are strong theoretical arguments favoring the development of intercultural communicative skills required to foster effective communication and interaction with culturally different others. Consequently, as theory suggests, language learners need to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, and critical cultural awareness to interrelate in today's multicultural world. In that sense, educators are called to work as agents of change, creating and facilitating novel practices to foster foreign language learning in a fruitful, active, experiential, and collaborative way.

The debate about connecting culture and language can be traced back to the 1950s. Whorf (1956) started giving the matter a particular emphasis, by remarking that language is used to construct our reality by organizing concepts and shaping our worldview. Since then, many experts have taken a particular interest in the subject, contributing to the analysis, implementation, models, and research over the need to integrate it into language learning. In this line, The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001) scopes an instrumental and interesting new role for language learners, that of social agents. It presents a whole new idea inviting language

teachers to become intercultural promoters or mediators. This role may guide educators to a transformational teaching method, which is particularly essential and crucial in the interconnected global context in which we live. The inclusion of the intercultural competence in the English classroom is also supported by the demands of the 21st century through a calling for cultural sensitivity. This issue becomes urgent because, unfortunately, sensitivity to other diverse groups does not emerge naturally.

The language classroom is a good start for complementing university students' instruction by offering the opportunity to integrate intercultural content that might serve as a standpoint to learn, relearn, participate, respect, understand, reflect, empathize, and collaborate with an open mind towards different ways of perceiving and doing things by diverse people in multicultural settings. Experts have supported throughout the years that foreign language learning is definitely intercultural. Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) suggest that intercultural language learning involves developing in learners an understanding of their own language(s) and culture(s) in relation to other cultures. In that sense, it is key to underline that learning a foreign language from an intercultural perspective requires learners to explicitly see its relevance. This is in the hands of educators when presenting class tasks and activities intended to change traditional modes for new views, new models of learning a foreign language linked to their reality. Consequently, integrating ICC is an invitation to set novel and broader objectives in the foreign language classroom that go beyond mere linguistic goals.

According to Byram (1997), knowledge, attitudes, skills, and cultural awareness lead students to communicate effectively with culturally diverse others. Embracing this conception compels the language learner to act, not as a mere communicator, but as a mediator, who is aware of the influence his/her own culture has on his/her thinking when interacting with multicultural interlocutors. Byram (2008), Kramsch (1998), and Deardoff (2006) have supported the move

towards intercultural communicative language learning. They claim that foreign language learning situates the learner in an influential role that redefines his/her position and identity in both the native culture and language and foreign cultures and languages.

In the Costa Rican context, the intercultural component, especially the recognition of one's culture and identity is enhanced through many curricular and extracurricular activities in early education, elementary and high schools. However, the concept and scope of the intercultural communicative competence in the language classroom is an issue that requires further attention and praxis accommodation and innovation at all levels of formal education to effectively enhance students' ICC. ICC at higher education in the foreign language classroom is a path that urgently needs further exploration, research and reinforcement. In order to find out Costa Rican students' needs at tertiary education and validate the need to integrate the intercultural component in the foreign/language classroom, a survey was conducted among university language students in order to determine their perspectives on the inclusion of culture in their English learning process.

### **3.3.2 University language students' perceptions on intercultural learning**

A survey was applied to 102 elementary English students from two Costa Rican universities during the second semester in 2019. The objective was to identify students' perceptions of ICC in the context of English learning. The data were collected through a questionnaire consisting of eight questions. First, students were asked if they knew the meaning and definition of ICC. According to the data gathered, 89.2% of them admitted not knowing the meaning of ICC and only 10.8% responded that they knew the meaning. The second question participants were asked was whether they had learned about culture in an English class before. Results showed that 60.8% of the students had never learned anything about culture in their EFL classes, while 39.2% claimed to have

received cultural content in English classes. The third question focused on whether they believed that learning about culture had a positive impact on their learning academically and professionally. 94.1% of the participants believed that culture added benefits to their learning process and 5.9% considered it did not. The fourth question consulted was about their level of interest in learning about ICC in the language classroom. It was surprising to find out that 100% seem interested in exploring the intercultural dimension. When asked if ICC should become part of the curriculum, students' opinions were divided since 52.9% believed culture learning should become part of the curriculum compared to 47.1% who did not consider ICC should be included in the curriculum.

To know more about their perceptions over the subject, they were also asked about the level of importance they would give to ICC. 72% of the respondents believed that ICC is very important, 24% ranked it as important, and 4% considered ICC it as irrelevant. Another question examined the frequency with which they consulted resources in English to learn about their own culture or foreign ones. Their answers showed that 56% of the students sometimes used English to learn about other cultures, 36% claimed they never did it, and only 2% admitted doing it frequently. The last question asked participants to self-assess their ICC level. The responses obtained indicate that 96% of the students rated their ICC as poor, 59% rating it as deficient, 37% as regular, and only 4% rating it as good.

The data collected show that students are aware of the need to advance in integrating ICC under formal instruction at tertiary education. They consider ICC as a very important competence to develop in face of the global diverse and intercultural reality. Results from the survey indicate that students share a generalized interest in upgrading foreign language instruction to get prepared and trained to become interculturally and linguistically competent. These reactions confirm that

learners acknowledge that, since the world is changing, students need to adapt to new challenges by directing the attention to the development of essential competences such as ICC.<sup>2</sup>

In light of the results of the survey to find out English language students' notions and opinions of ICC, a quasi-experimental analysis has been proposed to study the effectiveness of a combined language approach (CLIL and PBL) intervention to promote ICC at tertiary education in the Costa Rican context. In this context, it is hypothesized that an eclectic, hybrid approach of learning principles from CLIL and PBL methodologies may offer opportunities for learners to take an active and creative role in learning the language and developing intercultural skills. A teaching and learning proposal that integrates principles from CLIL and PBL to mediate the intercultural communicative competence may strengthen objectives to build appropriate and effective language proficiency. The framework proposed in the pedagogical intervention associates CLIL and PBL principles as a pedagogical framework to teach intercultural issues explicitly. The main objective is to teach the intercultural dimension through language activities that go beyond isolated and fixed facts about the culture of the target language. These activities should offer opportunities for students to interact, question, experience, reflect, and react in their own way to the content in order to develop understanding and respect of others and their cultural values and assumptions (Cubero-Vásquez, 2020).

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<sup>2</sup> An article covering the subtopic of the need for intercultural communicative competence in the Costa Rican context discussed in this chapter and conducted for the purpose of this doctoral thesis has been published in: Cubero-Vásquez, K. (2020). *"The need for intercultural communicative competence in the Costa Rican context: Strategies for a combined approach intervention"* En Habib-Mireles, L. (Coord.). *Tecnología, diversidad e inclusión: repensando el modelo educativo* (pp. 166-177). Eindhoven, NL: Adaya Press. Madrid, España.

The intercultural perspective in the Costa Rican EFL context is still a work in progress. Even though, some pedagogical efforts to study the cultural component in the English classroom have been made, the core ICC views and its dimensions remains unexplored. At the university level, intercultural matters have been included in the Costa Rican English curriculum through specific cultural courses focused on language and culture and intercultural communication. The aim of these courses is to explore in deep the theoretical concepts, elements, and rationale of culture and/ or of that of target cultures. Moreover, some other courses have been designed to address certain cultural elements and aspects, such as courses focused on oral communication, elocution, literature, and linguistics (Espinoza & Rodríguez, 2020).

In the elementary English courses offered to different majors, such as the case of integrated English courses, the intercultural component is not included in the syllabi. Therefore, the language educator is left to decide if the cultural component is worth the time and the effort. Based on the literature review, no research has been conducted on the intercultural communicative competence in the EFL in the Costa Rican context. Perhaps, this is related to the curriculum demands and the lack of guidance of how to approach such a complex issue, which requires teachers' specific ICC training, time, knowledge, creativity, and flexible view to effectively mediate ICC.

Likewise, the combination of CLIL and PBL approaches have not been a research subject in the Costa Rican context to teach English. Some private elementary schools and some state universities take on some principles from CLIL in the form of content-driven instruction. Most of the English language curriculum in elementary courses take a language focused approach. So, mediating ICC through CLIL and PBL is a novel and unexplored research direction in the Costa Rican context. Consequently, this study aims at enhancing the intercultural communicative competence through the combination of content and language integrated (CLIL) and Project-based



learning (PBL) in English courses offered at tertiary education in Costa Rica. The major aim of this study is to broaden language learning opportunities to offer an eclectic language learning model that places the development of the intercultural communicative competence as fundamental in foreign language instruction. Besides, research findings are intended to contribute to widening language learning opportunities in eclectic modes that place and strengthen the integration and development of the intercultural communicative competence (ICC) as a core element in the language classroom. Findings may potentially support curriculum developers in guiding, recommending, and advising foreign language teaching linked to intercultural communication in the Costa Rican context. Teachers and curriculum developers need to be aware that Costa Rica, as a small country, should be able to compete and integrate into these globalized dynamic contexts.

Educational goals should enable learners to handle future changes, employability, and citizenship in peaceful coexistence with others. To do so, citizens need to acquire new skills, competences, and knowledge to meet changing environments. Foreign language education can be a vehicle to provide students with the tools and strategies they need for their successful, productive, and responsible immersion in society.

### **3.3.3 Previous ICC related research in educational settings**

Numerous publications related to intercultural learning are available on databases but not all of them address the construct of ICC in educational settings through experimental, quasiexperimental or action studies. Eligible research relevant to this study has been selected based on how the ICC component is studied especially in SL/FL contexts under an explicit oriented instructional methodology. The literature review suggests that there is a need for more experimental studies to investigate the ICC component in the language classroom framed under a clear

methodological framework to orient the teaching of such complex and elusive construct. Even though, the interest to study ICC in educational settings has been growing through the years, specific theoretical methodologies or proved approaches to deal with such issue in the language classroom is still limited and scarce. Table 5 provides an overview of some research conducted in the field of ICC in the context of language learning addressing the intercultural matter through a delimited methodological scope of either CLIL or PBL or task-based learning. These studies offer a window to better understand the process and factors that play a role in teaching and training learners to develop ICC dimensions. Thus, these identified studies provide useful findings and insights that support the design of ICC tasks, activities, and resources in educational contexts.

**Table 5** *Research Related to ICC*

<b>Author (s) (year)</b>	<b>Study</b>	<b>Aims</b>	<b>Methodology to ICC</b>	<b>Key Findings</b>
Tran, T.Q., & Duong, T.M (2018)	The effectiveness of the intercultural language communicative teaching model for EFL learners	The study aims to test the effectiveness of an intercultural communicative language teaching model design in the English language class. (n=47)	teaching model(activities)	The findings revealed that EFL learners' language competence and intercultural competence had similar improvement patterns after a thirteen-week training course. This implies that the model designed effectively facilitates EFL learners' ICC development, supporting that intercultural content can be learned through language learning.
Gómez, L.F. (2012).	Fostering Intercultural Communicative Competence Through Reading Authentic Literary Texts	The study explores the use of authentic literary texts with advanced EFL learners through four constructivist approaches to develop student	literary texts	Results demonstrated that integrating language and literature in English as a foreign language constitutes an opportunity to construct cultural knowledge. The findings conclude that these approaches improve teaching practices in

	in an Advanced Colombian EFL Classroom: A Constructivist Perspective	intercultural communicative competence at a language program in a university in Bogotá, Colombia. (n=23)		EFL through meaning negotiation and the possibility to build cultural knowledge in a meaningful way.
Daphne Huang, L. J. (2021).	Developing intercultural communicative competence in foreign language classrooms – A study of EFL learners in Taiwan.	This research aims at evaluating the effectiveness of explicit instruction on EFL learners’ development of ICC through assessment tools and explores the relationship between the development of ICC to certain background factors. (n=54)	explicit instruction (activities)	The results indicate that explicit instruction effectively raises students’ development of ICC, especially the knowledge and skills dimensions and that English proficiency and overseas experience are significantly related to ICC development. Results showed that explicit classroom instruction led learners to acquiring knowledge about other cultures. Similarly, they could analyze intercultural conflicts, recognize cultural elements, and interpret cultural practices of two different cultures.
González Rodríguez, L, M. & Gerke, A. E.	Using Foreign Films to Foster Pre-service Teachers’ Intercultural Awareness in an EFL Context	The case study explores the development of intercultural awareness in prospective teachers of English at university level by using a film based intercultural unit. (n=53)	Task-based and CLIL approach.  Film based intercultural unit	Findings suggest that using films with intercultural content in the classroom is an effective and enjoyable tool to foster students’ IC skills, empathy, tolerance, open-mindedness, and respect. The unit helped at developing a high level of intercultural self-reflection and sensitivity while progressing in all IC dimensions analyzed. Data also prove that foreign films help to deepen cultural understanding while developing language communicative skills.
Nguyen, H. T. (2021).	Project-based assessment in teaching intercultural communication competence for foreign language students in	The paper aims at finding out students’ reflection and teachers’ beliefs towards using project-based assessment method in teaching ICC to English major	PBL	Conclusions confirmed that using project-based learning as assessment tool in teaching culture had a satisfactory impact on students’ intercultural competence and developing problem- solving skills, critical thinking, and learning motivation.

	higher education: a case study.	students in nine weeks course. (n=124)		
Aguskin, L., & Maryani, M. (2020)	Investigating the use of project-based learning in enhancing Indonesian university students' cultural knowledge.	The study explores the target culture through project-based learning (PBL) in language learners.	PBL	Findings indicate that the use of project-based approach is helpful to develop communicative skills and enhances students' understanding and critical thinking towards the cultural phenomenon while developing a positive attitude towards culture learning.
Tabaku1, E., & Ahmet, E.(2014)	Project work as a means of teaching intercultural communication skills.	The purpose of this case study is to explore the benefits of project work to approach language and intercultural communication skills. (n=30)	PBL	The study concludes that the use of project work is effective to promote in domestic and international students understanding and appreciation of different cultures as to help students become mediators between cultures.
Kanatkyz, Araylym. (2019)	The impact of project-based learning on developing intercultural communicative competence at B1 level.	This paper looks at how Project Based Learning can be used as a method to develop intercultural communicative competence (ICC) among language students. (n=29)	PBL	Findings indicate that the PBL model used was effective to enhance real- problem solving skills, and intercultural communicative competence development by promoting individual and social values. The English learning process was reported to become more cooperative, motivating and engaging.
Koro, R (2018)	Developing learners' intercultural understanding through a clil approach	This action-based research project seeks to develop ICU among secondary language learners through the teaching of various CLIL based lessons.	CLIL	Findings indicate that learners showed the ability to contemplate different intercultural perspectives, express empathy after the exposure to the intervention materials, and demonstrated motivation for intercultural opportunities and for language learning.
Joo-yeon, S & Eunhyun, K (2016)	Exploring the Potential of CLIL: Focusing on Local Culture	This article examines college students' general perspectives of content and language integrated learning class situating local	CLIL	findings showed that students achieved the language and content. Goals, raised their motivation from experiencing the content and language integrated learning class.. This study suggests that adopting CLIL approach situating local

		culture and language skills.		culture offers opportunities for students to deepen their own culture' knowledge and language skills.
Wen-hsien Yang	Developing tertiary level clil learners' intercultural awareness with a self-produced coursebook integrating content and language	The research investigated university students' evaluation of a self-produced language-based culture CLIL coursebook and measured the change in their CQ performance after an 18-week CLIL instruction. (n=33)	CLIL	findings showed that the contextualised design was effective in significantly increasing CQ after the course instruction, improving learners' cultural competence. Besides, results revealed that students were highly satisfied with the learning experience based on the explicit intercultural coursebook and approach.

Findings on the research consulted (Table 5) based on explicit intercultural teaching activities show positive results and efficacy in developing the intended intercultural aims in the language classroom. These findings seek to achieve holistic intercultural objectives along with the development of language skills. These studies differ among them in the way each approaches the intercultural construct ranging from focusing in one or the four ICC dimensions or subdimensions linked to the construct and also as to the how they approach the intercultural instruction. Even though, these studies are not based on large samples which limits the generalizability of conclusions the positive findings demonstrate that explicit intercultural language tasks and activities effectively impact the target learning process enabling learners to grow linguistically and interculturally.

Research exploring the ICC notion under either CLIL or PBL reported not only effectiveness and advances in fostering intercultural competence but the development of crucial competences related to the education of the whole individual with critical competences such as critical thinking, collaborative skills, cognitive development and positive attitudes and tolerance

towards cultural diversity along with progression in the second or foreign language. Regarding CLIL-based research to foster ICC, it is suggested that CLIL has a clear potential for the development of critical cultural awareness, intercultural skills (González & Borham, 2012) and attitudes while research based on PBL as a tool to develop intercultural competence and knowledge yielded positive and promising results to foster ICC and other crucial skills such product process creation within collective work (González & Robledo, 2017). Thus, experimental, and empirical research and papers correlate learners' intercultural communicative competence development to higher levels of satisfaction and motivation to learn the target language and cultures (Mitchell, et al., 2015; Dombi, 2013; Lee-Heng, 2019). These research results invite language educators and researchers interested in the field to conduct more research involving larger samples of subjects to further support the acquired responsibility of instructing language learners to develop and sustain intercultural skills, behaviors, criticality, and attitudes. Therefore, it is in the interest of this study to explore the potential of a hybrid approach of CLIL and PBL to instruct and facilitate an intercultural language learning experience in the EFL classroom seeking to deeply investigate the potential use of these two learning models in a merged-designed pedagogy to pursue ICC enhancement purposefully and meaningfully.

This study is one of the first few studies that embarks on a contextualized longitudinal research design within the EFL classroom environment thorough a hybrid approach of principles from CLIL and PBL. The combination of these two approaches intends to maximize students' exposure to both language and intercultural input in a functional and meaningful learning process. Longitudinal studies exploring ICC or intercultural language learning (EFL) for two language semesters under a hybrid methodology is scarce, and unexplored in the Costa Rican context and even in international contexts. This research proposes to design contextualized learning activities,

tasks, and projects to explicitly teach intercultural content and language as a platform to improve the EF syllabus. At the same time, learners are offered a wide range of learning benefits in terms of skills, knowledge cognition, collaborative skills, behavioral, attitudinal, and affective domains, XXI century skills to better adjust to local and international requirements in a constantly changing world. Therefore, this study proposes an eclectic, hybrid pedagogical instruction as an alternative approach to teach English or a SL/FL away from the traditional language focused approach to better motivate language learners, teachers, practitioners, and curricula reformist to set nonlimited language objectives.

As teacher and learners roles continue to change, the classroom remains a perfect location to incite intercultural language learning experience within an articulated pedagogy because educational settings such as school, high schools and universities play a fundamental role in educating integral learners that today require intercultural skills, values and attitudes to interrelate in modern societies (Mariela et al., 2014). In consonance with that notion, this study is a fundamentally important pioneer work that scopes ICC under a longitudinal quasi experimental design based on testing a pedagogical instruction of lessons, units and material enriched by target language, culture, content, context, and authenticity. This tailor-made instruction under a hybrid methodology to foster ICC is an appealing inquiry to gain a deeper understanding into the elements that impact the development of language learners' ICC on the four different dimensions the construct encompasses.

Furthermore, the objectives of this study explore the construct of ICC through various quantitative and qualitative instruments which allow data triangulation and the exploration of the object (ICC instruction and learning) from diverse angles. To do so, this study designs under a hybrid approach a series of units and lessons as an ICC teaching proposal oriented on suggested

steps to plan the integration of the target language (English) with intercultural content, resources, and activities into the EFL syllabus. This hybrid approach proposal attains to create opportunities for language progression within communicative, purposeful, real and meaningful learning while enhancing ICC to better educate and train language learners to successfully engage in intercultural scenarios.

In conclusion, this study seeks to offer an orientation towards enhancing and promoting learners' intercultural communicative competence intertwined with language learning. Learning activities within a hybrid paradigm that teaches units based on learning principles concerned with content, context, collaboration, communication, culture, cognitive stimulation, learner centered, real-life relevance, product creation, and autonomous exploration assert to authentically engage learners through the lens of culture and language to become intercultural language users.



## **PART II: THIS STUDY**

## **CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 Research Methodology: Aims, Questions and Objectives**

This chapter presents the research methodology employed in this study. It proposes the research method, objectives, questions and shapes the general approach and design taken to conduct the study, illustrating the instruments used for data collection and data analysis procedures. It also describes the steps and stages involved in planning, developing, and conducting the intervention, the research setting, and the participants.

This study hypothesizes that systematically integrating ICC into the EFL classroom through a hybrid approach of CLIL and PBL could improve learners' intercultural communicative competence. The theoretical foundation for such a claim is based on theories and approaches related to the integration of ICC in the EFL context, as mentioned in the theoretical framework of this study. The research is also grounded on the belief that various teaching techniques under a hybrid teaching approach may lead to an engaging, meaningful, and real language learning process that enhances learners' ICC and also their communicative competence in the target language. Thus, this research investigates the implementation of CLIL and PBL teaching principles to foster ICC in the Costa Rican context by means of an intervention to enhance learners' intercultural communicative competence. To attain this goal, this study establishes the following objectives:

- To identify student perceptions and degree of acceptance of ICC dimensions (knowledge, skills, attitudes, and cultural criticality) in the EFL classroom through a combined approach.
- To explore the learning experiences (benefits and challenges) drawn from the implementation of a combination of PBL and CLIL to enhance intercultural communicative competence in the integrated English I and II elementary English courses offered at UNA university.

- Evaluate the development of students' ICC dimensions (knowledge, skills, attitude, critical culture awareness) when learning English through classroom language tasks in a combined CLIL and PBL methodology.
- To measure the impact of CLIL and PBL on learning outcomes in language competence and intercultural communicative competence.
- To design language tasks for teaching ICC through English utilizing a combination of CLIL and PBL, including contextualizing teaching material from both native and target cultures.
- To compare the level of intercultural communicative competence acquired by foreign language learners through traditional language instruction vs. the level of competence developed through a hybrid approach of CLIL/PBL.
- To identify the effectiveness of the resources used to develop students' ICC during the learning and teaching process.
- To establish the degree of importance placed on the intercultural communicative competence by students at tertiary education.
- To evaluate and analyze the degree of intercultural communicative competence developed by students studying English as a foreign language as a result of implementing CLIL and PBL.
- To evaluate the impact of a hybrid approach intervention on students' intercultural communicative competence.
- To analyze if significant differences are yielded in the pretest and posttest scores measuring student ICC in both intervention and control groups.
- To determine practical and useful learning strategies to integrate and implement ICC in the foreign language classroom.

To achieve these objectives, eight research questions were addressed. The analysis derived from the results will relate to these questions to guide the findings, understanding, and implications of the study regarding the objectives and challenges faced when implementing a hybrid approach of CLIL/PBL to foster ICC. The analysis of the results will therefore aim to shed light on the major intentions of this research. Particularly, the study intends to answer the following research questions:

Question 1: Does a combined approach of CLIL and PBL help promote student intercultural communicative competence in tertiary education? If so, to what extent?

Question 2: Is the hybrid approach correlated with the promotion/enhancing in the experimental group of students' intercultural communicative competence?

Question 3: Are there any significant differences in participants' pretest and posttest scores measuring ICC for both experimental and control groups?

Question 4: What are the benefits of teaching the intercultural dimension in the EFL classroom in Costa Rica?

Question 5: What challenges emerge when implementing CLIL and project-based learning to foster ICC?

Question 6: What is the perceived impact/effectiveness of the hybrid approach of CLIL and PBL principles in both linguistic competence and intercultural communicative competence among EFL students in tertiary education?

Question 7: What are the experimental group students' perceptions of the hybrid CLIL/PBL approach?

Question 8: What are some practical and useful strategies to integrate and mediate ICC in the foreign language classroom?

### **4.1.1 Hypotheses**

Intercultural communicative competence (knowledge, critical cultural awareness, attitudes, and skills) is enhanced by systematically integrating intercultural content (intervention) mediated through a combined approach of CLIL (content and language integrated learning) and PBL (project-based learning) of principles and classroom strategies in the integrated English I and English II language courses in tertiary education.

There is statistical significant difference among control and experimental groups after implementating an intercultural language instruction during the two semester periods in which the experiential group outworks the control group by progressing and developing ICC after each pedagogical intervention.

Intercultural language learning benefits and progression are correlated to the systematical and regular expousure to intercultural content, tasks and projects in EFL contexts under a hybrid approach of teaching principles.

A hybrid approach of CLIL and PBL principles has a positive impact and effectiveness in developing linguistic competence and intercultural communicative competence among EFL students in tertiary education.

## **4.2 Methodology and Procedure**

The design of this study was embedded in a mixed-methods approach within an exploratory longitudinal quasi-experimental intervention that focused on collecting, treating, and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data. The qualitative data gathered serve to corroborate and further illustrate some of the quantitative results. Therefore, this research dealt with a mix of quantitative and qualitative data gathered at different stages of the study wit the aim of providing

various perspectives on the subject. The research method selected obeys the nature and objectives of the study. The appealing nature of mixed studies allows the researcher to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the study object. As Creswell (2008) states, this kind of research involves collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data to understand a research problem more thoroughly. He also believed that all methods have biases and weaknesses that can be reduced by collecting quantitative and qualitative data as they set opportunities to unveil the bigger picture within the study (Creswell, 2014).

In this study, the quantitative data were obtained by administering a pre- and posttest questionnaire, using five-point Likert scales, and a formative quiz. The information obtained from the learners' reflective journals, classroom observations, and open-ended questions generated qualitative data, allowing further interpretation of results. The researcher assumed a teacher-researcher role during the two academic semesters of 2020 at the National University of Costa Rica (UNA). The researcher was involved in conducting and designing the implementation of an intercultural communication component (ICC) intervention in which intercultural content was integrated into elementary English courses through ICC tasks and activities under a combined approach of principles from content and language integrated learning (CLIL) and project-based learning (PBL).

The practitioner participation framed the study as action research because, in this kind of research, educators regularly act upon observation, collecting data, and adapting practice for better educational classroom environments. Dörnyei (2007) explains that the extent of action research is supported by collaborative practices among educators with the objective of acquiring better understanding and insights into their educational environment to improve the effectiveness of their teaching. Action research then becomes a method of inquiry for educators to self-inquiry and network on their practices and synergies by observing, reflecting, and participating in the learning

experience to be able to impact, change, and look for more effective teaching dynamics that may help them understand how learners can better achieve objectives and teach them learning strategies. This kind of practice allows the comprehension of the particular factors and reasons that play a role in the teaching-learning process.

Regarding the scope of the research, it is framed as experimental since it attempts to explore whether the integration of the intercultural component regularly, facilitated via a hybrid approach, can enhance learners' ICC. A further aim is to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges met in the foreign language learning environment.

As specified earlier, this study followed a quasi-experimental design, which is a design that can be useful in conducting classroom explorations from experiments by working with naturally assigned experimental and control groups (Best & Kahn, 1998). These designs follow a specific pattern in which the independent variables are manipulated, but the candidates are not assigned accordingly. They are assigned to groups depending on non-random criteria (Bärnighausen et al., 2017). This particular kind of design measures treatment efficacy and establishes a cause-and-effect relationship among dependent and independent variables. In this context, the researcher uses intact and equivalent groups, but only one group experiences the treatment while the other acts as a control group (Price et al., 2015). In educational fields, quasi-experimental designs (QEDs) improve stakeholders' knowledge by studying the magnitude of causal effects during interventions. Quasi-experimental research can sustain a certain level of confidence in terms of the results found due to the mechanism of control when comparing control and intervention groups and through the application of tests at different moments or periods. This argument became a solid basis for this research. This study was a longitudinal study in which participants were measured and observed for an extended period (during two semesters). The way it was conducted took multiple measures over time, during which the experimental group was measured at different moments during the



study. The students from the intervention group were surveyed before (pretest) and then after the intervention (posttest) during semesters I and II. The control group was surveyed four times across time with pre- and posttest during semesters I and II.

### **4.3 Data Collection**

This section describes the data collection procedures representative of the research study. It outlines the study setting, the participants' profiles, and the instruments used to conduct the study.

#### **4.3.1 Research Setting and Participants**

This study gathered data from 219 students. The group population consists of regular students studying at the UNA Liberia campus. All of the students were enrolled in Integrated English I and II (English as a foreign language) classes, which are mostly imparted during their first university year. These English courses are compulsory for their majors. Participants were divided into two groups: an experimental/intervention group and a control group. The participants involved in both groups were elementary English students enrolled in a university English course. Their English level was similar, as evidenced by their scores resulting from the university department's English diagnostic examination. The researcher took on an active role in designing and implementing the intervention proposal. Two other language instructors also became involved in teaching and implementing the intervention classes, where it was used a combined approach of CLIL and PBL principles in which ICC was systematically integrated into the English as a foreign language (EFL) experience.

Ethical issues were taken into account along the research periods by making them sign informed consents including aspects regarding confidentiality, right of refusal or withdraw without penalty. Subjects involved in the study were students at the National University of Costa Rica, who

are positioned within educational settings and a protected environment. Participants' confidentiality was protected. Their identity and responses were not to be exposed, their individual participation was kept anonymous when referred to their perspectives and results in this dissertation. Before conducting the study, a letter requesting permission to execute the interventions was sent and approved by the head of authorities and the dean at the UNA Liberia campus (see appendix G ) allowing to carry out this study during the two academic semesters of 2020.

The subjects in the study were conveniently accessible to be studied as groups were preset classes. Therefore, the participants could be considered a convenience sampling, naturally set. The sample involved 219 students, of which 105 (47.9 %) were females, and 114 (52.1 %) were males. Their ages ranged from 17 to 25 years old. In terms of nationality, 213 (97.3%) were Costa Rican students, and 6 (2.7%) were of Nicaraguan nationality. Almost all students came from the Guanacaste province, 192 (87.7%), and 27 (12.3%) came from the Alajuela province of Costa Rica.

One group of 124 students conformed to the intervention class major in business administration, commerce, tourism, and English teaching. The control group was of students whose majors were computer science, hydrology, and business administration. Both groups were taking Integrated English I and II and were predominantly in their first university year. A total of 204 (93.2%) came from public high schools, and 15 (6.8%) graduated from private ones. Most students, 162 (73.9%), had been learning English for over 4 years during college. The diagnostic assessment supported that their English level profile predominately ranged from elementary English levels A1 to A2. (See Tables 6 and 7 for students' biodata and diagnostic test results).

**Table 6** *Data Profile for Experimental and Control Group*

Group Class	Nationality	Province	Gender	Age	Language Experience	Level	ICC Self-perception	Total Students
EC	Costa Rican (97.6 %)	Guanacaste (88.7%)	F (55.6%)	17-19 (70.2%)	4 years (72.6%)	A1-A2 Mean 54.7	Deficient (70.9%)	124
	Nicaraguan (2.4%)		M (44.4)					
CG	Costa Rican (96.8 %)	Guanacaste (86.3% )	F (37.9%)	17-19 (74.7%)	4 years (75.8%)	A1-A2 Mean 54.2	Deficient (71.6%)	95
	Nicaraguan (3.2 %)		M (62.1)					

*Notes.* EC: Experimental, CG: control.

**Table 7** *Test Results Diagnostic English Test*

	Control Group		Experimental Group		Both Groups	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
25 and below	1	1.1%			1	0.5%
26-50	51	53.7%	64	51.6%	115	52.5%
51-75	32	33.7%	45	36.3%	77	35.2%
76-100	6	6.3%	11	8.9%	17	7.8%
101-125	5	5.3%	4	3.2%	9	4.1%
M		54.2		54.7		54.49
SD		20.3		17.5		18.762
Minimum		25.0		28.0		25.00
Maximum		121.0		118.0		121.00

It was established that in terms of ICC self-perception and language level (results obtained in the diagnostic test that the university English department applies) groups were equivalent. As seen in Table 3, except for gender, the other dimensions illustrate that the two groups were mostly similar.

### **4.3.2 Instruments and Data Collection Procedures**

This section describes the process involved in collecting the data, which comprises the use of a questionnaire; ICC self-report scale, formative ICC quiz as pretest and posttest, and an after-intervention perspective scale. Qualitative instruments include teacher and students' reflective journals, class observation, and open-ended questions. Before implementing the ICC intervention, participants from both groups were administered a pretest and, after intervention, a posttest self-report questionnaire (five-point Likert-scale) to measure respondents' level of agreement and disagreement on the different ICC dimensions studied (Appendix A). This questionnaire combined items/statements regarding learners' intercultural communicative competence composed by the dimensions of knowledge, critical cultural awareness, attitudes, and skills. The questionnaire was developed to measure the construct dimensions of ICC in which learner were asked to report on their ICC perceptions. Their responses were analyzed regarding changes before and after intervention during semester I and then again in semester II.

Furthermore, an intercultural formative quiz (Appendix B) was used as a pretest and posttest to collect and measure changes in the dimensions of cultural knowledge and skills. It was comprised of two parts: one testing cultural knowledge, which included questions related to intercultural content, and a second part portraying some intercultural situations that required students to select the best possible behavioral response for the situation described. This quiz was designed to test students' knowledge and specific skills in a formative way. The total score of the quiz was 15.

Furthermore, a pretest and posttest English and intercultural learning perspective questionnaire (Appendix D) was applied to both groups. It intended to gather data, about perspectives and attitudes toward their English learning process and previous experience enrolling

in the integrated English courses. The questionnaire consisted of two parts; the first was intended to collect the participants' biodata and the second part included close-ended questions inquiring about their English language learning experience and beliefs about ICC in the English classroom. The primary objective was to gather information about their English learning experience and other questions regarding material, resources, and ICC elements mediated in the English classroom. Participants were asked to select the option that best resonated with them based on their perspective and experience. These instruments were applied as a pretest to both the experimental and control groups one week before the intervention began. The researcher decided to apply these pretest instruments in paper and pencil form to ensure all the participants were reached. Students were informed that these instruments were designed to collect data solely for research purposes and that their answers would remain confidential.

Thus, to understand some of the implications resulting from the interventions in both semesters (I-II), an after-intervention perception Likert-scale questionnaire (Appendix C) with open-ended questions was also applied. This instrument was only applied to the intervention group to measure the effectiveness of the hybrid approach on the dimensions of impact, satisfaction, and benefits. Students were required to report their levels of agreement or disagreement on the statements proposed after participating in the pedagogical interventions I and II during semester I and II for the courses Integrated English courses I and II correspondingly. These instruments, applied as pretest and posttest, allowed the analysis of numerical data to evaluate whether the tests yielded significantly different results between the experimental and control group. These results were analyzed and compared according to the research objectives and questions.

**Table 8** *List of Research Instruments and Implementation sequence.*

Quantitative Instruments	Section	Content	Questions/ Items
Questionnaire (Pretest-posttest)	1-2	Biodata information English language learning experience and perspectives ICC perspectives	8 30
ICC self-assessment scale (Pretest-posttest)	1-2-3-4	ICC knowledge Critical cultural awareness Attitude Skills	38
Formative quiz (Pretest-posttest)	1-2	Culture knowledge Intercultural situations	15
Combined approach Perception scale	1-2-3	Impact of CLIL/PBL Benefits Level of satisfaction	20
Qualitative instruments	Section	Content	Items
Participants' perspectives	4	English language learning experience and ICC perspectives	4
Journal entries Observations	—	English language learning experience and ICC perspectives	—

During the interventions, participants kept a reflective journal about some of the tasks and general learning experiences during the lessons. Thus, some class observations were made to complement the research with qualitative data and students' responses from open-ended questions intended to illustrate their language learning experience during the interventions. During classroom observation, the teacher-researcher observed and gathered data about students' performance and behavior, evidence of engagement, participation, and reaction toward the content and language tasks integrated with intercultural content during synchronous and asynchronous class sessions. The data collected from classroom observations allowed the researcher to record the process of learning and became a source of insights to adjust or adapt the ICC teaching-learning proposal

(intervention program to be mediated on remote learning environment) and to generate valuable data and findings linked to the research questions.

The reflective journals were used as e-journal entries tasks. Students uploaded samples of their work, videos, podcast audios, and self-reflections after studying the units and after the online meetings. This technique offers an appropriate means to assess students' progress in language and ICC proficiency. The journal tasks were guided through a line of questions to reflect upon, and some others were free lesson reflections. Students would write their ideas in English. Some of their entries were extracted to support some of the quantitative findings. These qualitative instruments were used to collect and analyze further findings.

#### **4.3.3 Validity, Credibility, and Reliability**

Measures were taken to narrow ambiguity and any misleading gap that might affect the intended measurement of the instruments. To ensure they are entitled to validity, credibility, and reliability specific steps suggested by research experts were taken. The influential and crucial literature consulted in this study was considered in the construction of questions and items for each of the proposed instruments. After constructing, delimiting, and reflecting on the instruments' purpose, the researcher asked for experts' opinions. Experts on intercultural communication and language teaching were contacted to receive feedback on the instruments' structure, content, questions, items, and formative quiz. Accordingly, the first drafts of the instruments were reflected on, revised, and changed to ensure readability, clarity, and relevance to the research objectives.

The feedback provided by experts focused on the research instruments, more specifically, on the instruments' length, some wording, and repetitive ideas, which were immediately considered to improve them. Once revisions were made, the improved version was prepared for piloting. Creswell (2003) suggests the pivotal role of piloting instruments is to test items' validity. The pilot

test gives the researcher insights regarding the effectiveness of the instrument, complying in that way to the task of reassuring that it will measure what it is intended to measure. After the piloting feedback, the researcher can modify the instrument to a final version (Dörnyei, 2007).

The instruments developed were piloted in an English class of 27 students who were not to be involved in the study. Students were instructed to answer the questionnaire, the ICC scale, and the formative quiz and report on any emerging problem or misunderstanding when using the instruments. Based on the comments from the pilot class, the instruments were subsequently revised, and some minor issues regarding the structure of some questions were improved in order to meet the objective of collecting more accurate responses. The modified version was believed to be appropriate to collect the intended data. After correcting and improving the instruments, they were applied to both groups as pretest and posttest.

Reliability analysis was conducted on the ICC scale using SPSS 25. A Cronbach's alpha of greater than 0.90 was reported for all the ICC dimensions. It evidenced that the scale was appropriate for measuring what was intended. As for the combined approach perception scale, Cronbach's alpha was also greater than 0.90. The units developed were also discussed and revised by colleagues in the field of language teaching, who contributed insights and recommendations to improve them.

#### **4.4 Data Analysis**

Data analysis involves the task of analyzing the results and findings to reveal new knowledge. The data collected in this research were examined by using quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis. The use of quantitative instruments was intended to provide a numeric description of the study participants' trends, attitudes, and opinions (Creswell, 2009). The



quantitative data collected were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 25) using test measures to compare pretest and posttest accounting for the intercultural intervention in the EFL classroom during the first and second academic semesters in 2020. Different statistical analyses (descriptive, comparisons) were carried out. To complement the analysis of the quantitative results, a qualitative report was also generated to provide a better understanding of the study; such information provided further knowledge for interpretations or reinterpretations.

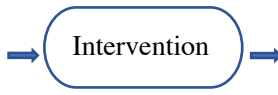
The data obtained from the pretest and posttest questionnaire, ICC questionnaire, and quiz were analyzed quantitatively to learn and establish differences between the intervention and control group after conducting comparison tests and then across the semesters. The pretest and posttest ICC questionnaires were analyzed using the Mann-Whitney U test to determine whether the intervention yielded significant differences between the intervention and control group and then to establish a comparison for the same groups across time during semesters I and II.

The comparisons intended to clarify and build on whether there were causal connections between the intervention and the variable of ICC and/or if any other relationships were evident. The intercultural formative quiz and the combined approach perception scales were also compared using the Mann-Whitney U test analysis to illustrate any significant differences between groups and across time. The questionnaire utilized categorical variables, consequently McNemar's chi-square was used to assess the difference between groups during the two semesters in which the intervention was applied.

The qualitative data resulting from the open-ended questions, reflective journals, and class observations were organized and built on using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is a flexible approach to qualitative analysis that facilitates categorizing and generating new insights and findings resulting from data. The NVivo program was also used to

relate units of meanings and outline the repeated themes and patterns resulting from students' open-ended responses. The journal reflection entries gathered from the students' posts were analyzed using the thematic analysis in which the researcher established repeated patterns of concepts, perceptions, and select extracts related to the research objectives and questions. Table 9 illustrates the design process undertaken in this study.

**Table 9** *Design Procedures and Instruments Adopted for the Semester I and II*

	Quan	Quan	Qual-Quan	Quan	Quan/ Qual	Interpret
E G	Data collection Pretests Questionnaire Formative quiz ICC self- assessment scale	Statistical Analysis	 Data collection Participants' journal reflections Assessment	Data collection Posttest Questionnaire Formative quiz ICC self- assessment scale Perception scale	Statistical analysis and thematic analysis	Interpre- tation and compari- sons
C G	Quan Pretests Questionnaire Formative quiz ICC self- assessment scale	Quan Statistical Analysis	— (No Intervention)	Quan Data collection Posttest Questionnaire Formative quiz ICC self- assessment scale	Quan Statistical analysis	

Note: \* E G: experimental group \*C G: control group

The quantitative and qualitative data results were gathered, analyzed, compared, and reported independently to establish a process in which the researcher explains and interprets both data sources. The qualitative data collected during and after the implementation of the ICC

framework were intended to identify the influence of combining the two approaches to mediate intercultural communicative competence. This sought to support and further validate the overall findings of this study. The results obtained established inferences and interpretations about ICC's implementation in the Integrated English I and II courses during academic semesters I and II of the year 2020.

## **CHAPTER 5: Pedagogical Interventions: Integrated English I & Integrated English II**

## 5.1 Pedagogical Intervention Proposal: CLIL and PBL Hybrid Approach

Two interventions were implemented to measure whether a combined approach of CLIL and PBL had any effectiveness in enhancing students' ICC. During the interventions, participants were informed and ensured the right to decline to participate or withdraw from participation at any time while the research was being conducted. The involvement in the study would not be unfavorable to these students in terms of the course evaluation. The course syllabus, content, objectives, and evaluation were respected and not disrupted during the interventions, while the complementary content and material were facilitated. According to the university standards, participants were graded and evaluated as specified in the course syllabus. It is important to highlight that the intervention was designed so that it was likely to enhance students' engagement, the authenticity of topics, interest, and to relate the learning experience to their immediate context. The interventions took place most of the time in a remote learning environment due to the health emergency caused by COVID-19; such a modality was a mandate by the state and the university officials.

Byram and Fleming (2009) propose that language teaching should respond to well-defined objectives with a view to develop practical communication skills, language, and cultural awareness. Therefore, the objectives for the intervention were drawn upon literature dealing with language teaching methodology (combined/hybrid method of CLIL and PBL) and other guidelines for instruction. During both interventions, pedagogical principles of CLIL and PBL approaches were considered when implementing the teaching units. Thus, instruction guidance steps were also considered when organizing the language learning environment.

**Table 10** *Hybrid Approach Principles*

<b>Learning Principles &amp; experience</b>	<b>Content &amp; Cognition</b>	<b>Context &amp; Language Culture</b>	<b>Teaching &amp; Assessment</b>
-Learning experience considers the 4Cs model and language triptych notions.	- Foreign language is promoted through content.	-Context relates to community engagement.	-Formative
-Learner-centered experience.	- Content relates to previous experience.	-Real-life purposes.	-Summative
-Develops digital competence.	-Content is instructed via a foreign language	-Deal with contextualized challenges, questioning, and problems.	-Holistic
-Cooperative learning	-Content is a mean for meaningful understanding and reflection.	-Context is a source of knowledge.	-Group, peer, and self-assessment.
-Facilitator acts as a guide and mentor.	-Content offers a cross-curricular approach to knowledge.	-21st-century skills and working life.	
-Experiential & deep learning	-Content is tangled in the projects & tasks.	-Projects & tasks are community-driven and connected to the real world.	
- Authentic, active, and constructive learning via tasks and projects.	- Interdisciplinary content guides to diverse standpoints	-Communication becomes authentic and purposely	
-Direct, explicit teaching		-Production & language is functional	
-Online & M-Learning	<u>Content and cognition tasks enrich:</u>	-Language acquisition occurs naturally.	
-Cross-curricular	-Creative and critical thinking.	-Language learning becomes concrete.	
- Natural language acquisition and communication	-Curiosity, reflection, autonomy.	-Communicative and input tasks are	
-Multiple foci			

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- Integrated learning	-Scaffolding.	interconnected (listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary).
-Constant interaction	-Consolidation	
-goal-oriented atmosphere	-Thinking skills: higher and lower.	-Preparation for linguistic demands.
Inquiry sparks curiosity and ongoing reflection.	-Problem-solving skills	-Knowledge and understanding of other cultures
-Increases motivation, autonomy, and cooperation	-Interpersonal and social skills	-Raises intercultural understanding and awareness from target and native cultures
-Increases academic achievement	-Learning to learn	
-Increased motivation and personal growth.	-Decision making and innovation	-Intercultural citizenship
-Community connection	-Inquiry and research skills.	-Implicit and explicit culture exposure
-Students are driven to share, understand, apply, and retain.	-Community of learners; cooperative and collaborative.	- Autonomous, guided development of ICC.

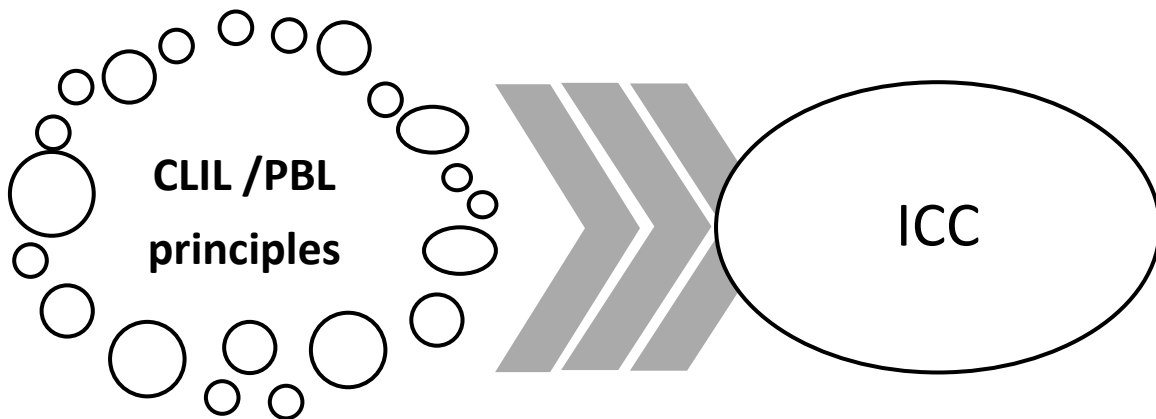
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Principles from CLIL and PBL were used to uplift the learning experience so that the target language could be acquired holistically and authentically and educators could act as significant guides and mentors. This synergy of CLIL and PBL principles poses a singular opportunity to infuse a repertoire of activities to experience language, communication, content, context, cognition, and interculturality. The target language was perceived as instrumental since it was used to accomplish higher curricular goals such as intercultural citizenship, intercultural awareness, and language competence progression. The intercultural and the language skills are acquired explicitly, consciously, and incidentally through the engagement in projects, class participation, content,

language, and performance-oriented tasks which were systematically and progressively introduced during the classroom experience. Language learners had the opportunity of working with intercultural content, a varied range of communicative tasks, and projects and were offered opportunities to reflect, understand, and support cognitive activation as approaching language learning.

The proposed objectives deliberately contemplate chances to connect, reconnect and rediscover their native culture and other cultures to support the process of adopting intercultural perspectives towards life. The whole process seeks language learners to become solidary, receptive, active, reflective, and sympathetic when interacting, learning, or using the target language as well as to initiate an autonomous but guided development of ICC.

**Figure 9** *CLIL and PBL Hybrid Approach to Enhance ICC*



The combination of CLIL and PBL learning principles postulate a dynamic learning environment that supports learners' intercultural communicative competence in a framework of formative and holistic possibilities for feedback and assessment.



### **5.1.1 Remote Learning at the National University of Costa Rica**

The intervention occurred primarily under a remote learning environment during semesters I and II due to the global and national health emergency caused by COVID-19. At the beginning of the first semester on March 2020, complying with the global and national health emergency caused by the spread of COVID-19 and following the health ministry dispositions, the UNA released a resolution stating the need to make a transition from face-to-face campus courses to sessions mediated through technological support as a strategy to respond to the pandemic emergency. The resolution emphasized that the modality was a contingency while the emergency lasted. Therefore, all face-to-face academic activities and courses were suspended until further notice. This meant that the intervention planned during 2019 prepared for face-to-face, on-campus had to be readapted to meet the emergent online modality. Digital and online resources content, assessment, and techniques were used through the semester I and semester II intervention.

Aware of the need to endeavor processes for academic innovation, UNA created the UNA Virtual program in 2005. The institution has progressed in incorporating digital technologies as a fundamental axis and, since then, the institutional unit that supports the development of blended online learning. In times of COVID-19, “UNA Virtual” is the university’s official online platform, where asynchronous online classes have been held. Activities such as lessons, units, homework, digital files, resources, and media are uploaded, and tasks for the learning process are mediated through it. This official platform (UNA Virtual) was used as the primary technological communication tool for asynchronous sessions during the interventions. Thus, other digital tools such as Google Classroom were used as a complementary platform to mediate asynchronous learning, especially to evidence and keep student’s production and online interaction and engagement.

For synchronous sessions, digital platforms such as “Zoom,” “Teams,” and “Google Meets” were used, taking advantage of these technological advances to facilitate live meetings with students who connected online. The remote online classes were carried out every week, and each session was divided into synchronous and asynchronous teaching hours. Synchronous and asynchronous virtual learning consisted of carefully conducted classes to ensure interaction between teachers and students and between students themselves. During this intervention, a critical pedagogical element relates to remote learning under the conceptualization of blended synchronous learning.

#### **5.1.1.1 Blended Synchronous Learning and mobile learning**

This virtual modality has become popular as a worldwide practice in educational environments and as an alternative measure to reduce the spread of the virus during these 2020 and 2021 pandemic years. Bower et al. (2015) define blended synchronous learning (BSL) as the “[l]earning and teaching where remote students participate in face-to-face classes utilizing rich-media synchronous technologies such as video conferencing, web conferencing, or virtual worlds” (p. 1). Another definition depicts BSL as a kind of mediated learning where using technology allows a nontraditional environment and face-to-face and remote students are gathered synchronously. Some of the advantages observed in using this synchronous virtual modality range from flexible, practical, educational, economical to connection convenience from anywhere. From an academic perspective, it is believed that BSL “can let remote participants experience an instructor’s lesson, ask and answer questions, add their own comments to the class dialogue, and generally allow engagement similarly to on-campus students” (White et al., 2010, p. 35). Girons and Swinehart (2020) recommend that language learning activities mediated through BSL should be planned to meet specific goals:

Pedagogical principles provide the foundation of a BSL course, and designing activities built on top of that foundation requires creativity from instructors. Activities should promote interaction among all students and improve group dynamics; take advantage of online tools where all students are “online students,” all in the same environment; be proactive, make sure that students come prepared and have had access to the input in advance (i.e., flipping content); encourage students to practice all four skills (speaking, reading, listening, and writing) outside of the classroom, and make special attention to move or add speaking tasks outside of the class meeting times; ensure individual feedback—as much as possible given the limitations of the setting; and promote activities that provide private spaces for individual feedback (such as online homework consultation or online assignments with written/oral feedback). (p. 41)

Moreover, in BSL contexts teachers need to be aware of the necessity of providing students with appropriate, continuous and timely feedback so as to ensure that they are engaged in the learning process. In this vein, Girons and Swinehart (2020) provide important insights in providing written and oral feedback to students engaged in BSL:

Written feedback is very easy to integrate into BSL environments. BSL courses can become a stronger way for the instructor to communicate with students and provide a wider range of feedback—not only assignment feedback (like comments using track-changes tools, short paragraphs at the end of a task) but also periodical, formative feedback. BSL environments can explore written feedback as a tool for providing group feedback. the instructor can be sure that the feedback has been delivered to all students equally and can also ensure that students have access to it

whenever they need it [ . . . ] Written group feedback can complement oral synchronous feedback [ . . . ] find one-on-one moments outside the classroom to provide synchronous oral feedback (e.g., online office hours or online homework consultation). (p 39)

These authors also put forward certain recommendations for students involved in BSL. Students need to be familiar with the basic use and troubleshooting of the mediated technology. They need to be reminded to follow the rules and reduce sounds or disturbances by using an area free from disturbance, noise or interruptions, mind clothing, not eating during class meetings, and muting the microphone when they are not speaking. Considering these specific details along with a planned instruction makes the teaching practice an organized learning experience from which students can take advantage at different levels. Another pedagogical element considered during this intervention under the practice of remote learning is mobile learning.

The mobile learning construct played an important role during the implementation of this ICC proposal. This kind of learning has become an rapidly growing modality that enables to use apps for online engagement through communities of learning with almost unlimited content access through the Internet. According to Castillo and Ayala (2012), m-learning proposes learning activities through mobile devices via a flexible connection of anywhere and anytime in which information and knowledge are obtained. Mobile learning has shown its potentialities for new learning experiences in and out of the physical realities of the classroom. In this regard, Shuler et al. (2012) contends that students and teachers are already using mobile technologies in a variety of contexts for a wide range of teaching and learning purposes, from education stakeholders to local school districts interested in testing supportive policies to boost mobile and innovative learning in formal and informal educational settings.

Cubero and Villanueva (2017) claim that m-learning comes with the possibilities of exploring apps such as WhatsApp to facilitate interactive communities of learning the instruction of a foreign language, which contributes to broadening perspectives and strengthening communication and specific functionalities of the language within particular purposes and tasks complementing and enhancing the learning experience. When planning well, its flexibility, real-time, popularity, and interactive features constitute an attractive tool in service of varied academic purposes such as sending and receiving messages, personalized communication, a community of learners, diffusion lists, contents, images, or video distribution, among others. Well-structured educational purposes can support the teaching-learning process, allowing progress, collaborative, and autonomous work among students. The role of m-learning in the pedagogical interventions was considered to be advantageous since most students could use their devices (smart phones, iPads, tablets, computers) to get quick access to the content, resources and information needed to complete the units facilitated independent of time and location. Besides, the communication channels (online meetings, calls and messages) were supported and mostly conducted through their smart devices. In general, the use of mobile devices was thought to support the facilitation of the learning experience in terms of flexible access, collaborative mediation, and ubiquitous communication.

## **5.2 ICC Hybrid Approach Intervention Proposal: Instruction Planning and Design**

It is an undeniable reality that the nature of teaching is associated with monitoring, observing, planning, creating, designing, collecting, and analyzing data to adapt or change praxis. This intervention process involved planning, designing, and adjusting the teaching and learning praxis carefully, reflectively, and systematically. During the two semesters in which the

intervention was conducted, varied resources were used, observations were noted, and instruments were applied to determine whether a hybrid approach combining CLIL and PBL would impact students' ICC skills. Evidence in the field suggests that to evince some progress when dealing with competence development such as communicative competence, intercultural communicative competence, critical cultural awareness, and intercultural understanding, requires constant and sustained exposure to comprehensible input within an ongoing process of instruction. That is why the intervention proposal was implemented during a two-semester period.

Developing an intervention proposal is a procedural and dynamic process involving reflective thinking about the elements that constitute the learning experience. A model process was established to design an intercultural communicative competence learning framework developed in several stages. In the different steps of the process, factors and principles were considered to enable students participating in the intervention to experience a differentiated learning purpose. Creating the suitable learning experience is fundamental to enhance the previously established educational goals. For that reason, the model comprised eight steps to outline the learning experience considering among other factors the context, objectives, hybrid approach principles, observation, and monitoring throughout the process.

**Figure 10** *ISUACAFO: The Procedural Steps for ICC Planning*

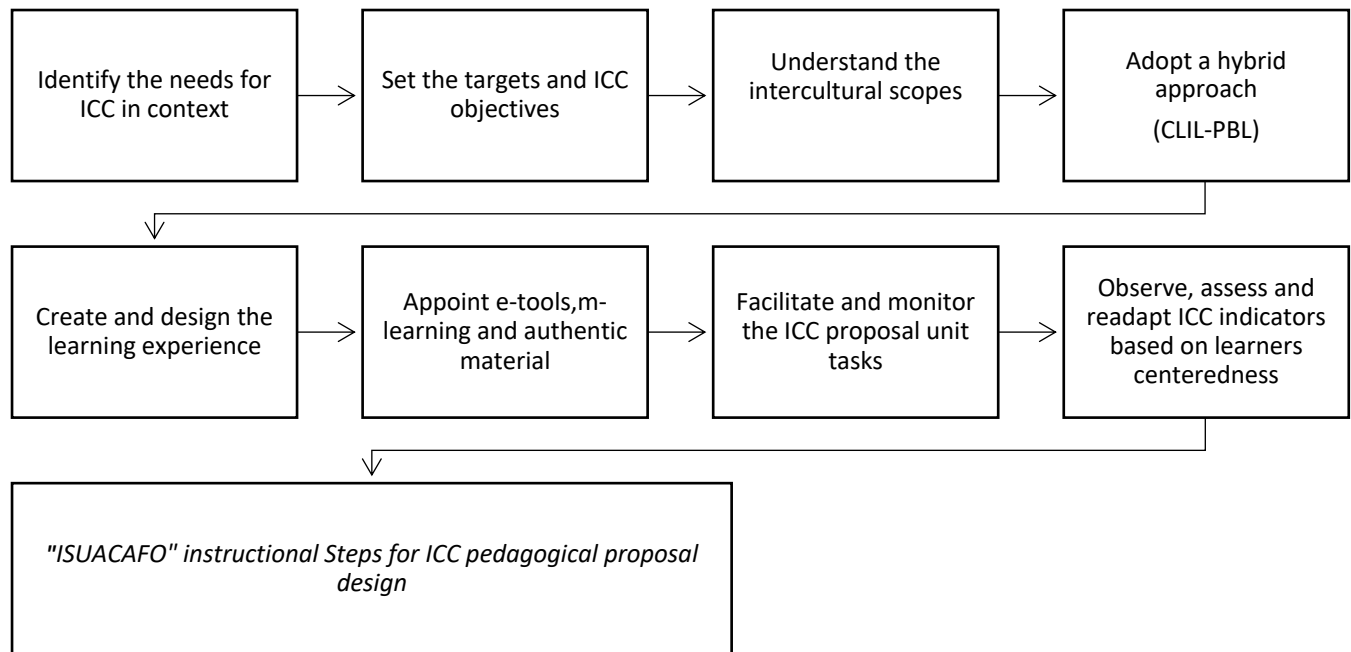


Figure 10 summarizes the procedural steps suggested in this study for ICC learning and teaching planning. The first step examines the learners’ and context needs, which are essential to adopt a vision of instruction that may benefit the learning experience. The analysis of the learning context helps to select and design the tasks and resources that may play in favor of the language and intercultural learning experience. The instructional objectives are to determine how the intercultural content will be managed and what is expected for learners to acquire or improve. Learners’ general profiles (e.g., linguistic level, cultural affiliation, interest, ICC needs and perspectives, study program) should also be considered to delimit the scope of the ICC learning proposal. The second advisable stage in any ICC instructional experience is related to establishing objectives and targets that delimit the proposal and guide the tasks and procedures learners will be exposed to, including the assessment tools and alternatives to determine the effectiveness and learners’ progression in attaining the goals.

The ICC proposal must be developed with a clear understanding of the complexities that surround the design of such a pedagogical proposal with the intercultural dimension in mind. At the beginning of this proposal design, challenges emerged when trying to answer questions about the what and how to address the intercultural component in an EFL classroom. An approximation to deal with those challenges requires adopting a holistic, integral notion of the concept of intercultural communicative competence and its link to language learning and the comprehensive idea of lifelong learning. A holistic intercultural vision requires an eclectic methodology, so a combined methodology enriched by a symbiosis of theoretical principles was adopted in the design of this intervention. CLIL and PBL teaching principles offer a wide variety of learning notions that can be merged into tasks with language and intercultural objectives as supportive for a multivariant platform to foster ICC learning.

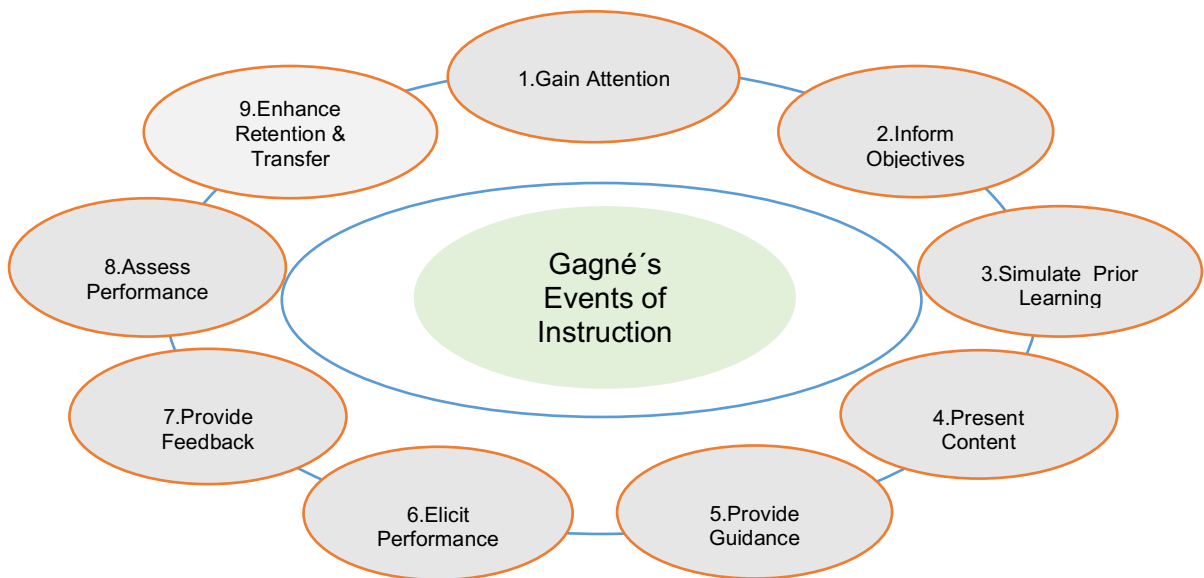
Selecting and designing the combined tasks into units facilitates integration and allows objective, formative, and holistic assessment. The next step is to create the learning experience, strategies, techniques, content, tasks, assessment, and units that integrate language and intercultural content to attain the targeted objectives. Appointing for varied authentic, contextualized material, digital resources with potential use through remote learning, technology-mediated, or m-learning may instill dynamism to the experience and facilitate learners' construction and enhancement of the learning experience. Careful selection, design, and adaptation of authentic materials support the process. Facilitating and monitoring the process requires a reflective integration of the learning elements and maximizing learners' exposure to a process that is rich in content and language. The framework needs to be designed around a great variety of tasks and based on a hybrid methodology, which scaffolds the learning process proceeding from simple to more complex tasks and exposing and engaging learners in the target language, communication, content, interculture, and projects.



This educational practice implies preparing, reflecting, and previsualizing the learning experience to adapt or change what might not be adequate or proper to general objectives.

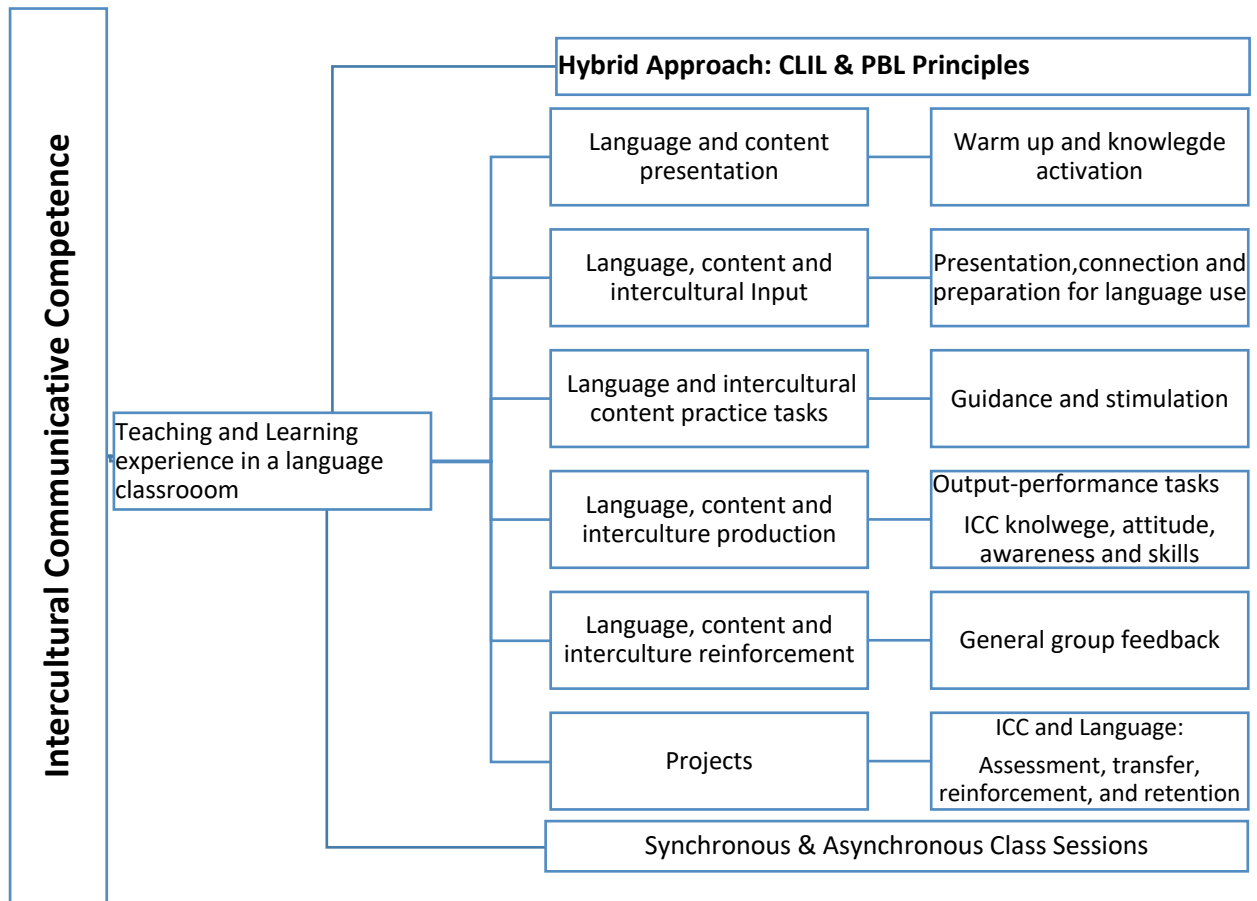
A stage for observing and assessing learners’ reactions and responsiveness to the tasks, activities, and overall exposure is helpful to measure the overall impact of the intended goals. It requires learners to be active in their autonomous knowledge construction while other processes take place. This revision aims at engaging students in the process of bilateral feedback. The aim of these stages is to design a humanistic, integral, cyclical teaching sequence that voices and centers students in achieving learning objectives and gains. The language instruction for ICC used in these interventions considered teaching and learning principles of CLIL and project-based learning adapted to the teaching reality of online learning and the specific context in which the learning took place. As specified earlier, Gagné steps for instruction were also considered for the sessions’ planning instruction (See Figure 11).

**Figure 11** *Gagné’s Events of Instruction*



*Source.* Created based on Gagné, 1985 pp. 276

**Figure 12** *Language Classroom Instruction for ICC: Hybrid CLIL and PBL Approach*



The aforementioned procedures and factors were carefully considered to provide the necessary learning conditions for learning to emerge grounded on the objectives proposed. Students were openly exposed to and explained about the language and cultural objectives and intended ICC outcomes. The stages implemented in class sessions were not rigid but flexible and took a cyclical standpoint during the whole process. Stages intertwine and follow an ongoing process focused on students' needs and interests. The stages, as shown in Figure 12, comprised: language and content presentation (warm-up, pre-knowledge activation); language, content, and intercultural input (presentation/ preparation, language use); language and content practice tasks (guidance and stimulation); language and content and intercultural production (output/performance); language,

communication, content, and interculture (reinforcement and feedback) and projects for further assessment, transfer, reinforcement, and retention.

During the sessions, students had a voice empowered by directing their own learning process in continual real-time communication with the instructor. The lesson plan provided a clear sequence and a framework for understanding content, but they were given the freedom to modify and reflect on what was being presented. Feedback was a vital part of the process in which critical ideas about how to treat intercultural issues when communication was provided. The model instruction presented language in the forms of quotes, images, phrases, short poems, or songs for them to establish connections concerning language, content, culture, grammar forms, and vocabulary. Language and intercultural content were treated as intimately interconnected.

This vision was explicitly shared with learners through tasks, projects, and real-life examples that were facilitated during the synchronous and asynchronous sessions. Students were expected to reflect over this relationship independently and freely. The educator facilitated, mediated, and accompanied learners during the whole learning process, which included target language and authentic, valuable content for their future professional lives. In terms of language, content, and intercultural input, the units and topics included a wide variety of authentic means, resources, and tasks to explore different cultural perspectives through the English language (i.e., English-speaking cultures and their native culture).

One of the major objectives of the second-semester intervention was to focus on a combination of tasks for developing ICC content knowledge, skills, attitude, and awareness, emphasizing topics for rediscovering the native/local culture in which guidance and controlled practice were provided holistically so that learners could acquire the competences incidentally by performing simple to complex tasks throughout the lesson development. Hence, learners had at

their disposal varied communicative opportunities to interpret, reflect, and learn the novel elements introduced for content, ICC, and communication in the target language.

During both interventions carried out in semesters I and II, students put into practice intercultural communicative strategies in the form of oral and written discussions, forums, wikis, reflections, video role-playing, audio podcast, project development, movie analysis, cultural capsules, intercultural incidents, and formative exercises. These activities were balanced in complex and level-appropriate tasks. The language demands for such tasks were previously planned and dealt with during the synchronous sessions to promote language use as most effectively possible.

Since learners were at the elementary English level, error correction was treated carefully at certain moments to avoid demotivating students from participating and engaging in productive skills. Further feedback was provided in written form through the Classroom App or the UNA platform. Language (e.g., grammar forms, vocabulary, fluency, pronunciation), content knowledge, and critical intercultural awareness were promoted in their asynchronous tasks, homework, and projects. During the synchronous online class, which usually took two hours, students were encouraged to use the language as much as possible, working collaboratively throughout the content and intercultural material tasks. Focus on language was addressed when students had questions, doubts, or comments.

During the production stage, students were given immediate group feedback for both asynchronous and synchronous sessions and positive reinforcement and recognition of their progress in terms of language and ICC skills. Learners were led to use language while reflecting on the content and intercultural issues of their own culture and others. Using a hybrid approach helps provide theoretical foundations and principles that support both language and ICC instruction and provide students with a holistic vision of language learning. The new tendencies of teaching a

foreign language correspond to the need to train intercultural speakers in order to nurture aware and active citizens who recognize in their own culture an opportunity to contribute to the well-being of humanity.

### **5.2.1 Pedagogical Interventions: Overall Description**

The students enrolled in the official integrated English I and II courses met twice per week with a mean of four hours per sessions. The regular teaching hours for these courses range from 8 to 10 weekly hours within a 16-week semester. These courses generally divide language skills into two sessions, that is to say, a session that emphasizes listening and speaking and another session that focuses on reading and writing and language forms. For these courses, teachers usually use textbooks and complementary material for their sessions. The Integrated English I and II courses are offered to different majors at the UNA since these are intended to complement their major's curriculum with English courses.

The intervention was implemented during two semesters in these elementary English courses Integrated English I and Integrated English II. The research participants who were part of the intervention were enrolled in elementary general English courses Integrated English I during semester I, 2020, and were to take Integrated English II in semester II, 2020. Due to the COVID-19 health emergency, the on-campus intervention was interrupted by mid-March 2020 and forced to continue as remote learning instruction during the two semesters.

Both intervention classes and the control class were enrolled in Integrated English I and were to take Integrated English II. The experimental class majored in commerce, tourism, business, and English and the non-experimental class majored in business, computer science, and hydrology. They had similar elementary English levels, ranging from A1 to A2, based on their English scores obtained in the diagnostic test administered during the first week of classes. For the purpose of this

study, the population enrolled in the courses was divided into two groups: the intervention and control groups correspondingly. The proposal for the experimental class used a hybrid principle of CLIL and PBL to facilitate the systematical integration of ICC in the EFL class sessions while the control group followed a traditional methodology. The proposal for the experimental group was applied for a 26-week period, 13 weeks per semester, during two semesters within the Integrated English I and Integrated English II courses. The control group did not receive any intercultural training and followed traditional teaching instruction based on four language skills and textbook-focused instruction (i.e., grammar forms, structure and reading, listening comprehension, vocabulary, and writing). The control group was taught by colleagues using a four-skill-oriented perspective without methodically integrating the ICC component into the units within the EFL classroom. In contrast, in the intervention group the syllabus consisted of thematic units with intercultural content following a CLIL and PBL combined methodology during semesters I and II.

The researcher assumed the role of researcher-practitioner, facilitating two intervention classes while collecting data simultaneously. The researcher was a language educator in charge of teaching two of the courses categorized in the intervention group. Two other colleagues facilitated the two other courses within the intervention group during each semester. The other two intervention professors in charge were advised and guided on how to proceed with the units' objectives, activities, methodology, and intercultural content. They were given the units, material, resources, and content intended to be developed.

The language educators imparted online synchronous sessions. The units and activities were discussed, guided, and generally carried out every week for two hours. Students were asked to go through the tasks and engage in live discussions and task completion and conduct the project, reflections, and homework as complementary tasks. These would be conducted in asynchronous mode. Students would work with the teachers on the tasks proposed by having direct and constant

communication between students and students and teachers and students based on remote learning in synchronous and asynchronous modes. They worked, reacted, and reflected on the tasks material and content autonomously individually, in pairs or groups. They were required to complete around one hour and a half or more of tasks as homework, projects, and journal entries related to the units proposed every week. The online learning experience utilized was the online UNA platform, Google Classroom, and for live meetings, Zoom and Teams were used weekly to conduct live class sessions.

The pedagogical intervention was based on the theoretical body of literature proposed to mediate ICC within a learning environment that takes a hybrid approach of teaching and learning principles from CLIL and PBL. Additionally, some of Byram's educational objectives, notions, and recommendations were considered and included to implement the lessons and units of the two pedagogical interventions that lasted two semesters. Each intervention comprised seven intercultural units whose instruction intended to interrelate varied relevant content to students' context, majors, and real life in connection to interculture, foreign and the Costa Rican culture, assuring language exposure as well.

Based on the general objectives proposed by Byram (1997, 2020), the experimental group students were expected to: (a) increase, discover, and rediscover their knowledge of the products, symbols, behaviors, practices, and national memory about cultures and their native culture; for example, the Costa Rican culture, through the use of receptive and productive skills, real-life a combined approach of tasks and projects; (b) enhance, develop, and reaffirm positive attitudes toward cultural differences by promoting empathy, curiosity, and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about foreign cultures, the Costa Rican culture, and subcultures through the use of receptive and productive skills mediated by a combined approach of tasks, homework, and projects;

(c) develop and enhance learners' intercultural skills to interpret, relate, discover, and interact by introducing, instructing, and leading them to learn to combine knowledge, skills, critical cultural awareness, and attitudes when communicating and engaging with people from different cultural affiliations through the use of receptive and productive skills mediated by a combined approach of tasks and projects.

The unit lessons intended to meet these intercultural goals holistically throughout semesters I and II. As Fonseca-Greber (2010) recommended when introducing culture, it is fundamental for educators to initially introduce students to a self-reflective process of their preconceived notions and misunderstandings about the target culture; during this reflection, students tend to be more open to undertake identity transformation and self-awareness. To build more on that recommendation, it is noticeable that virtually every theme or topic transmits cultural elements, opening gates to work on comparisons, reflection, and analysis of singular cultures. Language, content, and skills can be enhanced upon various materials ranging from national to international issues. The intervention proposal developed in the study integrated varied intercultural content through the target language, which intended to build and foster students' cultural knowledge (e.g., cultural-general, cultural-specific, intercultural citizenship) of various cultural elements. Those were facilitated during both interventions as working synergies for enhancing students' intercultural communicative competence (e.g., knowledge, skills, critical cultural awareness, receptive attitudes toward different cultures) within a hybrid method learning experience characterized by language teaching principles from both CLIL and PBL approaches.

Productive and receptive skills require sufficient target language input and adequate opportunities for practice and reinforcement of grammar forms and vocabulary tasks implicitly introduced in the units facilitate a balanced learning experience. Projects and homework during the



intervention experience were assigned to boost students' autonomy, inquiry, collaborative skills, and connections to actual-world elements.

The lessons developed included themes related to historical memory hints, native culture and other cultures world views, insights about everyday life, routine work, lifestyle and habits, education, gender roles, music, food, traditions, behaviors, beliefs, and customs, social rules legends, stories, proverbs, stereotypes, communication styles from native culture and other cultures. Various authentic activities, tasks, tools, and resources were used to achieve such objectives. Tasks were carried out to expose the learner to language skills (i.e., reading, listening, speaking, and writing) and intercultural instruction was given through classroom engagement promoted as an individual, group, or pair work. Research on authentic learning suggests that interactive engagement and authentic like instruction helps learners to achieve confidence and increasing chances for knowledge acquisition and higher interest and positive attitude toward the methodology.

During the synchronous and asynchronous sessions, some of the primary means and resources used included multimedia resources, audiovisual material, such videos, movies, television series, documentaries, audios, podcasts, texts, cartoons, images, infographics, reading passages, songs, quotes, art, literature, poems local newspaper articles, magazine articles, critical incidents, and culture capsules. Students were asked to engage in different tasks to work on receptive and productive language skills while creating their products and projects infused with intercultural content and reflection. The units included exercises as warm-ups, visual thinking, whole-class and group discussions, matching tasks, fill-in tasks, forums, retelling, summarizing, creating, situation solving, critical thinking, short answer exercises, completion, listening and reading comprehension, small talks, video creation, oral presentations, and virtual role-plays,

among other kinds of tasks. Students had autonomy to develop their own strategies, make decisions and establish connections to language and intercultural content.

In addition, the development of cognitive skills was scaffolded through homework, tasks, and projects and autonomous and independent work. Feedback from peers and teachers about their products during both asynchronous and synchronous sessions also contributed to fostering cognitive skills. Students used the Classroom App platform to keep a record of their progress and upload the evidence of their engagement through the unit lessons (i.e., unit tasks, homework, project, videos, audio podcasts, peer reviews, presentations, and journal entries). Students were asked to post their video products and projects and view, revise, and comment on each other's products. At the same time, during the online meeting, they submitted their experience briefings and general intercultural reflections. The facilitator provided group feedback on the language content and intercultural connections.

Concerning the intercultural perspective, Gray (2000) advises that material with inappropriate cultural content should be avoided and suggests to adapt tasks and activities to meet the intercultural goals. Therefore, the material was carefully chosen in order to avoid the spread of stereotypes and bias. Audiovisual material was selected in terms of genuineness, quality, accuracy, and contemporaneity. The material was reviewed to meet the general intentions of the ICC proposal, targeting the established objectives. Themes, resources, and tasks targeted the interaction between learners and student engagement and with language, content, and intercultural dimensions. The intercultural content and materials were carefully selected and adapted to meet the criteria of language acquisition, context, authenticity, and interculturally driven themes to target cultures (English-speaking countries and other cultures that use English as a lingua franca) and native culture respecting its appropriateness for students' level of English and interest.

The design of the intervention included varied formative assessment tasks and techniques to estimate the student learning progress resulting from the ICC combined instruction strategies. Alternative forms of assessment, such as self-assessment, reflective journals, peer review, interviews, and portfolios, are preferable ways to assess intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997; Lange & Paige, 2003) rather than traditional measurements, as no single assessment tool can give a complete picture of ICC enhancement. The progress made in terms of assessment has been remarkable. Now, classroom dynamics regards the task of assessing not necessarily as giving a fixed score and as an activity fully oriented to the final product of students' work. Hence, the assessment procedure carried out during the intervention proposal was conducted eclectically through a variety of instruments instruments, such as observations, participants' e-journal entries, rubrics and checklists formative task activities, which allowed to assess students' advance, progress and products throughout the learning process (interventions).

The project process tasks required constant communication, autonomy, and self-monitoring on behalf of the students. Certain aspects were taken in consideration to assure the success and effectiveness of the process. For instance, the following criteria helped guiding and providing students with formative assessment regarding their project process:

- The project's driving question or problem is linked to the students' context, community, interest, and real life
- Project tasks and final products reflect authentic and practical purposes
- The project process promotes learners' voice and learning. Students take significant responsibility and autonomy in deciding how to conduct their projects
- The project reflects sustained inquiry, making use of resources to actively construct and reflect on knowledge, questions, and answers

- The project highlights sufficient ideas connected to intercultural communicative competence (ICC) and culture identity around native and target cultures
- The project is equally constructed since students work collaboratively, benefiting from each participant's skills to complete the project tasks
- Students ask for feedback on their work and ask for support on language needs to revise ideas and create their product successfully
- Collaborative and individual learning deal with important language, content, and ICC advance and progression through the work on project tasks
- The project shows students' self-assessment and monitoring on goals achievement and ICC integration
- Students present their project while attempting to make the content interesting and focus on relevant information.
- Digital tools are used to support content illustration allowing engagement, interest, and creativity
- Students use proper English to present their work taking into account content, pronunciation, grammar mechanics, and oral delivery.

Throughout the intervention, the researcher and colleagues in charge observed students' reactions toward the content and units. The observations were useful to note aspects resulting from the development of the pedagogical intervention to determine students' reactions and levels of engagement after studying the language through the hybrid approach. In such a manner, field notes were taken to systematize detailed descriptive reports of the different situations that happened during synchronous and asynchronous class sessions. Students participating in the intervention

were involved in writing reflective journals about the learning experience. They were required to write reflective journals based on each unit's suggested questions/topics or themes addressed during the sessions. Students wrote their reflective journals by providing comments addressing the questions posed, thus serving as an exercise for developing critical culture awareness, attitude, skills, and knowledge, according to Jacobsen and Florman (2011). The collection of these entries served to guide and assess students' learning process allowing them to benefit from the materialization and articulation of their learning and growth.

Based on the observations, reflections, comments, and feedback from colleagues after the first module intervention in semester I, some modifications were done regarding the content, units, tasks, and projects. Revision on the timing of class activities, project periods, class activities, contextualized material, number of tasks, and level of difficulty of teaching materials were considered for intervention II, semester II. Table 11 offers an outline of the topics and main objectives addressed in Interventions I and II.

**Table 11** *Intervention I and II Topics and Major Objectives*

S.I	Week	Topics	ICC insights	Major Objectives	ICC
<b>Feb to Jun 2020</b>	1	Globalizati on and the	- Historical origins.	-Identify international commerce remarks and its role on the global market	*K
	2	global market	-Costa Rican early's economical activities	-Relate the country's efforts to grow by exploring its historical origins.	*S *A
	3	Tourism:	-Concept of	-Learn about Tourism in Costa Rica and its beautiful	*C
	4	Costa Rica' beauty	beauty Critical culture awareness	venues. -Understand their own cultural ideology with respect to beauty.	A
	5	Blue zones:	-Chronemics	-Find out about cultural norms and practices of	
	6	happiness and tempo	-Notions of happiness	different Blue Zones of the world. -Identify Costa Rican cultural norms and lifestyle that promotes longevity and happiness	

7 8	Jobs and diversity	-Cultural diversity -Stereotypes	-Find out about cultural stereotypes and possible impact on communication by watching a movie. - Recognize and respect cultural diversity while communicating with people from different cultures.
9 10	Achievements and dreams	Individualism and collectivism	-Compare and analyze individualistic and collectivistic cultures. -Learn about famous peoples' goals and achievements
11 12	Communication in the workplace	Communication styles Critical culture awareness	-Learn about some key aspects and business etiquette at the workplace. -Get familiar with and compare some cultural values from different countries in business and at the workplace.
13	Intercultural citizenship: skills for the future	Intercultural citizenship	-Find out about the meaning and implications of Global Citizenship. -Propose ideas to act as agents of change to make a difference in their community.

<b>S.II</b>	<b>Week</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>ICC insights</b>	<b>Major Objectives</b>	<b>ICC</b>
<b>Jul to Nov 2020</b>	1	Advertisement: services and products	-Values, practices, stereotypes. -Critical culture awareness Hofstede's cultural dimensions	-Discuss about shopping habits, ads, and commercials.	*K
	2			-Get familiar with certain rules for providing quality of customer service -Creatively design and film a commercial advertisement for a made-up product or service. -Identify cultural aspects represented in advertisements and commercials.	
	3			-Learn about some key aspects and business etiquette at the workplace.	
	4	Workplace communication	Communication styles	-Get familiar with and compare some cultural values from different countries in business and at the workplace.	*A
	5	Costa Rica: a look back	-historical events -Culture traits	-Explore key historical events of Costa Rica from 16 <sup>th</sup> century till 20 <sup>th</sup> .	A
	6			-Learn about some of the significant events that have shaped the Costa Rica of today. -Encourage a sense of one's own culture awareness.	
	7	Business and gender equality	Gender roles in one's and other cultures	-Learn about some of the challenges and advances for women at workplace.-Get familiar with gender's roles in some cultures and the challenges women face in certain areas of life.	
	8				

9 10	Technology : advantages and disadvantages	-Interculture -cultures comparison Critical culture awareness	-Identify key technological advancement, its positive and negative impact. -Recognize the impact of those advancements on human life, societies, and cultures. -Propose ideas to lessen the dark areas of expected technological progress.
11 12	Afrocostarian: rediscovering roots	-Interculture -cultures comparison Critical culture awareness	-Recognize the historical background of the Afro-Costa Rican culture and their contribution and heritage to the Costa Rican culture. -Encourage critical culture awareness towards one's own roots, cultural diversity, traditions, and practices.
13	Global citizenship	- Intercultural citizenship	-Investigate the meaning and implications of Global Citizenship. -Propose ideas to act as agents of change to make a difference in their community.

\*K: knowledge - \*S: skills - \*A: attitude - \* CA: critical awareness

### 5.2.2 Integrated English I & II Interventions: Sample Lesson Plans

The following lesson plans include some of the tasks and projects used to mediate the learning process and infuse and enhance learners' intercultural communicative competence. Table 12 shows the structure used to plan the hybrid methodology and the activities, task and materials.

**Table 12** *ICC Lesson Plan Structure*

<b>Overall Lesson Plan Structure</b>		<b>Topic:</b>
<b>Learning outcomes:</b> (intercultural learning, content, communication, and language)		
<b>Content:</b> (Themes, thematic units)		
<b>Intercultural Insights:</b> (Knowledge, skills, attitude & critical culture awareness)		
<b>Cognition:</b> ( Bloom Taxonomy & <i>Cognitive Discourse Functions</i> ...)		
<b>Language skills &amp; Communication</b>	<b>Interaction &amp; Engagement</b>	<b>Materials &amp; Resources</b>
<i>Language Skills Emphasis</i>	Individual, peer or Group work	<i>(photos, pictures, songs, auth. material texts, online resources...)</i>
<b>Formative Assessment:</b> <i>Assessment techniques (formative, peer and self-assessment, journal reflections)</i>		
<b>Project Tasks:</b>		

**Table 13** *Table Sample Lesson Plan 1*

Overall Lesson Plan -Sample Lesson Plan. Level: A1-A2 Time: 3:30 hours			
Intervention I- <b>Integrated English I - Topic: Globalization and the global market</b>			
<b>Learning outcomes:</b>			
<u>Content:</u>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find out about commerce and trade importance to the country.</li> <li>• Identify international commerce remarks and its role on the global market.</li> </ul>			
<u>Intercultural Insights:</u>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find out history about the country's early economical activities.</li> <li>• Relate the country's efforts to grow by exploring its historical origins.</li> <li>• Understand their own cultural identity and how it formed.</li> <li>• Recognize aspects of their own cultural identity, specificities/references/affinities.</li> </ul>			
<u>Language:</u>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn some relevant vocabulary about marketing and globalization.</li> <li>• Discuss and share ideas about marketing, globalization, and Costa Rican early's economical activities.</li> <li>• Learn about the verb "to be" in present tense and practice its usage in different kinds of sentences.</li> </ul>			
<u>Cognition:</u>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand, explain, interpret, and discuss ideas about the content.</li> <li>• Identify and describe some Costa Rican's cultural identity and historical traits.</li> </ul>			
<b>Language skills &amp; Communication</b>	<b>Interaction &amp; Engagement</b>	<b>Materials &amp; Resources</b>	<b>Main Tasks</b>
Observing and speaking	<i>Whole Class</i>	Picture on Multimedia	<b><u>Warm up:</u></b> Task # 1: Students observe a picture of a port and share their observations.
Reading and Interacting	<i>Pair work</i>	Text as hand out/e-copy	Task # 2: Students read a passage about International Marketing and participate orally providing their interpretations, ideas and answers to questions posed by the teacher regarding the text. 2.1 Students will be given some basic definitions regarding Commerce and trade, which they will match with their respective terms from a word list. They will then check their answers.
Listening, reading and writing	Individual work	Multimedia and printed /printable transcript	<b><u>Core part:</u></b> Task # 3: Students watch a videoclip related to globalization and fill in the blanks its transcript content ideas. They will then listen an audio track about Costa Rican economic position in the global market.
Listening and	Small group work		Task # 4:



writing	Individual work	Notepad/iphone Notebook Or questionnaire	In pairs, students will interview their partners to note down their opinions about positive and negative aspects that globalization has on their country's economy, along with its direct impact on their lives. Task # 5:
Reading, matching/ writing and reconciling	Whole class		Structures and examples of VERB "TO BE" in Simple Present Tense, will be shown to students, so that they can study it, and then can identify such sentences from the content they have read so far in the unit. Task # 7:
Reading and speaking	Whole class	Hand out Picture on Multimedia and hand outs	Students will look at the given pictures about Costa Rica Early's economical activities. As a group students converse with the teacher about key facts and prominent aspects regarding their culture and identity while connecting it to its economical productivity.
Reading and interacting	Pair/ Small group work	Multimedia a slide/ hand out	<b>Closure:</b> Task # 8: Students are introduced to the role of culture in everyday life and how it is linked to language. Task # 9:
Speaking and writing	Whole class	White board/	A picture of an iceberg shall be placed/shown on the board. Students will brainstorm and list on the board, elements of the Costa Rican culture. They will then identify and join visible elements to the tip of the iceberg and invisible ones to the lower hidden part. Teacher explains the need to be careful with stereotyping countries, and regions.

**Assessment:**

Journal writing:

Students will be writing a digital blog about their learning experience in this unit, describing perspective of their culture and the key aspects they consider significant of their identity as a nation part of a global market.

**Project:** In small groups, students are required to read about key historical events such as the conquest of the Costa Rican territory to rediscover certain identity roots and traits. Then, they conduct a mini project by interviewing certain seniors from their community. They design a set of questions to ask them with the aim to explore any historical event they are interested to approach about. They will create a videoclip or a product about their findings regarding their country's past or history (Costa Rica). They will record their highlights discussions and share some of the short stories/anecdotes in their next class.

**Table 14** *Table Sample Lesson Plan 2*


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 Overall Lesson Plan -Sample Lesson Plan. Level: A1-A2 Time: 3:30 hours

**ICC: Intervention I- Integrated English I - Topic: Tourism: Costa Rica' beauty**


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**Learning outcomes:**Content:

- Find out about beauty & its various facades.
- Learn about Tourism in general and Costa Rica in particular, with respect to beauty of venues.

Intercultural Insights:

- Find out about the concept of beauty from a cultural sense.
- Understand their own cultural ideology with respect to beauty.

Language:

- Learn some relevant vocabulary.
- Learn and practice about the verb “to be” in Simple Present Tense in different kinds of sentences.

Cognition:

- Identifying, comparing, summarising, and reflecting about their country's natural and cultural beauty.

<b>Language skills &amp; Communication</b>	<b>Interaction</b>	<b>Materials &amp; Resources</b>	<b>Main Tasks</b>
Observing, speaking and interacting	Whole Class	Pictures on Multimedia	<p><b><u>LEAD IN:</u></b> Task # 1 &amp; 2: Teacher will ask the students to observe the pictures shown to them and then share their observations about their beauty. Further they will be given the opportunity to guess and name of the venues and if they believe are from their territories.</p> <p>Students will then be asked to share their opinions about it in terms of their country's beauty, its nature and culture. They would also pinpoint some negative aspects they know.</p>
Reading, discussing and writing	Pair work Pair work/ Whole class	Hand out Phone with internet connection	<p><b><u>CORE PART:</u></b> Task # 3 &amp; 4: Students will be given pre-reading questions to answer about the Costa Rican tourism industry. In pairs, students read the provided passage and have a conversation guided by the given questions.</p> <p>Task # 5: Students will explore a touristic website and then discuss with their partners/professor their opinion about the best of the places to visit from the list the website suggests. This must be done with some valid reasoning for their choice.</p>
Reading, selecting and arguing	Whole Class	<p>Website link: <a href="https://www.cntraveler.com/gallery/most-beautiful-countries-in-the-world">https://www.cntraveler.com/gallery/most-beautiful-countries-in-the-world</a></p>	

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			Task # 6:
Observing, speaking and interacting  Reading and listening	Whole class	Picture on Multimedia	The quote of Plato about beauty will be discussed: <i>“Beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder.”</i> Students will be encouraged to address the notion of beauty perceptions across different cultures. After which, a few pictures will be shown, and students will share their views about the various kinds of apparent beauty reflected in the photos (Emphasis on North American ideology of beauty and Costa Rican beauty perspective, are addressed).
	Pair Work/ Whole Class	Handouts and audio file played on Multimedia	Task # 7: Students will listen to the audio clip talk about some other aspects of beauty other than appearances. Students paraphrase the message and express their opinions. Students are encouraged to use and enhance new vocabulary.
		Multi-media	Task # 8: Students will describe their beauty routine to their partners. Then they will discuss Simple Present Tense and its structures in different kinds of sentences. Later, 2 pairs will describe each other, the comparison of beauty routine between the partners.
	Thinking, interacting and speaking	Group work	Multimedia for showing questions

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**CLOSURE:**  
Task # 9: (Final Reflection)  
Students will be divided in 5 groups and will think, reflect, and discuss and then share with the class the following questions: - Why is important to study culture in an English class?, What is Intercultural Learning?, What do we understand by the word culture?, What is the direct relationship between language and culture?, What skills relate to Intercultural Competence?  
The class would conclude with Ralph Waldo Emerson’s saying about beauty: *“Beauty is the mark God sets on virtue. Every natural action is graceful; every heroic act is also decent and causes the place and the bystanders to shine.”* Ralph Waldo Emerson

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**Assessment:**

**Journal writing:** Students will be writing a reflective journal about their learning in this unit. They will also be describing their opinion about beauty, difference in cultural perspectives of beauty and the tips to remember while communicating with culturally different people.

**Project:** Students are required to investigate about some indigenous people of Costa Rica, while collecting pictures, facts, traditions, practices, and beliefs about them. They will research and include the groups and information they autonomously agree as a group. Then, they will share their product findings in two weeks.

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**Table 15** *Sample Lesson Plan 3*


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Overall Lesson Plan -Sample Lesson Plan. Level: A1-A2 Time: 3:30 hours  
 Intervention I- Integrated English I - Topic: Achievements and Dreams

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**Learning outcomes:****Content:**

Investigate the meaning of the term achievement and other relevant terms.

Learn about famous people's goals and achievements.

Discuss the ideas of individualism and collectivism.

**Intercultural Insights:**

Explore cultures' differences in terms of reaching goals and achievements.

Introduce intercultural communicative competence issues.

Compare and analyze individualistic and collectivistic cultures.

**Language:**

Learn some important vocabulary related to successful personalities.

Communicate ideas related to individualistic and collectivistic cultures.

Differentiate between the simple present and simple past, and practice using these tenses correctly.

**Cognition:**

Interpreting, and reflecting on cultural differences regarding achievements.

Reviewing, assessing, and evaluating the achievements of others.

Brainstorming, discussing, researching, and identifying strategies to achieve goals.

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Language skills	Interaction & Engagement	Material & Resources	Main Tasks
Listening and speaking	Whole Class	Cartoon	<b>LEAD IN:</b> Task # 1: Teacher will ask the students to observe a cartoon related to achievement and share their observations. Task # 2 & 3: Two quotes will be shared by the teacher and students are expected to react to the quotes. For example: A dream becomes a goal when action is taken toward its achievement. Bo Bennett After that, students will provide and construct their own definition of 'achievement'.
Reading and speaking	Individual Work	Multi-media and E-dictionary	<b>CORE PART:</b> Task # 4: Students will read the biography of Bill Gates and label paragraphs with correct titles from a given list. They will then look for definitions of some words from the biography passage. Then, they will fill some factual blanks about Bill Gates by using verbs in the past tense. They will also read a passage about Keylor Navas. A Costa Rican soccer player. Task # 5:
Reading and writing	Individual & Group Work	Multi-media and Handouts	

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Reading, writing, and speaking	Whole Class		<p>Sentence structures of Simple Present and Simple past are addressed and discussed in class to meet the language demands of the activities.</p> <p>Task # 6</p> <p>Students will read and evaluate critically with their partners the two short biographies to ascertain ideas related to achievement and success. After that, they will, in the same way, evaluate their own achievements in the context of their culture and country, while thinking and providing ideas of strategies that can help them in achieving their goals in life.</p>
	Pair Work		<p>Task # 7:</p> <p>Students will read and discuss a comparative analysis of cultures provided by Hofstede with respect to achievements, i.e., individualism and collectivism, with some examples.</p>
	Whole class		<p>Task # 8:</p> <p>In a plenary session, the teacher guides the students reflect about the necessary steps and strategies to achieve goals. Finally, students share characteristics of highly successful people and how they can set their goals to progressively achieve them.</p>
Listening and speaking	Whole class	Video song	<p>The class is concluded by listening to the song “Unwritten” by Natasha Bedingfield. Students are invited to provide final insights around the song and its cultural elements.</p>

**Assessment: Journal writing**

Students will write a journal entry reflection about differences in terms of collectivistic and individualistic cultures and how each culture handles the idea of achievement. They will also provide their general insights about the task activities and what they have discovered in terms of content and culture.

**Project:** In groups, students record an online mini drama video (via Zoom app) based on a short story that reflects or touches the idea of achievement and success. Students will then post/share their video drama on the classroom app for the whole class to watch the video and provide feedback on their performance and content ideas reflected.

**Table 16** *Sample Lesson Plan 4*


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 Overall Lesson Plan -Sample Lesson Plan. Level: A1-A2 Time: 3:30 hours  
**Intervention I- Integrated English I - Topic: Blue Zones: Happiness and Tempo**


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**Learning outcomes:**
Content:

- Find out about Blue Zones of the world and the reasons of their longevity.
- Study about Nicoya Peninsula, Costa Rica, as a Blue Zone.
- Discuss the ideas of happiness, time, time orientation, Chronemics, pace of life and tempo.

Intercultural Insights:

- Find out about cultural norms and practices of different Blue Zones of the world.
- Develop intercultural communicative competence.
- Identify Costa Rican cultural norms and lifestyle that promotes longevity and happiness.
- Compare their personal lifestyle with the Blue Zoners.

Language:

- Learn some important relevant vocabulary in relation to Blue Zones and their way of life.
- Discuss ideas around happiness and longevity.
- Practice reading, inferring, discussing, interpreting, speaking, and explaining their own ideas related to the topic.
- Understand and practice the use of modals: “can, must, may, have to, should, would, used to” in different kinds of sentences.

Cognition:

- Comprehending, identifying, and discussing about Blue Zones.
  - Comparing, reflecting, analyzing, and evaluating lifestyles that ensure longevity and happiness.
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<b>Language skills &amp; Communication</b>	<b>Interaction &amp; Engagement</b>	<b>Materials &amp; Resources</b>	<b>Main Tasks</b>
Observing, speaking and writing	Whole Class/ Individual Work	Video on Multimedia and Notebook	<b><u>LEAD IN:</u></b> Task # 1.1, 1.2 & 1.3: Students will be asked about Blue Zones - if they have heard of them and their wish for living a long life. After that, they will watch a video about Nicola Peninsula, Costa Rica, which is famous for longevity. They will then share their understanding about it. Finally, students will create a mind map regarding the video.
Reading, writing, and speaking	Whole class/ Individual Work	Quote/picture on Multimedia	Task # 2 & 3: Later, they will read a quote and write down their reaction regarding it. They will also be shown a few pictures to ponder upon and will be asked to guess their age.
Reading, interacting, reflecting and writing	Individual reading/ Pair Work		<b><u>CORE PART:</u></b> Task # 4.1, 4.2 & 4.3: Students will read a passage about Blue Zones and the lessons we can learn from the people of those

Reading, discussing, and writing	Whole Class/ Individual	Multimedia and Handouts	areas, followed by discussion in pairs. They will then write a few of their habits and lifestyle routine. After that, students will reflect their understanding of the topic with the partner by looking for the similarities and differences between the aspects of their lifestyle to that of the Blue Zoners.
Reading, writing, and interacting	Work		Task # 5: Students will study modals ‘can, may, must, should, would, have to, used to’ and the situations they are used in. They will practice them by forming a few sentences/questions by themselves, considering the topic.
	Individual/ Pair Work		Task # 6.1 & 6.2: Here, the students will read individually, the detailed content about the people of a Blue Zone, the Nicoya peninsula in Costa Rica, and the reasons behind their longevity, as per research conducted on them. This will be followed by a post-reading pair discussion and looking for the terms of the given definitions from the text. The students will ask each other few questions to their partners about the passage and their habits in similar aspects of life.
Reading, and speaking	Individual/ Pair Work	Handouts	<b><u>CLOSURE:</u></b> Task # 7: Students will read and then discuss in pairs an informative article about how different cultures perceive or practice time, its orientation types, Chronemics, its kinds, tempo of life and happiness.

**Assessment:**

**Journal writing:**

Students will be writing a journal about their learning experience in this unit using the classroom app. Thus, they will post different cultural viewpoints regarding time and happiness.

**Project:**

Students will research and then create a weekly plan to improve their own happiness and wellbeing. Then they will make a video diary documenting themselves implementing one of their plans. They will need to share the link in the classroom app, view, and comment on at least 5 other students’ videos.

**Table 17** *Sample Lesson Plan 5*


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 Overall Lesson Plan -Sample Lesson Plan. Level: A1-A2 Time: 3:30 hours

**Intervention II- Integrated English II - Topic: Workplace communication**


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**Learning outcomes:**
Content:

- Find out about the importance of business etiquette and business communication.
- Learn about key aspects when conducting business and communication at the workplace.

Intercultural Insights:

- Get familiar with some cultural values from different countries in business and at the workplace.
- Identify some Costa Rican business values, communication styles and workplace ethics.
- Compare their cultural values/practices with other countries/cultures of the world.

Language:

- Learn relevant vocabulary related to the topic.
- Read, discuss, and produce ideas linked to the content.
- Understand and practice using some modals verbs “can/must/must not/have to/should” in sentences/discussion.

Cognition:

 Comparing and reflecting about intercultural communication essentials at the workplace.
 

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<b>Language skills &amp; Communication</b>	<b>Interaction</b>	<b>Materials &amp; Resources</b>	<b>Main Tasks</b>
Observing, speaking and interacting	Whole Class	Video on Multimedia	<b><u>LEAD IN:</u></b> Task # 1: Students will watch a video about importance of intercultural communication understanding, when learning English language. They will then share their understanding about it.
Reading, and speaking	Whole class	Zoom app Quotes on Multimedia	Task # 2 & 3: Students will read the quotes displayed on the screen about effective communication and its essential elements. They will then share their understanding about them. Later, they will think and discuss the consequences of ineffective communication.
Reading, discussing and speaking	Individual reading/ Whole Class	Zoom app	<b><u>CORE PART:</u></b> Task # 4, 5 & 6: A pre-reading vocabulary brainstorming activity will be conducted, followed by reading comprehension regarding communication at workplace in general and Costa Rican culture. After that, students will reflect their understanding of the topic by answering a few
	Pair work	Multimedia and Hand outs	



Reading, discussing, and interacting	Individual/ Pair Work	questions. Later, the use of modal ‘can’ in Simple present tense shall be discussed and students will identify its examples from the reading text. They will practice it further by forming a few more sentences/question by themselves.
Reading, writing, and interacting	Individual Work	Task # 7 & 8: Students will study the given cultural norms and practices of 3 different cultures, followed by a comparative analysis of Asian versus UK/West European communication styles, patterns, and tendencies. Next, they will exercise a similar comparison between their cultural values and two of their neighbourhood’s. Considering these differences, they will then classify various counties as high context or low context cultures.
Reading, and writing	Individual Work	Task # 9 & 10: Here, the students will read individually, a detailed content about Business Etiquettes and Workplace Ethics in Costa Rica. This will be followed by a post-reading pair discussion and labelling the given statements mutually as true or false.
Reading, and writing		Task # 11: In this activity, students will evaluate the some given statements about communication at workplace and business etiquettes, to decide whether they are prevailing in their own culture or not. They will tick mark the correct ones.
		Task # 12 & 13: Students will fill in the blanks of the given information regarding cultural and business practices in UK. For this, they will be using modals ‘can/must/must not/should/have to’. Later, they will write 2 sentences with similar structures, about Costa Rican cultural values at workplace, family, or educational institutions.
Reading, discussing, reconciling and speaking	Pair Work	Multimedia
		<b><u>CLOSURE:</u></b> Task # 14 & 15: Students learn a few English phrases/statements that are considered cultured and civilised worldwide. The phrases will also help students to practice some structured use of modals they had learnt by then. They will then discuss with their partners, Tico’s communication style and challenges they face in different walks of life. Partners will also reconcile their answers for

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tasks 11, 12, & 13 with each other, followed by Whatsapp audio messages sharing to practice the phrases of task 14.

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**Assessment:**

Journal writing:

Students will be writing a report in the classroom app, about their learning in this unit, and the essential cultural aspects that must be considered while communicating with a diverse group of people. They will also write about common workplace communication challenges faced by Costa Rican workers when interacting with people of diverse culture.

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**Project:** Students are required to create a comparative info-graphic for two cultures, one native and second any other culture of the world. It must contain basic cultural aspects like history, heritage, cultural norms, some amazing facts, conversational practices/taboo, work values, celebrations, family, and relationship ethics etc.

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**Table 18** *Sample Lesson Plan 6*

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Overall Lesson Plan -Sample Lesson Plan. Level: A1-A2 Time: 3:30 hours

**Intervention II- Integrated English II - Topic: Costa Rica: a look back**

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**Learning outcomes:**

Content:

- Find out about some historical events and key figures or heroes who played a significant role in the country's development.
- Reflect, discuss, and compare events from a Costa Rican novel extract and the current Coronavirus pandemic situation.
- Learn about the importance of communication in daily life and in business conversations.

Intercultural Insights:

- Learn about current and historical aspects linked to the Costa Rican culture.
- Find out about the use of small talk in business conversations in certain cultures.
- Identify their cultural awareness in relation to small talks in business.

Language:

- Learn some important relevant vocabulary for discussing history.
- Create linguistic competence particular to business discussions.
- Practice reading, writing, inferring, discussing, and explaining their ideas related to the topic.
- Practice grammatical structures, especially in small talks during business conversations.
- Learn and practice some self-introduction statements/phrases.

Cognition:

- Reviewing, reflecting, and evaluating important events described to them.
  - Analyzing and comparing a past description with a present situation.
  - Identifying, summarizing, assessing, and comparing cultural differences in small talks during business conversations.
  - Reflecting and articulating a cultural custom or tradition and a Costa Rican food.
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<b>Language skills &amp; Communication</b>	<b>Interaction</b>	<b>Materials &amp; Resources</b>	<b>Main Tasks</b>
Observing, speaking and writing	Whole Class	Videos on Multimedia Zoom app	<p><b><u>LEAD IN:</u></b></p> <p>Task # 1: Students will watch 2 prescribed videos about Historical background and heroes of Costa Rica and take notes about it. After that, they will write a summary of important events described in each, while using varied grammatical structures.</p>
Reading speaking	and Whole Class	Hand outs Zoom app	<p><b><u>CORE PART:</u></b></p> <p>Task # 2: Students will read an extract from the novel “The Promised War” along with a little pre-reading text about its background and comparison to the current Coronavirus pandemic situation. Students will then record their reactions after reading, such as the element that surprised them, what was new for them and Ticos character-identity, etc.</p>
Listening, interacting writing	and Whole Class	Multimedia and Notebooks Zoom app	<p>Task # 3.1, 3.2 &amp; 3.3: A pre-reading brainstorming will be conducted to see if the students are aware of the phrase “Small Talk” and its importance in business. Then they will read a small text describing the same. Later, students will fill a case study-based questionnaire to ascertain how culturally mindful they are, and then watch a video about transition recommendations from small talk to business talk, which they will write in their notebooks.</p>
Listening, reading, writing and speaking	Whole Class/ Pair Work	Handouts and Notebooks	<p>Task # 3.4 &amp; 3.5: Students will listen to an audio conversation as an example of small talk in a business setup, after which, they will identify the correct grammatical structures in the transcript of the same. This will be followed by learning and practicing in pairs, some self-introductory sentences/phrases that can be used in everyday life</p>
Listening, reading and writing	Individual work	Handout and Multimedia	<p><b><u>CLOSURE:</u></b></p> <p>Task # 4:</p>

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Students will listen/watch video of the song “What a wonderful World” and then solve a few exercises relating to it:

- Choosing the correct answer from the choice of words
  - Unscrambling words to identify the correct answer
  - Filling in the missing verbs
- 

**Assessment:**

Journal writing:

1. Students will be writing a reflection journal by answering a few questions about the unit.
  2. Students are required to take a photo of themselves while practicing a custom or tradition of their culture or another culture. Then they will record an audio description their experience and upload it to their classroom app with the photo and a brief written description.
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**Project:**

Students will be recording a video based on the history of Costa Rica, imagining that they are narrating it to a non-national. They are guided to research for facts, traits, events, practices, proverbs, beliefs, and behaviours. Students autonomously and in groups prepare the details for recording an online meeting via zoom or any other platform to work on the project.

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**Table 19** *Sample Lesson Plan 7*

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Overall Lesson Plan -Sample Lesson Plan. Level: A1-A2 Time: 3:30 hours

**Intervention II- Integrated English II - Topic: Global Citizenship**

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**Learning outcomes:**

Content:

- Find out about the meaning and implications of Global Citizenship.
- Learn more about global problems, namely the Water Crisis.
- Recognize that small actions can lead to big impact.
- Propose ideas to act as agents of change to make a difference in their community.

Intercultural Insights:

- Learn and comprehend the notion of global citizenship in relation to diverse cultures.

Language:

- Learn some important relevant vocabulary around global citizenship.
- Discuss and reflect on global issues.
- Learn proverbs and practice using them by writing a poem and a composition.

Cognition:

- Comprehend, explain, rephrase, and evaluate ideas to address global problems, challenges and solutions.
-

<b>Language skills &amp; Communication</b>	<b>Interaction &amp; Engagement</b>	<b>Materials &amp; Resources</b>	<b>Main Tasks</b>
Speaking and reading	Whole Class/ Pair Work	Multimedia and internet + gadgets for research  Zoom app	<p><b>Warm up:</b> Task # 1.1 &amp; 1.2: Students are presented with definitions of Global Citizenship and are required to think of a major global issue that truly bothers them. They share their ideas and from that the teacher supports the whole class discussion. Students will then be asked if they know some of missions led by Leonardo DiCaprio, Beyoncé, Malala, and Bill Gates. Students get familiar with some of the work these well-known people do and discuss the ways they are serving the purpose of Global Citizenship.</p>
Reading, comprehending, discussing, and writing	Whole class/ Individual Work	Zoom app  Hand out  Doc-Link: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C65iqOSCZOY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C65iqOSCZOY</a>	<p><b>Core part:</b> Task # 2: Students read, try to comprehend, and then discuss the provided article about water shortage in Brazil. They will then solve a matching exercise of related concept and synonyms found in the article. Students relate the ideas discussed in the passage to their reality.</p> <p>Task # 3.1, 3.2 &amp; 3.3: Students watch a Netflix's documentary regarding an alarming global challenge of present time, Water Crisis. Students answer a few questions in groups about the facts and ideas addressed in the documentary. Later, students are going to ask their partners some of the actions that can lead to change in a broader scenario regarding their role as global citizens on the issue of water crisis.</p> <p>Task # 4.2 &amp; 4.3: Students will read two poems about Global Citizenship and will asked their classmates a question to reflect, discuss about them: Do you think that these poems are truly depicting the concept of global citizenship? Which stanza/verse did you like the most? Why? How do you feel about the message in the poem? Do you relate to it?</p>
Reading, interacting, answering and speaking writing	Whole Class/ Group work/ Pair Work Whole Class/ Individual Work	Multimedia, Classroom app and Notebook Hand outs	
Speaking and writing	Individual Work/ Pair Work	Handouts and Multimedia	

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Reading, interacting and speaking	Group work	Zoom app Multimedia for showing questions	<b><u>CLOSURE:</u></b> Task # 5: Students will independently study and learn some proverbs used in different parts of the world, then dedicate one of those to his/her friend. They will also learn a few more proverbs by matching them to their correct definitions. During the following online session, students and teacher interact extracting cultural meanings and indicators from the wisdom of proverbs and some of their similarities among cultures or countries
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**Assessment:**

**Journal writing:** Students will write a composition about a global issue and ways to address it. Then, they share their ideas to their class by creating an audio podcast which will be posted on the classroom app.

**Project:** Students will celebrate an Intercultural Costume Virtual Zoom Party, where they will dress up or paint themselves representing a culture and exposing key documents, events and challenging problems affecting different territories. Students will prepare their outline content presentation, as a group select, describe, and propose actions to address some global issues that affect us all as individuals sharing the same planet. They will celebrate the end of the most perplexing University year with some cherishing online activities.

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## **PART III: DATA ANALYSIS**

## **CHAPTER 6: ICC SELF-ASSESSMENT SCALE AND INTERCULTURAL FORMATIVE QUIZ: DATA ANALYSIS**



## 6.1 ICC Self-assessment Scale and Intercultural Formative Quiz Analysis

This chapter presents the results and the interpretation of the data gathered from the ICC self-assessment scale after conducting the study. The quantitative analysis that is presented is fundamental to understand the the results obtained in this study (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). Quantitative results have a fundamental role in quasi-experimental research, as they can help accept or reject the established hypothesis and support claims intended to be answered in this study. More specifically, this chapter examines participants' perspectives and responses regarding intercultural communicative competence in foreign language learning. It analyses data to determine any progression in the participants' ICC skills in the Costa Rican tertiary educational context and compares results between control and intervention groups to clarify and determine if there are any significant differences in competency among groups in terms of ICC.

As indicated previously, participants in this study were divided into intervention and control groups (124 were assigned to the experimental group and 95 to the control group). As aforementioned, steps have been considered first to examine and determine data distribution. As the data were not normally distributed, nonparametric statistics were used, such as the Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney U test. The Cronbach  $\alpha$  test was also performed to measure the internal consistency of (the extent to which all the items in a test measure the same concept or construct) the scales. Thus, qualitative data have been gathered and analyzed to complement the interpretation of quantitative results. In the following subsections, results from the ICC self-assessment scale and ICC quiz are presented in order to demonstrate the benefits of implementing the combined CLIL-PBL framework to foster ICC.

## 6.2 ICC Self-assessment Scale Analysis

An ICC self-assessment scale (Appendix A) was applied as a pretest and posttest for two academic semesters to the two groups (intervention and control) to measure whether there had been an impact, development, or progression in students' self-perception of intercultural communicative competence. For the purpose of this research, intercultural competence was understood as the ability to communicate effectively and transparently with people from distinct cultural affiliations in the desired context of fruitful engagement. It is generally theorized that to measure ICC development, key components or dimensions related to intercultural knowledge, attitudes, skills, and critical cultural awareness need to be considered (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006). Aside from this, according to experts and specialists, the process of measurement concerned with intercultural communicative competence needs to combine multiple assessment tools ranging from quantitative to qualitative ones, among which the use of self-assessment questionnaires, scales, and formative tasks such as journal reflections are included. For that reason, a self-assessment scale was considered an appropriate instrument to assess the participants' ICC progress. The ICC self-assessment questionnaire included all the ICC dimensions investigated and each comprised adapted and contextualized statements based on matters of interest including items related to the Costa Rican cultural context, cultural reality, and key aspects regarding the intercultural competence notions.

The results of the tests presented below try to show the efficacy of the intervention lessons and verify the internal validity of this study. Comparisons between the results obtained before and after implementing the intervention were conducted by analyzing and examining the ICC instrument results (scale and quiz) between the control and the experimental group to identify and explore the development of intercultural communicative competence. These comparisons also seek to determine whether internal validity is maintained throughout the experimental phase.

Before implementing the ICC intervention (pre-experimental measurements), comparisons between the control and experimental groups sought to determine if any equivalence between groups was reflected at the beginning. The subsequent comparisons of the ICC scale results between control and experimental groups applied after the pedagogical implementation were used to determine whether the intervention was effective. To achieve these objectives, the comparison of results must be statistically significant and that is the reason why the Shapiro-Wilk test was used to test the normality of scores and determine the appropriate test to use. The Mann-Whitney U test (Wilcoxon rank-sum test) was used to demonstrate the intervention effectiveness as this test is considered an alternative to the  $t$ -test when the data obtained are not normally distributed.

### **6.2.1 ICC Self-assessment Scale Results: Intervention I\_ Experimental vs Control Groups**

Table 20 shows the results obtained during the first semester 2020 of the control and intervention groups in the pretest corresponding to the Integrated English I course. A Cronbach's  $\alpha$  greater than 0.89 was reported when comparing both groups, indicating a high internal consistency for the ICC self-assessment scale among the dimensions (knowledge, critical awareness, attitude, and skills).

**Table 20** ICC Self-assessment Scale test results: Intervention vs. Control Group (Intervention I)

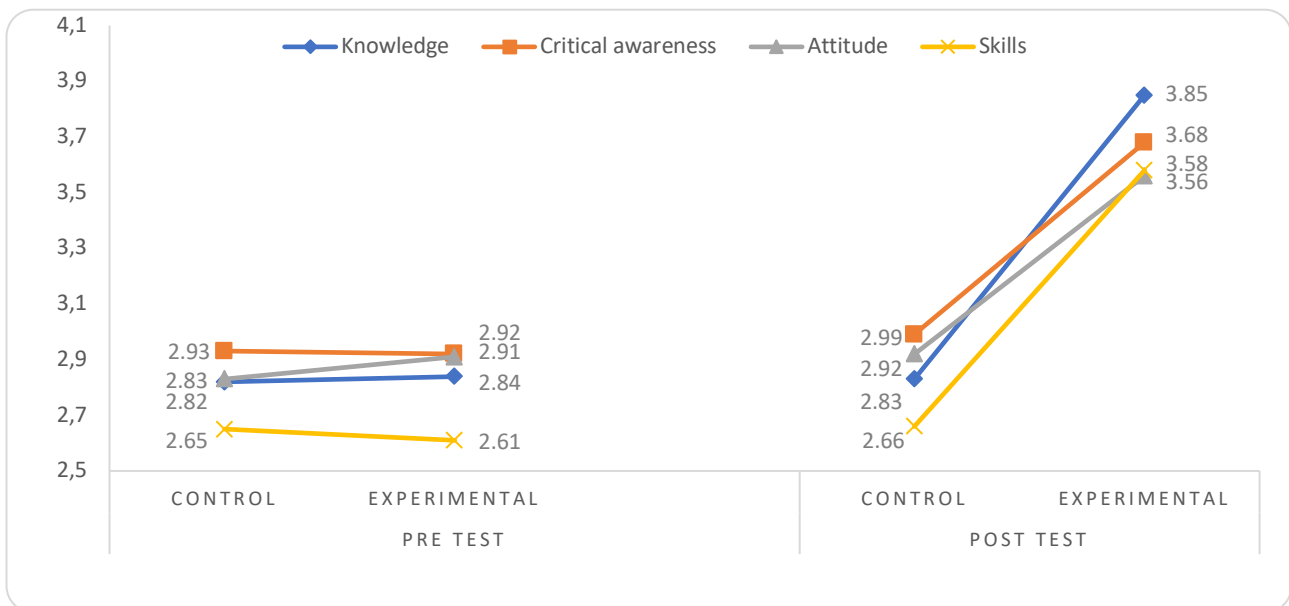
	Pretest		P-value	Posttest		P-value
	Control (n = 95)	Experimental (n = 124)		Control (n = 95)	Experimental (n = 124)	
Knowledge			0.898			< 0.001
Cronbach $\alpha$	0.95	0.92		0.95	0.96	
<i>M</i>	2.82	2.84		2.83	3.85	
Median (IQR)	3 (2.2-3.5)	3 (2.2-3.7)		3 (2.2-3.5)	4 (3.3-4.2)	
<i>SD</i>	0.90	0.87		0.88	0.82	
Critical awareness			0.999			< 0.001
Cronbach $\alpha$	0.95	0.94		0.95	0.94	
<i>M</i>	2.93	2.92		2.99	3.68	
Median (IQR)	3 (2.1-3.5)	3 (2-3.8)		3 (2.3-4)	4 (3-4)	
<i>SD</i>	0.93	0.91		0.95	0.98	
Attitude			0.278			< 0.001
Cronbach $\alpha$	0.96	0.89		0.97	0.96	
<i>M</i>	2.83	2.91		2.92	3.56	
Median (IQR)	3 (2.1-3.3)	3 (2.3-3.4)		3 (2.3-3.3)	4 (3-4.5)	
<i>SD</i>	0.94	0.82		0.94	1.08	
Skills			0.510			< 0.001
Cronbach $\alpha$	0.95	0.90		0.95	0.97	
<i>M</i>	2.65	2.61		2.66	3.58	
Median (IQR)	2.9 (2-3)	2.7 (2.2-3)		2.9 (2-3)	4 (3-4)	
<i>SD</i>	0.85	0.83		0.86	1.11	

Notes. *p*-values = Mann-Whitney U test (Wilcoxon rank-sum test).

Table 20 also reveals that no significant mean differences were yielded among the pretest scores between the control and intervention groups in terms of knowledge, critical awareness, attitude, and skills since the *p*-value ( $p > 0.05$ ) shows no significant difference. These results may indicate that participants have not developed their intercultural competence after completing English instruction during their high school years. The pretest results show that groups are equivalent in holding similar tendencies in language and intercultural competence. These pretest results show that both groups (control and experimental) reported the highest mean score on the dimension of critical cultural awareness, and the lowest was on knowledge and skills before the intervention begun. The posttest results indicate a significant mean difference between the control and intervention groups scores in the four categories: knowledge, critical awareness, attitude, and skills. After examining the scores obtained in the ICC components in the intervention group, it can

be observed that the highest scores are in the knowledge ( $n = 124, m = 3.85$ ) and critical culture awareness dimensions ( $n = 124, m = 3.68$ ). In contrast, the attitude dimension had a lower score ( $n = 124, m = 3.56$ ). These results are aligned with what the field has identified as signs of early evidence for ICC progression, indicating that it is usually reflected on the knowledge dimension (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006; Gray et al., 2019; Cai & Lv, 2019). It is also plausible to establish a relationship between these two intercultural dimensions, knowledge, and cultural awareness, from which mean scores were higher. It can be interpreted that results support evidence regarding the view of ICC as a cyclical-interdependent pedagogical process in educational settings where knowledge and content provide the building blocks to incite the act of becoming aware of and empathetic to other beings and their cultural views. A graphical representation of the mean differences is shown in Figure 13, which provides a deeper insight into the data obtained.

Figure 13 ICC Self-Assessment Scale Mean Difference: Intervention vs. Control Group (Int I)



*Note.* Figure Mean scores Intervention I

Figure 13 clearly illustrates the comparison of pretest and posttest mean differences between control and intervention groups. As can be observed, it displays how the experimental group improved and progressed in the mean scores obtained in the four intercultural communicative competence components from pretest to posttest. Additionally, it is observed that the experimental group outworked the control group, which did not report significant mean differences from pretest to posttest mean scores.

### 6.2.1.1 Mann-Whitney U Test Results: intervention I

A Mann-Whitney U test (Wilcoxon rank-sum test) was conducted to examine whether any measure was affected (see Table 21). For this purpose, the change of scores in each dimension after the first intervention was compared against the control and intervention groups to establish whether there were any significant differences. Tables 21 and 22 illustrate that test results demonstrate a significant effect since  $p$ -values  $< 0.001$ .

**Table 21** *P-Values for Intervention I (Integrated English I)*

ICC Component	Comparison	$p$ -Values Control vs. Intervention Group
Knowledge	Pretest vs posttest	$< 0.001$
Critical awareness	Pretest vs posttest	$< 0.001$
Attitude	Pretest vs posttest	$< 0.001$
Skills	Pretest vs posttest	$< 0.001$

*Note.*  $p$ -values = Mann-Whitney U test (Wilcoxon rank-sum test).

As can be observed in Table 22, in the experimental group the intercultural dimension of Knowledge significantly improved with the systematic exposure to intercultural content, tasks, and projects in the English classrooms ( $U = 2199.500, p < .001$ ), ( $Z = -8.029, p < .001$ ). Similarly, the

second dimension that significantly progressed was skills ( $U = 2833.000$ ,  $p < .001$ ), ( $Z = -6.656$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Overall, these results indicate that the experimental group for Integrated English I improved and changed their views on intercultural communicative competence. This improvement in their ICC can be attributed to the systematic mediation in lessons of intercultural topics and tasks along the 13-week period throughout the academic semester I, 2020. However, the scores did not change significantly in the control group, proving the methodology's efficacy to foster intercultural skills in the English class.

**Table 22** *Mann-Whitney U Test Results: Intervention I (Integrated English I)*

ICC Dimensions			Knowledge	Critical Awareness	Attitude	Skills
<b>Semester I (Control vs. Intervention)</b>	Pretest	Mann-Whitney U	5830.500	5889.500	5395.000	5586.000
		Wilcoxon W	10390.500	10449.500	9955.000	13336.000
		Z	-0.129	-0.001	-1.084	-0.659
		Asymp. sig. (2-tailed)	0.898	0.999	0.278	0.510
		Exact sig. (2-tailed)	0.898	1.000	0.279	
		Exact sig. (1-tailed)	0.449	0.500	0.140	
	Posttest	Mann-Whitney U	2199.500	3625.500	3756.500	2833.000
		Wilcoxon W	6759.500	8185.500	8316.500	7393.000
		Z	-8.029	-4.932	-4.652	-6.656
		Asymp. sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
		Exact sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
		Exact sig. (1-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

*Notes.* (a) grouping variable: intervention (b) some or all exact significances cannot be computed because there is insufficient memory.

## 6.2.2 ICC Self-assessment Scale Results: Intervention II\_ Experimental vs Control Groups

Table 23 shows the results of the control and experimental groups in the pretest and posttest for Integrated English II, semester II. A Cronbach's  $\alpha$  test result greater than 0.90 was reported for all the categories, indicating a high internal consistency for the ICC scale dimensions evaluated (i.e., knowledge, critical awareness, attitude, and skills).

**Table 23** ICC Self-Assessment Scale Results: Experimental vs. Control Group (Intervention II)

	Pretest		<i>P</i> -value	Posttest		<i>P</i> -value
	Control ( <i>n</i> = 95)	Experimental ( <i>n</i> = 124)		Control ( <i>n</i> = 95)	Experimental ( <i>n</i> = 124)	
Knowledge			< 0.001			< 0.001
Cronbach $\alpha$	0.95	0.96		0.95	0.96	
<i>M</i>	2.80	3.57		2.82	4.09	
Median (IQR)	3 (2.1-3.5)	3.5 (3-4)		3 (2.2-3.5)	4 (4-4.9)	
<i>SD</i>	0.86	0.88		0.88	0.73	
Critical awareness			< 0.001			< 0.001
Cronbach $\alpha$	0.96	0.96		0.95	0.93	
<i>M</i>	2.92	3.78		2.90	4.19	
Median (IQR)	3 (2.1-3.3)	4 (3-4.5)		3 (2.3-3)	4 (4-5)	
<i>SD</i>	0.93	0.99		0.90	0.68	
Attitude			< 0.001			< 0.001
Cronbach $\alpha$	0.97	0.94		0.97	0.95	
<i>M</i>	2.80	3.48		2.78	4.21	
Median (IQR)	3 (2-3)	3.6 (3-4)		3 (2-3)	4 (4-5)	
<i>SD</i>	0.92	0.94		0.89	0.75	
Skills			< 0.001			< 0.001
Cronbach $\alpha$	0.95	0.97		0.95	0.96	
<i>M</i>	2.67	3.27		2.66	4.12	
Median (IQR)	2.9 (2-3)	3 (2.9-4)		3 (2-3)	4 (4-5)	
<i>SD</i>	0.85	1.04		0.86	0.70	

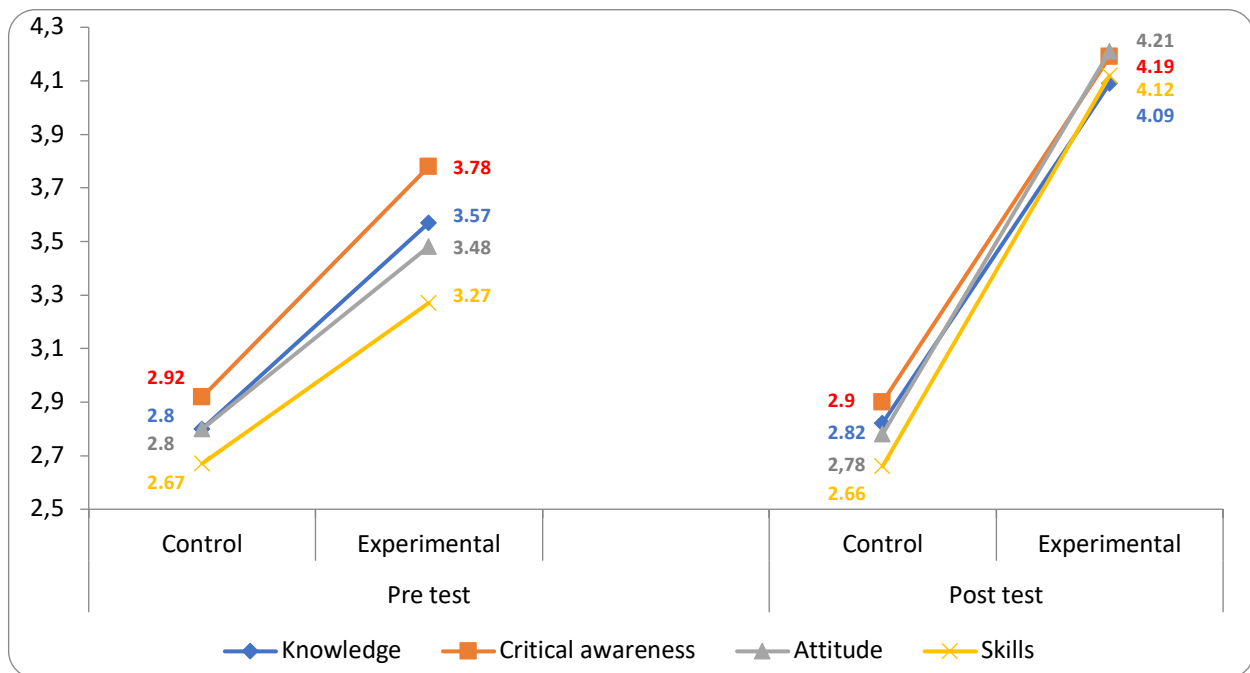
*Notes.* *p*-values = Mann-Whitney U test (Wilcoxon rank-sum test).

Table 23 and Figure 14 show the mean differences between both groups. When analyzing the results, it is evident that the control group did not undergo significant changes while the experimental group scores changed significantly. It is worth indicating that the highest score for



the experimental group after intervention proposal II was on the ICC component of attitude ( $n = 124, m = 4.21$ ), whereas the lowest mean score was noted on knowledge ( $n = 124, m = 4.12$ ). Participants self-assessed their perspectives, favoring a shift toward attitude and critical awareness, indicating that the prolonged exposure to intercultural matters (e.g., tasks, content, resources) influenced the overall way participants interpreted the ICC phenomena.

**Figure 14** ICC Self-Assessment Scale Mean Difference: Intervention vs. Control Group (Int II)



*Note.* Figure Mean scores Intervention II

As observed in Figure 14, there are apparent differences between the pretest and posttest means of the control and experimental groups in all of the ICC areas investigated. While the experimental group substantially improved their performance in all dimensions after Intervention II, the control group did not experience any progress. The pretest results (before Intervention II)

reported higher mean scores in the ICC components of critical cultural awareness and knowledge. These were also the most affected at the end of intervention I. It can be interpreted that the impact on these ICC perspectives (cultural awareness and knowledge) was sustained before implementing the pedagogical intervention II. The reason for this may be that these are the ICC dimensions which are more easily acquired.

There were significant differences in the self-assessment intercultural communicative competence scale components when comparing the results of the control group with those of the experimental group in the pretest and posttest. These results shed some light on the kind of influence that the pedagogical intervention II had on the experimental group's perspectives regarding the role of interculture in the process of learning English as a foreign language. Furthermore, it can be observed that no significant differences were found in the control group.

The statistics and test results for each intercultural dimension can be seen in Tables 24 and 25. Such results exhibit that, after comparing the control and experimental groups in terms of knowledge, critical awareness, attitude, and skills, the Mann-Whitney U test yielded results with  $p$ -values  $< 0.001$  (Table 24). Similarly, for posttest scores, a significant mean difference between the control and experimental groups was reported in all the four categories: knowledge, critical awareness, attitude, and skills ( $p$ -values  $< 0.001$ ).

**Table 24** *P-Values: Intervention II: Integrated English II: Semester II*

ICC Component	Comparison	$p$ -Values Control vs Intervention Group
Knowledge	Pretest vs posttest	$< 0.001$
Critical awareness	Pretest vs posttest	$< 0.001$
Attitude	Pretest vs posttest	$< 0.001$
Skills	Pretest vs posttest	$< 0.001$

As can be observed in Table 25, the systematic exposure to intercultural content, tasks, and projects in the English classrooms, helped improve learners' intercultural dimension of skills and this progress was more remarkable after the second intervention ( $U = 1057.000$ ,  $p < .001$ ), ( $Z = -10.574$ ,  $p < .01$ ), the second most affected was attitude ( $U = 1223.000$ ,  $p < .001$ ), ( $Z = -10.200$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

### 6.2.2.1 Mann-Whitney U Test Results: Intervention II

**Table 25** *Mann-Whitney U Test Results: Intervention II (Integrated English II)*

			Knowledge	Critical Awareness	Attitude	Skills
<b>Semester II (Control vs. Intervention)</b>	Pretest	Mann-Whitney U	3224.000	2999.000	3567.000	3723.500
		Wilcoxon W	7784.000	7559.000	8127.000	8283.500
		Z	-5.796	-6.312	-5.079	-4.730
		Asymp. sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
		Exact sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
		Exact sig. (1-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
		Posttest	Mann-Whitney U	1295.500	1453.000	1223.000
	Wilcoxon W	5855.500	6013.000	5783.000	5617.000	
	Z	-10.091	-9.704	-10.200	-10.574	
	Asymp. sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	Exact sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	Exact sig. (1-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	

*Notes.* (a) grouping variable: intervention (b) some or all exact significances cannot be computed because there is insufficient memory.

These results reinforce and support the previous descriptive analysis, indicating a positive impact after the weeks of systematically implementing the intervention proposal. The data corroborate the hypothesis of this research since the intervention contributed to effectively changing and shifting students' self-perceptions of their intercultural competence in all the scale components during semester II in the course Integrated English II.

Nalyzing the results in detail, it can be interpreted that the experimental group, after being exposed to the second pedagogical intervention (Integrated English II), improved the most on their

ICC attitude, while the knowledge component improved the least. These results support the arguments asserting that attitude is a pivotal early sign in achieving or fostering intercultural communicative competence (Zou & Shek-Noble, 2014; Byram, 2020; Brunow & Newman, 2020; Morganna et al., 2020).

Based on Deardorff's (2004) insights, it is fundamental to begin the long-life process of acquiring the intercultural competence by allowing the individual to progress toward the interactional level where the outcomes can be visible. She contends that the degree of intercultural competence depends on attitude as an ideal starting point or platform from where the learning that implies knowledge and skills can be sustained. Results favor this interpretation and show that any kind of systematic ICC exposure is much more beneficial to learners' ICC progression than no mediation. According to Deardorff (2006), attitude is the component that can maintain and lead the acquisition of ICC knowledge by reshaping personal frames of reference, which later are believed to influence behaviors.

### **6.2.3 ICC Self-assessment Scale Experimental Group: Intervention I vs. Intervention II**

Table 26 shows the results of the comparison between pre and posttest scores from interventions I and II for the experimental group. A Cronbach's alpha of greater than 0.90 was reported for all dimensions (knowledge, critical awareness, attitude, and skills), indicating a high internal consistency for the scale. Analyzing results from both interventions provides a better picture of how the experimental group progressed in the ICC dimensions throughout the longitudinal study.

**Table 26 ICC Self-Assessment Scale Test Results: Intervention I vs Intervention II**

	Intervention I_English I			Intervention II_English II		
	Pre (n=124)	Post (n=124)	P value	Pre (n=124)	Post (n=124)	P value
<b>Knowledge</b>			<0.001			<0.001
Cronbach alpha	0.92	0.96		0.96	0.95	
Mean	2.84	3.85		3.57	4.09	
Median (IQR)	3 (2.2-3.7)	4 (3.3-4.2)		3.5 (3-4)	4 (4-4.9)	
SD	0.87	0.82		0.88	0.73	
<b>Critical awareness</b>			<0.001			0.003
Cronbach alpha	0.94	0.93		0.95	0.93	
Mean	2.92	3.68		3.78	4.19	
Median (IQR)	3 (2-3.7)	4 (3-4)		4 (3-4.5)	4 (4-5)	
SD	0.91	0.98		0.99	0.68	
<b>Attitude</b>			<0.001			<0.001
Cronbach alpha	0.89	0.95		0.94	0.95	
Mean	2.91	3.56		3.48	4.21	
Median (IQR)	3 (2.3-3.4)	4 (3-4.5)		3.6 (3-4)	4 (4-5)	
SD	0.82	1.1		0.94	0.75	
<b>Skills</b>			<0.001			<0.001
Cronbach alpha	0.90	0.97		0.97	0.96	
Mean	2.61	3.58		3.27	4.12	
Median (IQR)	2.7 (2.2-3)	4 (3-4)		3 (2.9-4)	4 (4-5)	
SD	0.83	1.1		1.0	0.70	

*Note.p-values= Mann Whitney U Test (Wilcoxon Rank Sum Test)*

**Figure 15 Graphical Representation of the Mean Differences (Intervention I and II)**

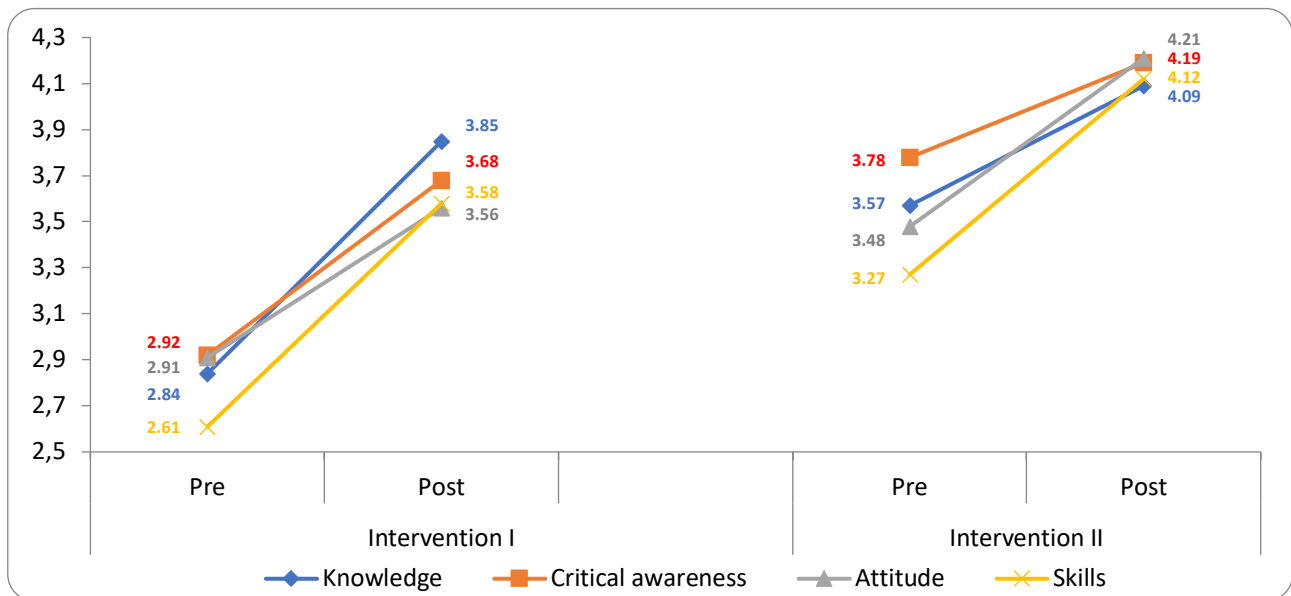


Table 26 and Figure 15 show the continuous progression of the experimental group in all the ICC dimensions during the second intervention. It is evident in intervention I, that the highest score is found in knowledge whereas for intervention II the highest mean score is found in attitude and critical awareness. The fact that students' scores improved remarkably in all ICC dimensions after the first intervention and that they continued improving at a similar rate after the second intervention proves the positive effects of adopting a combined CLIL-PBL approach to teach ICC in learning contexts.

### 6.2.3.1 Mann-Whitney U Test Results: intervention I and II

The change in each measure across the first and second interventions was calculated by running the *Mann-Whitney U test* to examine any significant differences between the interventions within the experimental group (see Tables 27 and 28).

**Table 27** *Mann-Whitney U Test Results: Intervention I vs. Intervention II*

Interventions			Knowledge	Critical_ Awareness	Attitude	Skills
<b>Intervention s (Pre vs Post Test)</b>	Semester I Interventio n I	Mann-Whitney U	2848.000	4424.000	4691.000	3560.000
		Wilcoxon W	10598.000	12174.000	12441.000	11310.000
		Z	-8.627	-5.855	-5.358	-7.370
		Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
		Exact Sig. (2-tailed)			0.000	
		Exact Sig. (1-tailed)			0.000	
	Semester II Interventio n II	Mann-Whitney U	4652.500	6076.000	4121.500	3761.000
		Wilcoxon W	12402.500	13826.000	11871.500	11511.000
		Z	-5.527	-2.960	-6.458	-7.119
		Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.003	0.000	0.000
Exact Sig. (2-tailed)						
	Exact Sig. (1-tailed)					

*a. Grouping Variable: pre\_post/. b. Some or all exact significances cannot be computed because there is insufficient memory.*

**Table 28** *P-Values: Intervention I and Intervention II*

ICC Component	Comparison	p-Values
		Intervention I vs. Intervention II
Knowledge	Intervention I vrs Intervention II	<0.001
Critical awareness	Intervention I vrs Intervention II	0.003
Attitude	Intervention I vrs Intervention II	<0.001
Skills	Intervention I vrs Intervention II	<0.001

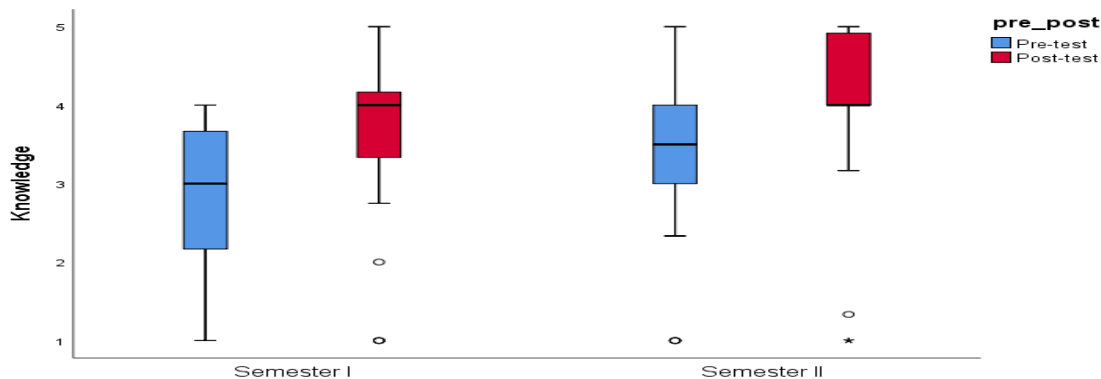
Tables 27 and 28 show that for interventions I and II, a significant mean difference between the pre and posttest scores was reported in all four categories: knowledge, critical awareness, attitude, and skills within the experimental group. The change in each measure across the first and second interventions was calculated and the *Mann-Whitney U* tests comparison was run to examine if any measure was particularly affected or significantly different. Comparing the change between interventions I and II within the experimental group, there were significant effects of progression in knowledge, skills, and attitude. The first intervention shows a higher impact on knowledge ( $U=2848.000$ ,  $p<.001$ ), ( $Z=-8.627$ ,  $p<.001$ ), and the second on skills ( $U=3761.000$ ,  $p<.001$ ), ( $Z=-7.119$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Table 27 indicates that the interventions had a greater impact in the knowledge and skills dimensions. Tests results seem to indicate that the first intervention had a significantly larger effect on knowledge ( $U=2848.000$ ,  $p<.001$ ), ( $Z=-8.627$ ,  $p<.001$ ), and skills, ( $U=3560.000$ ,  $p<.001$ ), ( $Z=-7.370$ ,  $p<.001$ ) than the second intervention, where knowledge increased more moderately ( $U=4652.500$ ,  $p<.001$ ), ( $Z=-5.527$ ,  $p<.001$ ), and skills ( $U=3761.000$ ,  $p<.001$ ), ( $Z=-7.119$ ,  $p<.001$ ). It can be interpreted that these results may be due to the novelty of the issue or even to the effect of the first sessions, which were implemented on campus through face-to-face learning, while the second intervention was carried out through the remote learning modality.

### 6.2.3.2 Boxplots for intervention I and Intervention II (semester I and II) comparison

Additional to the distribution of data for each intercultural dimension analyzed above, boxplots for comparison of the two interventions (English I and English II) in terms of pretest and posttest for the four ICC categories (knowledge, critical awareness, attitude, and skills) are presented below. Figure 16 shows the boxplot displaying the data for the knowledge dimension across both semesters for the experimental group. When comparing the ICC knowledge dimension in both intervention semesters, it is found that the posttest has a higher median compared to the pretest in intervention I and it is slightly higher in the intervention II. However, the spread of distribution is wider in the lower quartiles for the intervention I in the pretest and posttest while for the second semester, it is towards the upper quartiles.

These data provide evidence of positive self-assessment in the posttest, showing a major concentration of data for both interventions, which suggests that participants' level of agreement was consistent and affected after the pedagogical interventions. These results confirm that students can experience further gains in ICC knowledge if the intercultural component is included as part of the foreign/second language curriculum assisted by a combined teaching approach that is student centered and dynamic.

**Figure 16** *Boxplot for Knowledge: Intervention I vs Intervention II*





The distribution of the critical awareness dimension among the two interventions is presented in Figure 17. The spread in distribution follows a wider range in the pretests while the posttests show less dispersed data. It is evident that participants experience a change in their self-assessment report thus exhibiting a pattern towards the higher values of agreement and strongly agreement. This is also supported by second semester's pretest and posttests median which are higher than the median for the first semester. In fact, the median for the the posttest for the first semester is more dispersed towards the first quartile while for the second intervention it is towards the upper quartile. This demonstrates the efficacy of the explicit ICC instruction under a hybrid teaching of CLIL and PBL principles across two semesters to develop ICC knowledge.

**Figure 17** *Boxplot for Critical Awareness: Intervention I vs Intervention II*

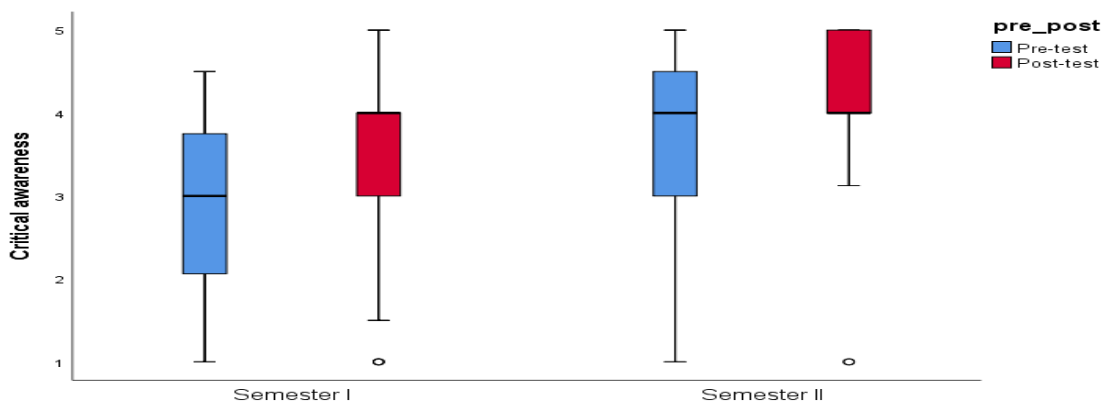


Figure 18, which displays the boxplot for the attitude dimension, shows that the median for the pretest for the first semester is lower compared to the median for the second semester. The median for the posttest is the same for both semesters; however, the posttest for the second semester is more dispersed above the median while the results of the first semester are below the median. The posttest scores for the second semester are more compact, meaning that the participants tend to hold unified levels of agreement. From these differences conclusions can be drawn regarding the

usefulness, functionality and efficacy of the hybrid methodology and the procedures used to structure the ICC language learning experience since they seem to have contributed to developing student critical awareness .

**Figure 18** *Boxplot for Attitude: Intervention I vs Intervention II*

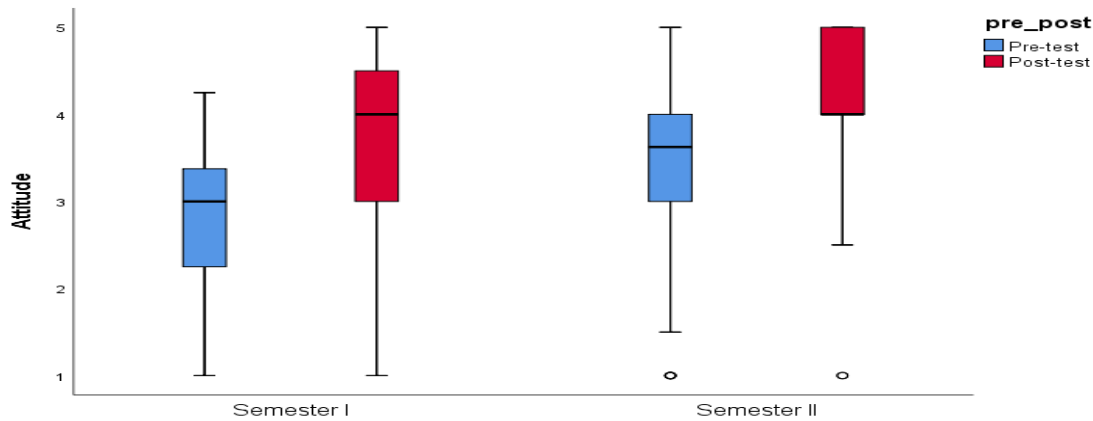
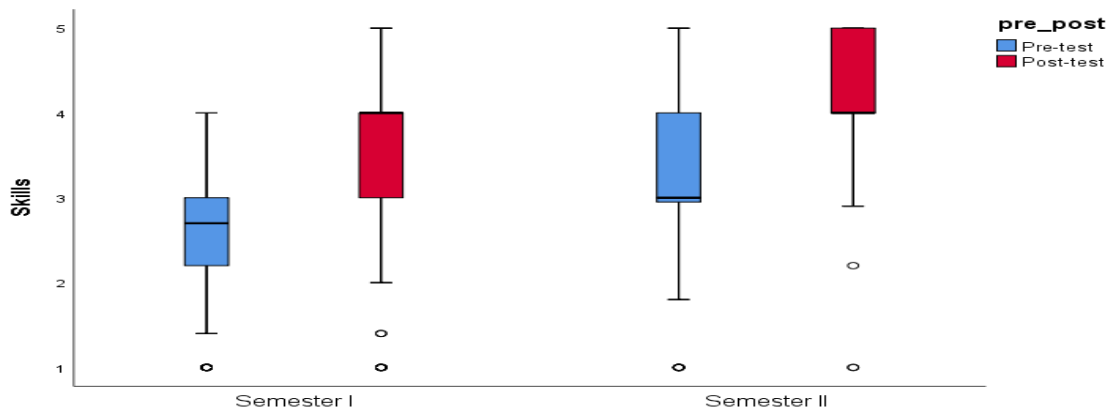


Figure 19 displays the boxplot for the ICC skills dimension. The plot shows that the second semester's pretest median is higher than the median for the first semester. The plot also shows that the pretest for the first semester is more dispersed below, while the second semester's pretest is more dispersed above the median. The median for the posttest is the same for both semesters; however, the posttest for the first semester is more dispersed below the median while it is above for the second semester. Moreover, the posttest scores for the second semester are less dispersed, illustrating participants' unified level of agreement.

**Figure 19** *Boxplot for ICC Skills: Intervention I vs Intervention II*



#### 6.2.4 ICC self-assessment Scale: Overall Remarks of Findings & Discussion

The overall results indicate a positive tendency in the complex process of acquiring the intercultural communicative competence. When comparing the progress made by students in the control and experimental groups during the first and second interventions using the Mann-Whitney U tests comparison, it was found to be significantly greater in the experimental group than in the control in all four measures ( $p < 0.001$ ). Therefore, it can be concluded that the interventions significantly improved the intercultural communicative competence of the experimental group. Over time, a shift of perception and comprehension clearly indicates that students are more open and willing to process the relevance of the intercultural component in the language classroom. This can be observed in the highest mean scores yielded in the second pedagogical intervention on the critical cultural awareness and attitude dimensions.

It is necessary to remark that results support the effects that interventions, carried out under a planned and systematic ICC instruction and implemented through the CLIL and PBL hybrid method, had on the students' learning experience students. A highly receptive attitude of students toward the intercultural experience was also perceived during the process. This can be attributed

to the systematic exposure to tasks and projects infused with intercultural content, which was deemed relevant to developing their intercultural competence.

The results from the pedagogical intervention obtained in the self-assessment scale demonstrate the efficacy of the CLIL-PBL mixed method to foster ICC in the Integrated English courses I and II. Results provide evidence that this method impacted more significantly in terms of progression the knowledge and skill dimensions during the I and II intervention respectively.

The hybrid methodology implemented in the lessons and units, as well as the content material facilitated during the two academic semesters, seem to have fostered students' core constructs about the need to discuss, address, and experience the ICC issued to progress on the foreign language competence holistically. Furthermore, these results seem to align with theory and research findings claiming that the first evidence of ICC progression becomes noticeable in the knowledge or skill dimensions (Byram, 2020; Gondra & Czerwionka, 2018; Czerwionka et al. 2015).

A prolonged intervention during two semesters favored the development of the ICC knowledge dimension, which yielded the highest mean score in the posttests during intervention I, and in the attitude dimension, with the highest mean score in the posttest for intervention II. This proves that effective intercultural learning can be promoted if learning and teaching elements are carefully structured in designing the learning experience. According to advocates of the integration of the ICC within EFL Curriculums, these are the key ICC dimensions to be fostered in learners since they become a platform to anchor the independent lifelong progress required to sustain effective intercultural communicative engagements (Bérešová, 2019; Deardorff 2020; Lyubova, 2020; LaScotte & Peters, 2021; Abid, 2021).

After analyzing the data obtained from the self-reporting survey, the students' achievement proves that a systematic hybrid approach to providing intercultural language input promotes

learners' ICC. Results showed that there was a significant effect on students' ICC knowledge dimension, which posttest mean result increased from (M=3.85) for intervention I to (M=4.09) in the posttest result for intervention II. This reveals that ongoing training in intercultural awareness effectively increases learners' intercultural knowledge about home and foreign cultures. The knowledge dimension comprised statements related to home cultural aspects such as Costa Rican heritage, subcultures' lifestyles, global citizenship, values, local and foreign stories, legends, traditions, and identity. Both dimensions constitute a pedagogical body of knowledge that opens doors for students to reaffirm and rediscover their notion of the self as a frame that enables the discovery of others who are culturally different even in the same culture.

Broader implications can be inferred from these data in terms of progression. The advanced and achievement reported in the experimental group from intervention I to intervention II and the significant differences found among control and experimental group support the hypotheses and validate the hybrid CLIL-PBL approach as an adequate framework to integrate ICC training in FL classroom. Participants in the experimental group made significant gains in intercultural knowledge after each of the pedagogical interventions proving that cultural and content knowledge and language learning can be taught and developed conjointly. It is reasonable to believe that in order to support intercultural language learning, there is a need to provide intercultural input that resonates with students' culture, reality, background, and interest with a purposeful, practical use. According to Zheng and Gao (2019), studying home cultures enriches native and foreign linguistic and cultural competence.

The role of content is pivotal in a foreign language class because without content, there is nothing to talk about. Students need to raise their confidence at the early stages of the learning process to feel and experience purposeful communication. Students need to boost their confidence

by using appealing content at the early stages of the learning process to make them feel and experience the need for intentional communication (Marsh & Frigols, 2012). Engaging students with cultural content initiates the building blocks for students to take on an active role as discoverers and collectors of knowledge and information, capitalizing on previously acquired knowledge as a result of socialization within the home country and of the acquisition of knowledge about home and foreign cultures. This knowledge is to be processed upon reflection, analysis, and interpretation, providing the learning mechanism to progress in cultural knowledge, language, and cognition. Thus, as the four ICC dimensions are interrelated, the knowledge component presupposes a platform that serves to boost the emergence of the other ICC dimensions. For instance, Byram (2020) has explained that individuals develop specific ICC skills by capitalizing on their existing knowledge. A shift from a traditional methodology to a hybrid methodology to learn and acquire a foreign/second language while getting interculturally knowledgeable and competent is a valuable reference for positive outcomes in the language classroom.

Interestingly, the data suggest that the dimension of critical cultural awareness has been highly affected during both interventions. This dimension explores cultural understanding as it relates to a personal level of understanding of other cultures drawing a specific connection to language learning. For example, participants were inquired about their awareness about cultural diversity in their country, interest in learning about other cultural points of reference beyond their own, awareness about similarities and differences among cultures, and reflection about cultural prejudices and stereotypes towards other culturally different people.

Data illustrated in Figure 57 lead to interpret that student mean scores for posttest, intervention I ranged from  $M= 3.78$  to  $M=4.19$  in the posttest for intervention II. The improvement in this dimension was considered to be statistically significant since participants deemed that they

had integrated the ICC notions related to critical awareness within their belief system. The learning opportunities offered through the varied resources and material used to conduct and complete tasks and projects through a foreign language for the two semesters during which the pedagogical interventions were implemented appears to have raised and enhanced students' level of ICC critical awareness. This particular ICC dimension allowed them to reconstruct acquired notions for new language discourses and the conscious visibility of diverse cultural realities. Learners trained in self-reflection and conscious observations and acknowledgment of their surroundings in terms of cultural diversity are more prone to understand the influence of their acquired belief system on how they perceive, interpret, and act towards others (Degens et al., 2016). Reflective cultural instruction, even in simple content or language tasks, can help cultivate respectful cultural views and understand that there is an intimate interrelationship between the self and the other and can reaffirm, complement, and foster individuals' growth when interacting and collaborating (Moncada-Linares, 2016).

The dimensions of ICC knowledge and critical cultural awareness, which were the most affected in the intervention I in the experimental group, are found to be the two most explored dimensions in intercultural learning research because they lay the foundations for learners to know and understand cultural frames of native and foreign cultures (Shadieff & Sintawati, 2020). It is believed that, after students go through this kind of introspection, other ICC dimensions may easily emerge. Knowledge and exposure can be an anchor for that process and development to take place.

The mean scores obtained in the ICC attitude dimension for intervention I showed a remarkable improvement from  $M=3.56$  to a mean score in the posttest of  $M=4.21$  for intervention II. The ICC attitude dimension focused on investigating students' attitude about learning the language while learning about home and foreign cultures, level of interest in interacting in English

with culturally different people, attitude towards cultural differences, and positive attitude towards learning English and intercultural content. Findings from both interventions are thought-provoking for various reasons. First, these findings correlate with the perspective that intercultural attitude can develop once a comprehensive intercultural exposure is sufficiently mediated. Without cultural knowledge of one's own group, connecting to others in respectful, nonthreatening, and sympathetic modes is virtually impossible. ICC knowledge works as a catalyst to support attitudes of respect, tolerance, openness, and curiosity (Zylkiewicz-Plonska & Aciené, 2021). The intercultural attitude has been pondered as the most crucial since it triggers the interest and motivation to seek intercultural engagements and openness to embrace intercultural contact and information. For Deardorff (2006), attitude is the base component for knowledge and skills to be sustained. Arguments to support such claims are important in developing the intercultural competence since attitude contributes to developing flexibility, openness, awareness, empathy, tolerance for ambiguity, and respect, among other skills (e.g., Byram, 1997; Ruben, 1976; Risager, 2007).

This study provides evidence that teaching and preparing a learning scenario for reflection, cultural learning, analysis, and the autonomous exploration of cultural content through contextualized resources and collaborative projects with peers prepare learners to develop the fundamental ICC attitude over time, as it is evident in results obtained in the intervention II. Findings also support the developmental perspective adjoined to the ICC competence (Kohler, 2020). The longitudinal nature of the interventions proved that learners first acquired the knowledge dimension (intervention I), and then, after the systematic ICC and language lessons during intervention II, learners' ICC attitude increased. These two ICC dimensions, knowledge and attitude, can be helpful to sustain students' intercultural interaction since ICC skills are strengthened through ICC training. This means that language educators have an excellent



opportunity to revitalize language teaching and learning with the inclusion of intercultural learning to strengthen the pivotal intercultural communicative competence needed to interact with people from other cultures in the target language in today's challenging times.

Regarding the ICC skills, it is particularly noteworthy that, although the experimental group outworked the control group in all the ICC dimensions in the two semesters, the experimental group progressed considerably in this particular dimension. The ICC skills dimension in this study included statements such as demonstrating flexibility when interacting; exhibiting empathy and respect to people who have different world views, values, and behaviors; using some strategies to support the English learning process and the intercultural component; contributing to the construction of a multicultural society based on respect, empathy, and the promotion of global citizenship; relating the intercultural knowledge to new situations in favor of effective communication; analyzing content and situations from different cultural perspectives; proposing projects to understand cultural aspects of the community, among others. In a broad sense, ICC skills enable learners to relate, interpret, interact, and operate effectively during intercultural engagements capitalizing on acquired home and foreign culture knowledge and attitudes. Mean scores illustrate that ICC skills for the posttest in the intervention I progressed from  $M=3.58$  to  $M=4.12$  in the posttest for intervention II.

It is noticed that this dimension was the second least affected after the pedagogical intervention, as noted in the posttest mean scores for interventions I and II. It can be interpreted that as skills require more time to develop and need a certain level of execution, students felt much more confident in positively self-assessing the knowledge (intervention I) and attitude dimensions (intervention II). Even though, results in all the ICC dimensions are highly positive. Participants in the experimental group not only reported clustered levels of agreement and progress but also

progressed further after participating in the intervention II. Insights and valuable scientific data are drawn from this longitudinal study helping to shed some light on the impact that regular and systematic training that considers hybrid principles of learning and teaching a foreign/second language and the intercultural component attached to it can provide positive and lasting benefits to learners' path of developing intercultural communicative competences while profiting on pragmatic competence and other comprehensive notions implied in language learning. Results contribute to the understanding that progressive teaching steps can delineate a dynamic, useful, and meaningful language learning experience that fulfills the need to prepare new generations of students with the skills, competences, knowledge, attitude, and awareness for them to feel confident and equipped to participate, mediate, and collaborate in reciprocal intercultural communication at local or international scenarios.

Finally, the hybrid CLIL-PBL model of teaching and learning principles used as the building blocks to design the intercultural language experience correlates with the significant pretest and posttest results yielded after comparing control and experimental groups. The methodology granted students a friendly and independent but collaborative freedom to study, discover, reflect, analyze, experience, and investigate intercultural input from various pedagogical resources (movies, photos, stories, videoclips, legends or cartoons) under a careful lesson plan of language tasks, activities and projects which led them to explore and learn not only the language but also content and intercultural topics. It is believed that the methodology based on project tasks help students attain language and intercultural goals as effectively taking them to enjoy the product creation. As Aziza Kavlu (2017) remark, PBL makes learning more enjoyable and effective. Thus, the mediated tasks, content, and units for each of the interventions led students to learn novel topics and themes through the foreign language whereas familiarizing learners with ICC notions as a basis

for self-introspection about their own roots, identity, and history as members of the Costa Rican culture or as immigrants. It seems that this kind of teaching allows ICC progression in all dimensions. Nguyen’s (2021) findings on the use of PBL to assess ICC are in line with this study since it helps students reinforce cultural knowledge and overall improve ICC.

### 6.3 Intercultural Formative Quiz: Results and Analysis of Control vs. Experimental groups

Two groups enrolled in the courses Integrated English I and Integrated English II were administered a pre and posttest examination at the beginning and end of each of the two semesters periods in which the intervention implementation took place. Shapiro-Wilk test was used to test the normality of scores and to determine the appropriate test to use. In this case, the Mann Whitney U Test (Wilcoxon Rank Sum Test) was used to demonstrate the intervention’s effectiveness. Descriptive data of results are also displayed on Table 29.

**Table 29** Mean Grade Difference: Control vs Intervention Groups

	<b>Control vs. Intervention Quiz Grade Means</b>					
	Pretest Control (n=95)	Intervention (n=124)	P-value	Post-test Control (n=95)	Intervention (n=124)	P-value
English I			0.686			<0.001
Mean	53.46	54.46		54.63	77.79	
Median (IQR)	53 (47-67)	56.5 (47-67)		60 (47-67)	80 (73-87)	
SD	15.25	13.73		14.82	12.14	
English II			<0.001			<0.001
Mean	55.99	77.90		56.74	82.42	
Median (IQR)	60 (50-67)	80 (73-87)		60 (50-67)	87 (75-87)	
SD	14.42	12.32		12.95	10.62	

*Note.* Descriptive analysis

Table 29 shows the pre and post test scores of control and experimental groups obtained during the first and second pedagogical interventions conducted during the semesters English I &

II. There were no significant mean differences in the English I pretest grades between the control and intervention groups ( $p > 0.05$ ). This may indicate that neither group handled specific cultural concepts or appropriate reasoning for intercultural situations before the intervention. In relation to posttest grades, a significant mean difference between the control and intervention groups was reported with a  $p\text{-value} < 0.001$ . There was a significant mean difference between the control and intervention groups in English II pretest grades,  $p\text{-value} < 0.001$ . Similarly, in posttest grades, a significant mean difference between the control and intervention groups was reported with a  $p\text{-value} < 0.001$ .

It can be seen in Table 29 that, throughout the process, the intervention students for the Integrated English I improved their test performance significantly. Students in the integrated English I pretest obtained a mean score of 54.46, and the posttest mean score was 77.79. These results exhibit evidence of relevant progression in mastering knowledge related to cultural content and key strategies acquired in dealing with intercultural situations. The results from the control group showed no significant progression for the pretest or posttest; obtaining means scores of 53.46 and 54.63, respectively.

As for the Integrated English II, students' improvement was also statistically significant compared to the control group. The pretest means score for the intervention group was 77.90. In contrast, the control group scored 55.99, which suggests that the intervention group not only experienced evidence of sustained knowledge mastery from Semester I but also during semester II. Participants from the experimental group outperformed the control group, and grades were higher in intervention II than in intervention I. It can be deduced that prolonged inclusion and facilitation of the intercultural component in various ways and means can positively influence students' awareness and expertise in certain intercultural and culture-related knowledge areas

mediated in the EFL classroom, which can be successfully transferred to real context situations. A graphical representation of the mean differences is shown in Figure 20.

**Figure 20** *Graphical Representation of Means Grade Difference: Control vs Intervention Groups*

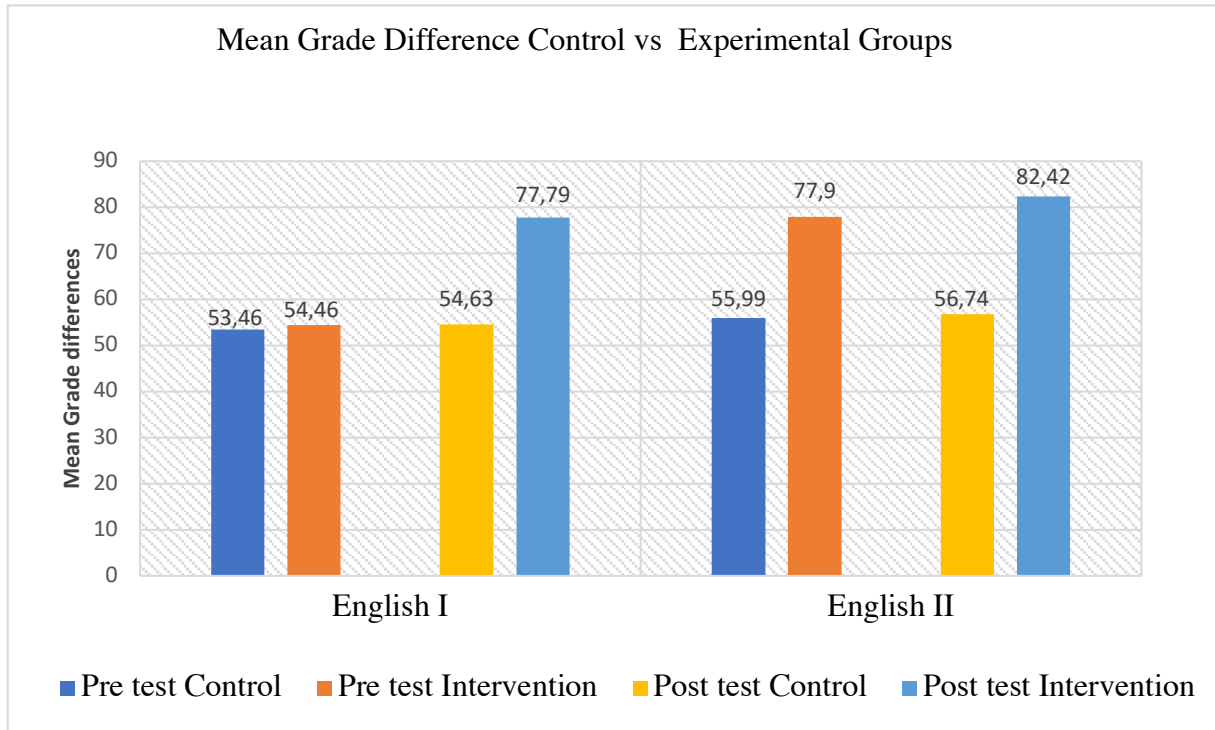
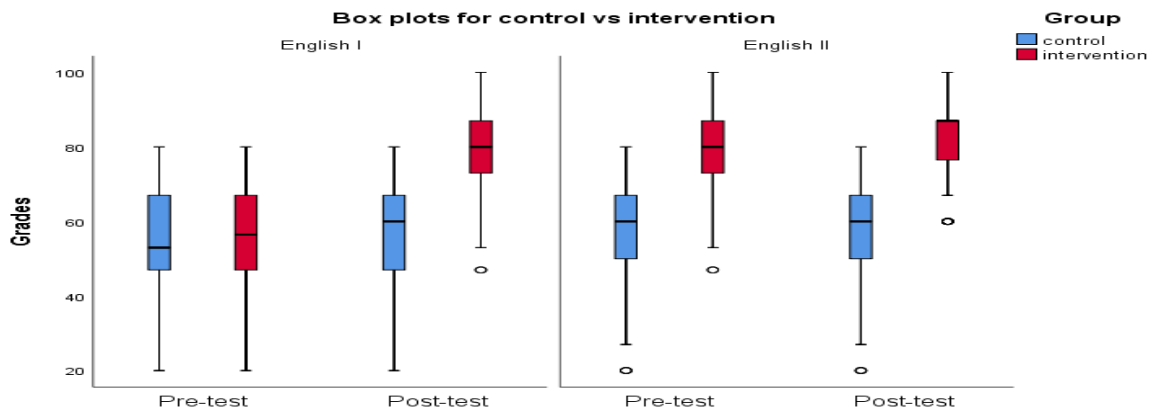


Figure 20 illustrates that when comparing the control group results to the intervention group, a significant difference is observed, demonstrating that systematically involving students with intercultural learning through a combined approach of CLIL and PBL influences students' ICC performance and fosters the development of ICC. Planning units that integrate language and intercultural content through varied learning activities where culture and language feed one another encourages their interest, desire to learn, to get better while building partnership with peers to share perspectives, ideas, opinions, and socializing projects final products. A regular teaching under these conditions creates an optimal learning environment for students to acquire and construct functional knowledge for their ICC components progression.

### 6.3.1 Box Plots for ICC Quiz: Control vs. Intervention

Additional and complementary illustration of both group results is provided in the way of boxplots in Figure 21. As can be observed, the intervention group clearly outperformed the control group. From these data, it can be derived that a systematic and prolonged exposure to intercultural issues, treatment, and reflection of intercultural content helped participants achieve intercultural objectives in terms of knowledge and skills, which were two of the ICC components assessed in the intercultural quiz. The results obtained by the experimental group after intervention I were significantly improved during intervention II. Conducting projects that require connections with content and cultural knowledge through collaborative ways effectively activate cognition and knowledge recall to be used with communicative purposes.

**Figure 21** *Boxplots for Intercultural Quiz: Intervention I and II (Control vs. Intervention Groups)*



### 6.3.2 Intercultural Quiz Mean Difference: Intervention I and II

Table 30 shows the results of pre and post test scores in the experimental group after each intervention in courses English I and II. These results were compared by using the Mann-Whitney U Test to obtain p-values. For both interventions, a significant mean difference between the pre

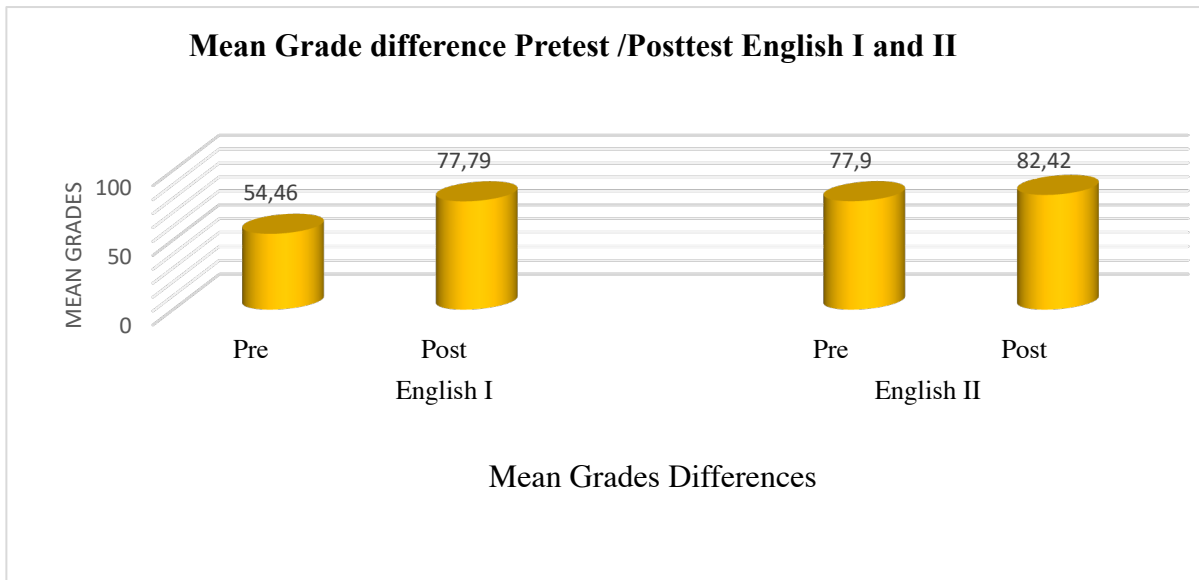
and posttest grades was reported with  $p$ -values $<0.05$ , indicating significance. A graphical representation of the mean differences showing information regarding the spread of the distribution of the variables is provided in figure 22.

**Table 30** *Quiz Mean Difference: Intervention I and II (Integrated English I &II)*

	Pretest vs. Post-test Quiz Results					
	English I		P value	English II		P value
	Pre (n=124)	Post (n=124)		Pre (n=124)	Post (n=124)	
Grades			$<0.001$			0.003
Mean	54.46	77.79		77.90	82.42	
Median (IQR)	56.5 (47-67)	80 (73-87)		80 (73-87)	87 (75-87)	
SD	13.73	12.14		12.32	10.62	

Data show (Figure 22) that, when comparing the pretest and posttest scores of the intervention group during the first course, integrated English I semester I, it is observed a significant improvement, from 54.46 in the pretest to 77.79 in the posttest. For the second course, integrated English II, one can see that students' progress seems to have accelerated and the scores are slightly higher, increasing from 77.90 in the pretest to 82.42 in the posttest. The intervention carried out over the 13-week period in each semester has considerably impacted students' ICC development. Knowledge of intercultural aspects was better acquired through time when exposing learners to various intercultural and reflective tasks both during online class meetings and through independent students' work.

**Figure 22** Graphical Representation of Quiz Mean Difference: Intervention I and II (Integrated English I & II)



**6.3.2.1 Box Plots for ICC Quiz: Intervention I and II**

Additional and complementary results of both intervention periods (intervention I and II during the courses integrated English I and II) are provided in the form of boxplots. The box plots show that the experimental group greatly improved their performance in the quiz from semester I to semester II.

**Figure 23** Box Plots for Grades: Intervention I vs II

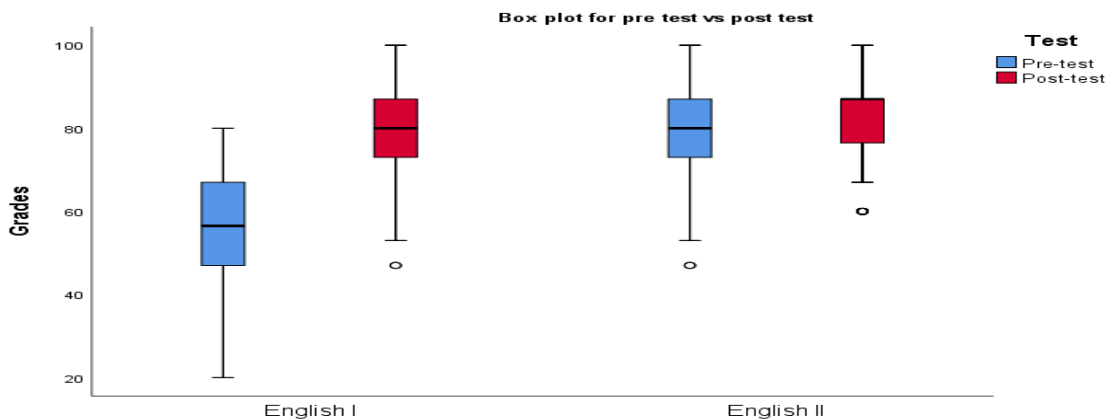




Figure 23 displays the boxplots representing the scores for pretest and posttest for both interventions (Integrated English I and II). As can be observed, the median of the posttest for English I is lower than the median score for the pretest for English II. Both pretests are equally distributed around the median; however, the scores for the pretest for English I are more dispersed than the scores for the pretest for English II. The median score for the posttest of English II is higher than the posttest scores of English I. The posttests scores for English I are relatively distributed around the median; however, the scores for the posttest of English II are dispersed below the median. Outliers were detected for the posttest for both English I and II and pretest for English II.

The data displayed in the boxplot show a slightly growing tendency in the median grades from intervention I to the second. In general, these differences reflect that as more time is devoted to exposing students to an integrated intercultural language experience in explicit and regularly, more chances will students have of performing better in any given intercultural situation because they have previously developed the strategies and a functional body of knowledge to use in intercultural contexts. It can be claimed that longitudinal exposure to CLIL and PBL learning principles during the interventions provided participants with the tools to build an autonomous and more confident management of ICC related knowledge and competency to appropriately perform during the formative quizzes.

### **6.3.3 Intercultural Quiz: Overall Discussion**

The use of quizzes in the process of teaching and learning is an optimal instrument to gather information about strengths and weaknesses regarding the established learning objectives.

Educators can use quizzes to determine students' progress and the specific areas that require further attention or reinforcement. Quizzes also have a nonthreatening nature compared to traditional tests, making them more effective and practical to use (Sánchez et al., 2017), allowing cognitive activation, retention, and memorization (Butler & Roediger, 2007; Roediger et al., 2011). The assessment of cultural knowledge can be carried out through familiar instruments like tests, quizzes, writing pieces, or through alternative tasks. Byram (2020), for example, suggests using tests to evaluate factual knowledge through varied kinds of questions. Testing cultural knowledge is crucial for reinforcing the learning process itself and for gathering data about the cognitive effects that the teaching process have had on learners.

The use of critical incidents or intercultural situations is an effective way to train learners to act in imaginary situations where they can learn to manage certain level of misunderstanding, awareness, and skills similar to those found in real intercultural situations. Findings suggest that critical incidents are suitable pedagogical means to teach and assess ICC components and may potentially foster strategies such as anticipating mistakes in communication and critical thinking and communicative skills to handle intercultural communicative contact (Bodrič, 2021; Snow, 2015; Tran et al., 2020). Tasks of this nature provide situations (incidents) and invite to manifest possible reactions in the best culturally respectful manner. Simulating intercultural situations prepares learners for future scenarios and offers a pedagogical tool that allows tracking indicators of progression. In the quiz, various intercultural situations were used suggesting the viability and usefulness of these kinds of tasks in teaching and assessing learners' intercultural language learning. It has been ratified in the quiz that grades improved not only when comparing the experimental to the control group, but also when the grades obtained by the experimental group in intervention I were compared to those obtained in intervention II.

It is therefore crucial to articulate pedagogical efforts for students to explicitly study key notions of culture as an anchor in the path to recognizing its relationship to language learning and its role in transferring utility to actual diverse communicative encounters. In the context of this study, intercultural knowledge has been situated in a rank of relevance due to its potentialities for developing cognitive, communicative, and language skills. As cultural content is explicitly addressed in the EFL classroom through varied language tasks and projects, students' confidence can increase by lowering their levels of anxiety, thus allowing them to take more risks when using the language for purposeful and communicative reasons. Content and information handled under a hybrid and planned learning process effectively offers academic and personal advantages to learners. This kind of praxis is in line with what Liddicoat (2004) has suggested when teaching and exploring intercultural matters in support of language learning.

Results obtained in the intercultural quiz used as pretest and posttest in each intervention suggest that knowledge acquisition has further room for improvement. The data obtained indicate that investing more hours in learning cultural content will enable learners to retrieve and transfer that knowledge for applicable and practical purposes. This is corroborated by the positive quiz results obtained in the experimental group, which progressed from  $M=77.79$  to  $M=82.42$  in the posttest for intervention I and intervention II, respectively. They also reveal that, in order to acquire a complex and multi-dimensional construct as ICC in the EFL classroom, students must be informed of its implications and the rationale that support the inclusion of this kind of content in the language classroom. If students are told about these particularities, they can be empowered, motivated, and drawn to make direct efforts to shift fixed perspectives and strengthen their views on language and culture.

Intercultural knowledge, in this sense, caters for a foundational theoretical stand for practice, use, change, and potentially pragmatic and intercultural growth. The process of teaching regularly intercultural content and knowledge under the correct teaching approach and use of materials supports positive advances in developing and progressing ICC. Managing to achieve such gains requires an attentive, responsive, and hybrid pedagogy that carefully balances the correct kinds and doses of knowledge so that learners can find it relevant and useful to their lives, academic growth, and IC competence building since, as Kramersch (2013) points out, the selected elements of culture to be taught and assessed should interconnect to language learning and intercultural communication purposes.

The competences tested in the intercultural quiz used for this study comprised concepts and intercultural situations to measure the level of responsive stances achieved by the students after participating in each pedagogical intervention. Moreover, as aforementioned, test results support that planned and balanced intercultural teaching offers valuable chances for students to construct their knowledge base, qualifying them to anticipate misunderstanding and potential conflict in intercultural contexts. Helping learners become interculturally knowledgeable in the context of EFL learning means a working ground towards ICC proficiency.

The control group made no significant intercultural gains nor progress in any of the periods investigated since the formative quiz results were not statistical significant. It can be argued that the traditional method or language oriented approaches neglect the intercultural component or fail to properly address the integration of intercultural matters within the language classroom. As a result, working to develop more ambitious language and intercultural objectives requires the design of explicit intercultural teaching. In the process of learning a foreign/ second language, if students are not exposed to cultural content, tasks, and projects that explore intercultural knowledge in

varied and meaningful ways, students are not expected to fully and effectively operate in those particular domains. Learning and improvement in the intercultural arena require conscious, ongoing, and regular exposure to intercultural content to construct its knowledge bases and retrieve it when needed. The classroom is an optimum place to begin the process of becoming knowledgeable and competent in intercultural communication while learning a foreign/second language. If no cultural input or exposure is brought to the language classroom, no significant gains can be visible, missing the numerous learning opportunities for students to fully develop crucial skills for today's world.

**CHAPTER 7:  
ICC THROUGH THE HYBRID APPROACH ANALYSIS**

## 7.1 Hybrid Approach perspective questionnaire: experimental group results

Students' beliefs and perceptions on the integration of the intercultural communicative competence in the EFL context were gathered through a questionnaire. The data from the experimental and the control group wer compared to establish any correlations that could determine the relationships of one variable to another across time (during two semesters). Finally, it analyses participants' intercultural communicative competence progression (if any) through formative assessment tools in foreign language teaching and learning. SPSS has been effective in identifying patterns resulting from the data. The results have been processed and treated in the form of frequencies, proportions, and comparisons to examine the object of the study among groups and periods.

A self-report questionnaire was used to gather participants' perspectives about their ICC learning experience after the implementation of a hybrid approach of CLIL and PBL. A total of 124 students from the experimental group completed the instrument. The results of the tests presented below seek to measure the effectiveness of the method implemented in order to verify the internal validity of this study. A Cronbach  $\alpha$  test was performed to measure the internal consistency and reliability of the scale. The test's results yield a Cronbach  $\alpha$  higher than 0.90 for all the self-report questionnaire categories indicating a high and satisfactory internal consistency and reliability.

A statistical hypothesis test was first conducted to determine the most appropriate test to compare the differences in perception of the experimental group after the intervention I and II in the courses English I and II and establish if there was a normal distribution of the data obtained from the instrument used. A Shapiro-Wilk statistical test was applied to check for normality. The test results indicated the nonexistence of normality, so a nonparametric test was used to compare

the measurements of the two-period interventions studied. The Mann-Whitney U test (Wilcoxon rank-sum test) was chosen to evaluate whether there were significant results once the parametric option was discarded.

The instrument was designed to measure the perceptions of the participants on the intercultural communicative competence implemented under a hybrid/ combined approach in three categories:

- Impact of the CLIL and PBL combination on English language proficiency
- Benefits of the CLIL and PBL combined approach for the learning experience
- Level of satisfaction with the tasks, projects, topics, and resources used during the implementation of the CLIL and PBL combined approach.

**Table 31** *ICC Hybrid Approach perspective questionnaire Results: Intervention I(English I)*

	Cronbach $\alpha$	$M$	Median (IQR)	$SD$
Impact	0.990	4.01	4 (4-5)	0.92
Benefits	0.994	4.01	4 (4-5)	0.92
Satisfaction	0.993	4.11	4 (4-5)	0.87
Overall	0.997	4.03	4 (4-5)	0.91

*Note.* Intervention I ( $n = 124$ ).

Table 31 displays the findings regarding the participants' perspectives on the combined principles applied to foster ICC within the English classroom. Based on the results, participants' perspectives on the method used in the English class were favorable. The highest score was obtained in the satisfaction category ( $M = 4.11$ ), but the other categories, impact, and benefits, also yielded high mean scores ( $M = 4.01$ ). The satisfaction category explored statements on the level of agreement about the activities, tasks and journals supporting home and foreign cultures reflection,



collaborative and cognitive skills, authentic learning, intercultural perspectives, and their role as global citizens, which were found to be remarkably positive among participants' responses. These results reveal a significant degree of satisfaction with the tasks, projects, topics, and resources used during the implementation of the combined method of CLIL and PBL learning principles. Working the intercultural competence through a combination of CLIL and PBL methodologies, as demonstrated in this study, help learners identify themselves with specific learning activities and classwork on cultures.

**Table 32** ICC Hybrid Approach perspective questionnaire Results: Intervention II (English II)

	Cronbach $\alpha$	$M$	Median (IQR)	$SD$
Impact	0.991	4.23	4 (4-5)	0.86
Benefits	0.993	4.31	4 (4-5)	0.85
Satisfaction	0.994	4.37	5 (4-5)	0.85
Overall	0.997	4.32	4.75 (4-5)	0.85

*Note.* Intervention II ( $n = 124$ ).

Table 32 shows the data obtained after conducting a descriptive analysis of perspectives after applying Intervention II during the Integrated English II, semester II, 2020. Findings clearly show an increase in scores concerning the semester I, Intervention I (Integrated English I). A higher score in the satisfaction category corresponds to  $M = 4.37$ , followed by perceived benefits with  $M = 4.31$ , while the impact was scored  $M = 4.23$ . This reveals that observing and perceiving certain kinds of changes around benefits and impact requires a systematic process over time.

Students' level of satisfaction with the activities, projects, and tasks supported by the integration of intercultural content, authentic and contextualized resources were highly accepted among students. Students seem to make long-lasting connections despite the novelty of the remote virtual classes. The lesson units infused with intercultural content, reflective task activities, and

project work seem to have been positively accepted by participants since they could even remotely be guided to work during online live meetings and individually or collaboratively using virtual platforms.

### 7.1.1 ICC hybrid Approach perspective questionnaire: Intervention I vs. Intervention II

To determine if there were significant differences in these variables (impact, benefits, and satisfaction), results from the intervention I and II (English I and English II) were compared. A general variable, which was obtained from a sum of points of the three previous variables, was created to measure the participants' overall perception on the combined approach scale questionnaire. Table 33 shows the results obtained, classified by the indicator variables mentioned above, as well as the differences observed between the English I versus English II course variables. The table also shows the results of the comparison between the Intervention I and II test. A Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of greater than 0.90 was reported, indicating a high internal consistency for our scales (i.e., impact, benefits, satisfaction, and overall measure) Table 33 illustrates a significant mean difference between both interventions' test scores reported in all three categories: impact, benefits, and satisfaction ( $p$ -values  $< 0.05$ ). A graphical representation of the mean differences is shown in Figure 24, with error bars (standard deviation) showing information regarding the spread of the distribution of the variables.

**Table 33** *Hybrid Approach perspective questionnaire Results: Intervention I vs Intervention II*

	<b>Intervention I</b>	<b>Intervention II</b>	<b>P-value</b>
Impact			0.036
Cronbach $\alpha$	0.990	0.991	
<i>M</i>	4.01	4.23	
Median (IQR)	4 (4-5)	4 (4-5)	
<i>SD</i>	0.92	0.86	
Benefits			0.004
Cronbach $\alpha$	0.994	0.993	
<i>M</i>	4.01	4.31	
Median (IQR)	4 (4-5)	4 (4-5)	
<i>SD</i>	0.92	0.85	
Satisfaction			0.003
Cronbach $\alpha$	0.993	0.994	
<i>M</i>	4.11	4.37	
Median (IQR)	4 (4-5)	5 (4-5)	
<i>SD</i>	0.87	0.85	
Overall			0.004
Cronbach $\alpha$	0.997	0.997	
<i>M</i>	4.03	4.32	
Median (IQR)	4 (4-5)	4.75 (4-5)	
<i>SD</i>	0.91	0.85	

Notes. Intervention I ( $n = 124$ ), Intervention II ( $n = 124$ ),  $p$ -values = Mann-Whitney U test (Wilcoxon rank-sum test).

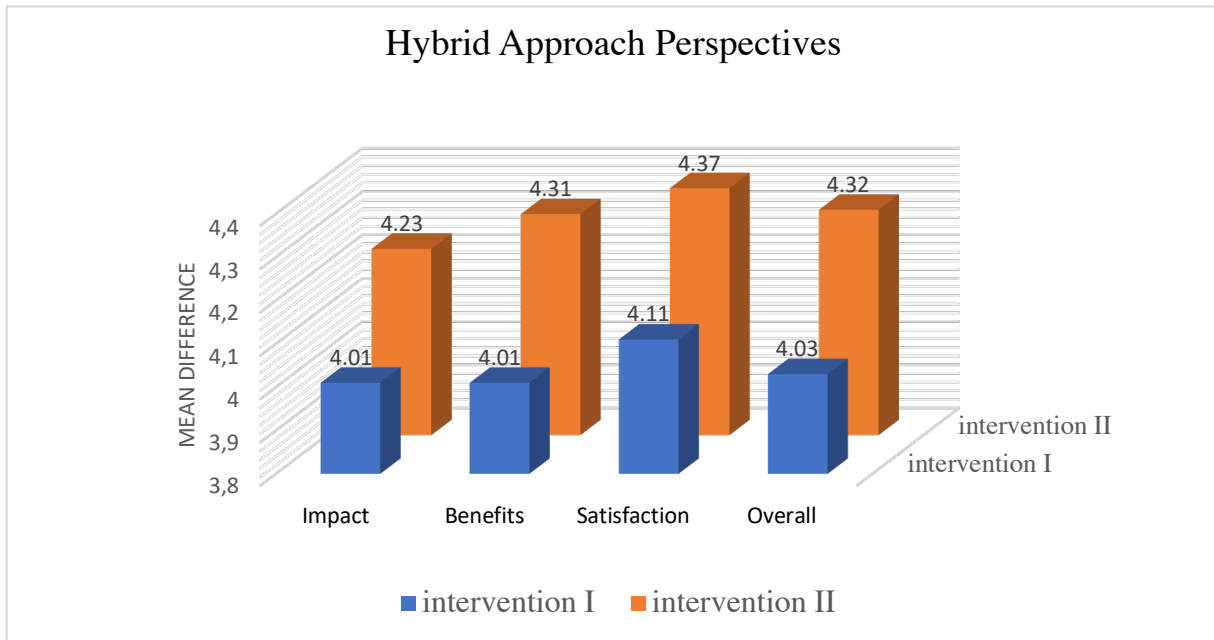
**Table 34** *Mann-Whitney U Test Results: Intervention I vs Intervention II*

		Impact	Benefits	Satisfaction	Overall
<b>Intervention I</b>	Mann-Whitney U	6590.500	6162.000	6158.000	6196.500
	vs. Wilcoxon W	14340.500	13912.000	13908.000	13946.500
<b>Intervention II</b>	Z	-2.092	-2.913	-2.927	-2.850
	Asymp. sig. (2-tailed)	0.036	0.004	0.003	0.004
	Exact sig. (2-tailed)	0.036	0.004	0.003	0.004
	Exact sig. (1-tailed)	0.018	0.002	0.002	0.002

Test results, as observed in Table 34, support the idea that teaching a foreign language through a hybrid approach combining principles from CLIL and PBL has produced a higher

statistical effect on the category of student satisfaction as demonstrated in the Mann-Whitney U test ( $U = 6158.000, p < 0.05$ ), ( $Z = -2.927, p < 0.05$ ).

**Figure 24** ICC Hybrid Approach Mean Differences after Intervention I vs Intervention II



The data illustrated in Figure 24 above indicate higher mean scores in the intervention II than in Intervention I. During the second intervention, the positive change in students' perspectives can be attributed to the systematic (weekly) facilitation of the intercultural component through cultural content, reflection activities, tasks, and projects. As can be observed, the least affected category after both interventions (semester I and II) was the category of impact. This may be due to the fact that this category comprises statements related to the impact that the combined approach of CLIL and PBL had on students' English proficiency, including elements such as confidence when speaking, the use of grammatical structures, and the development of ICC, which are complex factors to be perceived by students.

The fact that this category scored the least in both semesters of this study may indicate that in order to acknowledge a tangible impact of the interplay of elements related to English mastery and ICC, students require time for cognitive processes to accommodate which would support retrieval and use in real situations. Another aspect that may have influenced a lower mean score in the impact category can be accredited to the new remote learning modality. Even though students adjusted and adapted in incredible ways, it is still a novel and sudden way of learning that limits the benefits of an on-campus learning experience. The development of ICC competence is part of a process that requires time and several opportunities to put into practice in real-life settings.

It is in the interest of this study to identify the specific items that got higher mean scores within the experimental group after each intervention to further understand the impact of the hybrid approach proposed. Findings will provide further directions to measure the impact of the methodology used to foster ICC development in English language learners in the courses studied and after having participated in the two semester interventions. Table 35 below shows that most participants agreed and strongly agreed with all 20 items included in the instrument validating the effectiveness of the model used to achieve linguistic, intercultural, and learning outcomes in the two interventions. It displays the mean scores per item and provides further data and information to identify the most affected and positively favored items. These findings provide valuable insights on the nature of ICC didactics and how incorporating novel teaching principles can impact students' perception and actual learning in EFL contexts.

**Table 35** *Descriptive Statistics per item: Mean Scores for Intervention I and Intervention II*

Intervention Items	Intervention I			Intervention II		
	M	Median (IQR)	SD	M	Median (IQR)	SD
Item 1	3.89	4 (3-5)	0.97	4.23	4 (4-5)	0.86
Item 2	3.87	4 (3-5)	1.01	4.17	4 (4-5)	0.92
Item 3	4.06	4 (4-5)	0.87	4.19	4 (4-5)	0.86
Item 4	3.95	4 (3-5)	0.94	4.22	4 (4-5)	0.85
Item 5	4.06	4 (4-5)	0.93	4.40	5 (4-5)	0.81
Item 6	4.10	4 (4-5)	0.88	4.34	5 (4-5)	0.83
Item 7	3.94	4 (4-5)	0.90	4.31	4 (4-5)	0.83
Item 8	3.99	4 (3-5)	0.95	4.27	4 (4-5)	0.86
Item 9	3.99	4 (4-5)	0.91	4.25	4 (4-5)	0.84
Item 10	4.03	4 (4-5)	0.89	4.32	4 (4-5)	0.83
Item 11	4.06	4 (4-5)	0.87	4.29	4 (4-5)	0.84
Item 12	3.95	4 (3-5)	0.96	4.31	5 (4-5)	0.87
Item 13	4.03	4 (4-5)	0.92	4.35	5 (4-5)	0.88
Item 14	4.01	4 (4-5)	0.90	4.38	5 (4-5)	0.80
Item 15	4.10	4 (4-5)	0.84	4.32	5 (4-5)	0.85
Item 16	4.05	4 (4-5)	0.92	4.35	5 (4-5)	0.87
Item 17	4.10	4 (4-5)	0.90	4.36	5 (4-5)	0.88
Item 18	4.16	4 (4-5)	0.86	4.35	5 (4-5)	0.84
Item 19	4.15	4 (4-5)	0.86	4.43	5 (4-5)	0.85
Item 20	4.06	4 (4-5)	0.89	4.39	5 (4-5)	0.85

*Note. Intervention I and Intervention II*

For intervention I, it can be observed that in the first section of the self-report hybrid model questionnaire, referring to the impact category items 3 [the combined approach has helped me to better understand a variety of intercultural content], the mean score was 4.06 and SD 0.87. In item 5 [I have learned new vocabulary, basic grammatical structures, and expressions in English from the units studied using the combined methodology], the mean score was 4.06 and SD 0.93. Finally, the highest score was on item 6 [After working on the intercultural units using the combined methodologies, I have learned a variety of content relevant to real situations], with a mean score of 4.10 and SD 0.88. The standard deviation results show that participants' responses were clustered

together agreeing and strongly agreeing, portraying a consistent positive perspective among participants on those dimensions. Findings in this regard illustrate that the hybrid method used during the lessons was much more effective on supporting intercultural content understanding, vocabulary, grammar, and expressions acquisition and on learning useful content for real situations. Further interpretations on this impact can be drawn to the nature of the learning experience explicitly articulated around intercultural and linguistic goals with intentional communitive and practical purposes lined by the hybrid approach of principles. On the contrary, the lowest item score was on item 2 [I feel more confident about speaking English after having studied the intercultural units with the combined approach of CLIL and PBL], with the mean score of 3.87 and SD 1.01, indicating that responses for this item deviated from the mean.

Regarding the section of the questionnaire focused on the benefits, the highest mean score was on item 11 [I have learned to appreciate cultural nuances and their role in the process of learning English], with a mean of 4.06 and SD 0.87. By planning and assigning tasks and projects habitually and setting clear communitive objectives, students can positively perceive cultural diversity and its role when communicating through a foreign language within intercultural backgrounds. The projects and tasks infused with cultural messages, situations, analysis, and community related products triggered self-discovery and appreciation towards home and foreign cultures. The lowest mean score was obtained in item 12 [I believe the combined methodologies facilitated meaningful learning and critical cultural awareness], where the mean score was 3.95 and SD 0.96 demonstrating that participants' answers for this item spread from the mean. These findings disclose very useful insights in relation to how the lessons are structured and the demand to further considering learners' needs, interests and barriers to make informed decisions about the tasks and objectives brought and assigned in the language class.

As for the satisfaction category, the highest mean score was on item 18 [the resources and material (stories, videos, recordings, movies, texts) engaged me in authentic learning situations], with a mean score of 4.16 and SD 0.86, proving that the learner centeredness subscribed by both constructivist models principles (CLIL/PBL) influenced participants' perspectives to confidently acknowledge that the varied material, tasks and projects serve as a learning platform to facilitate authentic learning situations, crucial to advancing and accomplishing educational goals. The lowest result in this category was on item 16 [the projects and tasks promoted my collaborative and cognitive skills (creativity and critical thinking)], with a mean of 4.05 and SD 0.92. Even though the mean is relatively high, representing a tendency in responses between agree and strongly agree, the fact that this item got the lowest mean score indicates the need to further promote and guide students in developing cognitive skills, creativity and critical thinking, which are crucial and required training.

After analyzing the results in intervention II, a shift in student perception and increment on mean scores is noticed which provides interesting insight into the object of the study. As for the impact category, item 5 remains as the most favored by participants in the experimental group [I have learned new vocabulary, basic grammatical structures, and expressions in English from the units studied using the combined methodology]. The mean score of 4.40 and SD 0.81 obtained in this item demonstrates the methodology provided has contributed to their vocabulary input and growth. The lowest mean score was also replicated from intervention I in item 2, with a mean score of 4.17 and SD 0.92. In this regard, the methodology used through the novel mode of remote online learning had a minor impact on students' confidence in speaking.

The beneficial impact on the ICC learning experience is evident in item 14 [The combined methodology guided me to assume an active and autonomous role in increasing my English



language skills], with a mean of 4.38 and SD 0.80. The fact that this item obtained the highest mean score may be linked to the learners' focus on both model's principles (CLIL/PBL) used to outline an active and independent work throughout the learning experience. The lowest mean score was obtained in item 9 [I have actively participated in the class discussions by contributing to the intercultural analysis and reflection using the target language] with a mean of 4.25 and SD 0.84.

The fact that this item obtained a lowest mean score can naturally be linked to the beginner level most of the students participating of the interventions had. The language demands within a hybrid methodology requires students' disposition to engage in demanding but comprehensible content tasks and projects. As habitual classroom practice is expected to enhance confidence and language control and autonomy, these findings support the need to continue the instruction and analysis of intercultural tasks through the target language as part of a developmental process.

The satisfaction category noted the highest mean in item 19 [the proposed projects and activities allowed me to broaden my intercultural perspective and my role as a global citizen], where the mean was 4.43 and SD 0.85. This provides relevant information on the methodology implemented during the interventions. By corroborating that projects and activities permeated with intercultural research and product creation projects remain in students' memory and activates cognition since a communitive intent is given (Jong et al., 2015) along with explicit practice. The lowest score was on item 15 [The activities, tasks and journals guided me to reflect on my own and other cultures] with a mean of 4.32 and SD 0.85, suggesting that more reflection about home and foreign cultures needs to be considered through the tasks facilitated. Thus, it may be interpreted that cognitive and thinking skills of analysis and reflection need to be supported by a combined use of strategies attending cognitive and linguistic demands. This idea requires learners more time for actual practice and reinforcement that the remote learning could not fully and sufficiently provide.

Overall, it is concluded that the analysis per item has demonstrated the specific elements and factors that were highly impacted by the use of the hybrid methodology of CLIL and PBL principles during both of the interventions implemented in the courses of integrated English I and II. To summarize, positive and useful attributes were perceived by the experimental group were identified in item 18,  $M=4.16$ , and 19,  $M=4.15$ , for intervention I and in item 5,  $M=4.40$ , and item 19,  $M=4.43$ , for intervention II. It is very interesting to notice that for both of the interventions, item 19 is one of the items that obtains the higher scores. It is therefore, reaffirmed that the hybrid methodology has highly contributed to participants' learning progression and advance. Thanks to the principles from CLIL and PBL, applied and used in the design of the lessons, tasks and language activities, students have been able to engage in authentic learning situations (Goris et al., 2019; Lamella, 2020), learn under a holistic platform of projects and tasks that broaden intercultural perspectives and roles as global citizens (Cubero-Vásquez, 2021; Byram, 2020; Porto, 2021) and improve specific language skills in terms of vocabulary, grammar and expressions in English. This is highly endorsed to the CLIL nature (Dalton- Puffer, 2008; Beaten et al., 2020) and PBL language and vocabulary gains (Riswandi, 2018; Pinzon, 2014).

## **7.2 ICC hybrid Approach Perspective Questionnaire Discussion**

The positive results obtained after implementing a merged pedagogy of principles based on CLIL and PBL to facilitate ICC development have proven the effectiveness of the mediated learning experience. Addressing both culture and language at the early stages of the EFL process becomes a fertile ground to get learners' interest and focus on developing their linguistic and intercultural competence. Findings lead to the interpretation that combining several method in order to design a learning experience directed to attain linguistic and intercultural objectives can

affect both the teacher and the learner. Teachers are in charge of making decisions about teaching procedures, content, activities, assessment and assignments. As designers of the teaching experience, educators involved in intercultural teaching also take part in intercultural learning. Educators need to explore authentic resources and not rely solely on the use of textbooks which most of the time do not appropriately address cultural themes or do not offer a balanced proportion of intercultural issues from home and foreign cultures, nor expose learners to reflections and comparisons in non-biased modes.

For that reason, authentic material and material that comes out of national cultures serve as a rich resource to introduce learners to intercultural matters through in EFL classes. The use of effective procedures and material is crucial to entangle learners in intercultural learning and understanding (Risager, 2011; Tomalin & Stempleski, 2013; Reid, 2015). Authentic, meaningful, and interesting material encompassing culture, language and cognitive stimulation reinforces linguistic and intercultural objectives (Koro, 2018; Shayakhmetova et al., 2017). Findings support these beliefs since the hybrid approach of CLIL and PBL principles has demonstrated promising positive effects in all three categories analyzed.

The items from the satisfaction category yielded the highest mean scores during the two interventions carried out in the integrated English courses I and II. This category analyzed the degree of satisfaction with the tasks, projects, topics, and resources used during the implementation of the CLIL and PBL hybrid approach. Interestingly, it was found that the mean scores were maintained as the highest,  $M=4.11$  and  $M=4.37$ , after each intervention determining a substantial increment as well during the second intervention. These results provide valuable information that reveals the importance of planning procedures, material, resources, topics, and tasks used in the language class when mediating ICC.

The method, structure, design and forms linked to the facilitation of input seem to be a particular element of interest to students, who express their satisfaction regarding the use of an alternative methodology. The merged methodology provides numerous learning opportunities for learners to experience a nontraditional learning style suitable to progress in diverse academic and personal areas. Through the CLIL and PBL principles, participants have become conscious that intercultural and language learning could find a receptive attitude in FL learners despite the challenges encountered in linguistic areas, content material or task procedures. In this sense, findings clearly support that cognitive challenges grant language learning improvement for all students (Dalton-Puffer, 2007), allowing them to process their own understanding and progression despite their age or linguistic ability (Coyle, 2006).

Developing learners' linguistic and ICC competence is not an easy task. Educators must acknowledge that the advantages of mediating this kind of language experience are worthy not only to prepare individuals for intercultural encounters, but to educate them to interrelate as members of society, culture or community healthily and harmoniously. On these premises, teachers undertaking this teaching and learning path face a transformational stance of visions, modes and perceptions of what it means to teach a foreign language. Intercultural and language instruction in the context of foreign language teaching demands regular and appropriate practices within an instructional language planning that deploys foreign cultures exploration, and the rediscovery of home cultures as progressively promote reflections, comparisons, understanding, awareness and introspection as a catalyst for perception shifting.

The hybrid model of CLIL and PBL can provide directions into approaching and addressing the how to teach the intercultural component, its related dimensions, and the emphasis on awakening individuation (finding the self) while engaging in rich learning dynamics through

foreign language learning. Specifically, the hybrid approach of CLIL and PBL principles are portrayed as a benchmark to cultural reflection, intercultural citizenship responsibility, collaborative work, cognitive activation, creativity, critical thinking and motivation towards language learning improvement. Results show that the use of the hybrid approach has had a positive impact on the satisfaction category, implying a high level of student agreement on the type of instruction facilitated. Related research exploring the use of projects to promote the inclusion of intercultural content has been found to be motivating, beneficial and positively perceived by learners (Thomas, 2000; Bell, 2010; Grant, 2017; Fuentes-Cabrera et al., 2020). These perceived gains in the language classroom have been corroborated within each model's (CLIL/PBL) principles contributing to understanding how language teaching can go beyond linguistic aims. Bearing that in mind, these principles provide a learning experience based on student-centeredness, informed learners, content and culture analysis through tasks and project activities, community and real-world involvement, active interaction, cognitive processes and language reinforcement and progression.

Working to hone language learning processes in the context of tertiary education should nurture a multimodal classroom environment by the use of technology, authentic material and experiential tasks as influential means to promote cultural approximations (Rico-Troncoso, 2012; Zhang & Zhou, 2019; Quin, 2015) to enable students to achieve and succeed in the proposed learning goals. The constructive learning environment designed under the hybrid approach used in mediating the interventions has proven to be of greater satisfaction among the participants in the experimental group. Most of the material used was intended to be practical, functional and attractive to the student's age, level and context. The films, exercises, texts, stories, videos, readings, movies, quotes, commercials, photos, etc. drew upon relevant content and cultural issues

that took learners to use the target language and participate in dialogic construction and reflection of knowledge individually and collaboratively.

Regarding the benefits category of the CLIL and PBL hybrid approach to ICC learning, the mean score results obtained were highly promising for both of the interventions implemented:  $M=4.01$ , for intervention I, and  $M=4.31$ , for intervention II. This category was scored as the second most affected during the interventions. The effects of the CLIL and PBL principles to mediate an intercultural experience are likely to generate positive outcomes in the path to engage learners in language and culture acquisition and applicability. This has been corroborated through the scale perception findings within the experimental group after self-reporting their perspectives on the method used, which confirms the effectiveness, success, and benefits obtained from the tasks, projects and activities mediated to develop and reinforce their cultural knowledge acquisition, analysis, practice, reflection, appreciation and understanding through the use of English as a foreign language.

These findings correlate with what has been found in the ICC self-assessment scale, where for the first intervention, the highest mean score was on the knowledge dimension. The fact that the intercultural knowledge progression becomes easily acknowledged for learners is found to be replicated along with the literature available investigating the cultural component (Quin, 2015; Tran & Duong, 2018; Feng, 2016). Exposing learners to an alternative pedagogy of intercultural language tasks and projects in the classroom developed in learners' cultural awareness and a changed attitude towards language learning, helping them take on a more autonomous role due to the hybrid method used. These findings relate to the ones found in González and Robledo (2017), having identified ICC positive attitudes of openness, tolerance and understanding as well as gains

on linguistic progression and motivation towards language learning after stimulating intercultural interactions and activities in the classroom.

Even though results for this instrument have been found significant across both interventions, it is worth noting that the lowest mean score was found on the impact category the hybrid approach had on English language proficiency,  $M= 4.01$  and  $M=4.23$ , for intervention I and II, respectively. Such results suggest that even after adjustments were made to ensure students' interactions and sufficient practice via remote learning (synchronous and asynchronous), these are not paralleled to on-campus learning modes. Face-to-face classroom scenarios within a language classroom provide richer chances for practicing, socializing, and reading verbal and nonverbal communicative signs, and for learning from one another in much more real-like planned situations.

It can also be interpreted that, as most of the population during the year 2020 was under strict confinement measures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, students did not find many opportunities outside the classroom time to engage and practice the target language. To better understand these results, some of the items inquired within this category explored the students' level of agreement in relation to the use of the hybrid approach of principles in favoring students' intercultural communicative competence, written expression, English language speaking confidence, understanding of a variety and relevant intercultural content, vocabulary and grammar acquisition and language skills improvement. Therefore, findings suggest that the hybrid approach had a greater effect on the category of satisfaction than on the impact one.

Despite this novel teaching and learning mode, students in the experimental group demonstrated that the method of hybrid principles was statistically effective in mediating the integration and advancement in ICC in the FL classroom. Reasons behind these positive results can be supported by the careful structure, design, material selection, resources and overall mediation

during the English learning sessions. Research on merged principles of CLIL and PBL to mediate an intercultural language experience is scarce or even unexplored, but findings on each model used for intercultural or culture-related teaching purposes are available in the literature corroborating the effectiveness of using them to achieve positive intercultural outcomes in the foreign language classroom.

The quest to find appropriate teaching and learning models has inspired teachers and practitioners to experiment in the classroom with PBL to teach the cultural component. Some findings have identified optimistic learning outcomes regarding cultural knowledge, ICC, soft skills reinforcement and motivation (Nguyen, 2021). Moeller and Nugent (2014) have suggested that varied learning activities in the foreign language classroom take students to the initial stages in shifting perspectives where they start noticing the significant role adjoined to attitudes, knowledge and language skills in intercultural interactions.

The use of interactive activities (role-plays) within the CLIL model has found to provide students with learning benefits in intercultural communication, meta-cognitive skills, practical outcomes and active engagement (Leon-Henri & Jain, 2017). Similarly, Diab et al. (2018) claim that the dynamic nature of the CLIL approach and its attributes in facilitating authentic and comprehensible input potentially leads participants to effective engagement and increase of knowledge of home culture and cultural awareness. Another small-scale study found that CLIL-based cultural training improves participants' cultural quotient in cognitive, metacognitive, and behavioral dimensions (Yang, 2021).

Consequently, there is sufficient evidence to affirm an ascribed potential from CLIL and PBL learning principles when merged to set an effective educational environment to prepare the intercultural language teaching experience. The two interventions clearly contributed to the effects



found in ICC learners' development, verifying and validating that the hybrid model used was effective and valuable to foster ICC in the foreign language classroom. The varied topics used to support intercultural development and other skills such as thinking, creativity and cognition became building blocks in the language learning process. A critical aspect to be taken into account is the fact that ICC does not emerge spontaneously. Explicit and regular intercultural exposure through a variety of authentic and real-world tasks carefully and intentionally planned is required to boost learners' competency in such complex intercultural issues.

Lessons based on CLIL and PBL principles gives students greater exposure and supports learners' growth in linguistic, cognitive and intercultural domains. Resorting to diverse and varied learning activities (i.e. projects, active tasks, intercultural situations, research, role play, photo analysis, song discussions, comparative tasks, community projects, storytelling, etc.), authentic materials and resources in the foreign language loaded with home and foreign cultures provided the necessary intercultural and linguistic input to initiate an ICC lifelong learning process successfully and offered ample chances to seek holistic aims. Both model principles can be merged to pave the learning path towards enhancing intercultural communicative competence where students' intercultural knowledge, attitude, critical culture awareness and skills become the building blocks for them to believe in and act as intercultural global citizens and mediators.

The hybrid method was found valuable in creating a successful intercultural language learning process reinvigorating learners' intercultural perspectives and roles as intercultural global citizens, active, smart and autonomous learners. Since, PBL has proven to be effective in promoting autonomous learning (Vieluf & Göbel, 2019; Yuliani & Lengkanawati, 2017), and so has CLIL, it can be stated that a combination of both methodologies can further improve their individual benefits. Furthermore, findings obtained from this self-report hybrid approach questionnaire

correlate with the results found in the ICC self-assessment scale, highlighting similar progression and effects on intercultural knowledge (intervention I) and on intercultural attitude (intervention II). They also proved to have an impact on student overall learning since language and culture provide the functional pragmatics and factors for fruitful communication.

### **7.3 Open-Ended Questions: Intervention I & II Qualitative Analysis**

To better understand the impact of the implementation of the hybrid approach on students' perspectives the short answer section containing four open-ended questions of the self-report hybrid approach questionnaire was used to collect qualitative data to further picture the matter explored. Using a qualitative content analysis method and the computer program QSR-NVivo-11, the responses were analyzed to establish themes from codes and develop word clouds and maps to categorize threads of responses (see the questions below).

1. How have you benefited from the intercultural content studied and the projects carried out in your English learning process?
2. How do you consider that the units developed, and the combined methodology (CLIL and PBL) prepare you for real interaction with culturally different people using English as a foreign language?
3. How has your perspective changed in relation to your own culture after studying the units in the English course?
4. What intercultural topics did you find interesting in your learning process?

These questions were studied in terms of (a) benefits after studying intercultural content and using projects in the English learning process, (b) preparation for real interaction with culturally different people using English after the combined CLIL and PBL methodology, (c)

change in perspective over one's own culture after studying units with cultural content through a combined approach, and (d) relevance of the intercultural topics studied.

NVivo has become a prevalent qualitative software because it allows researchers to conduct varied task analyses. For the purpose of this study, this program was used to organize students' perspectives, thoughts, and ideas by creating nodes and identifying connections and similarities to process the data. The software QSR-NVivo-11 helped process the responses, the frequency of themes, and subthemes from the information obtained around the four questions. In general terms, it was intended to determine and identify the kinds of themes emerging from the consultation. Once the data were included in the program, units were identified, conceptualized, and categorized in groups/nodes according to the level of similarity. The data displayed present the coding yielded with the themes based upon participants' perspectives.

The following tables show the themes and subthemes taking into account the most stated perspectives and narratives from data from participants' responses during the pedagogical interventions during the semester I and II. The themes and subthemes that emerged displayed shreds of evidence on the positive impact the interventions had on students' ICC progression. These qualitative data complements quantitative results, broadening interpretations, correlations, and argumentation to answer research questions.

### **7.3.1 Question # 1: Benefits After Studying Intercultural \_Intervention I**

In order to identify the benefits obtained and perceived after studying intercultural content in the English class, students' answers to the question [1 How do you feel the content studied and the project work benefits you in your learning of English?] were categorized in recurrent themes. Themes and subthemes are illustrated in Table 36 and Figure 25. Within the two repeated themes,

English and knowledge progression, there were a total of eleven subthemes that were more salient to students during intervention I. Data shown in the table and graph expose a pattern of repetitive mentions around gains in the target language process identified in fluency, grammar, vocabulary growth, use, and communication of ideas. These findings validate the body of theory supporting each approach CLIL and PBL as learning methodologies that support language and cognitive gains (Banegas, 2021; Zhao et al., 2021). The intercultural language learning exposure mediated through the teaching principles from CLIL and PBL in intervention I proved these two methods overlap and are indeed functional and suitable in helping students improve their English language skills and knowledge about foreign and home cultures. Students seem to have made connections around the close nexus between language and culture and the need to learn the intercultural component to reinforce their linguistic ability and competence in order to become more knowledgeable in cultures and world views.

Language progression was reported in fluency, vocabulary, expressions, grammar, language use, and communication. It is also evident that students recognized the relevance of learning cultural knowledge considering it as an asset to future jobs performance. Language gains correlate with the reviewed literature entitling CLIL and PBL similar learning benefits. Likewise, these findings can be correlated with the line of progression recorded on the task assessment results and intercultural formative quiz, which denoted a similar path of progression in language and cultural knowledge. Such results suggest that the hybrid methodology effectively mediates intercultural language training by considering the holistic nature of the ICC process (cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral) development while moving beyond fixed and monolingual aims.

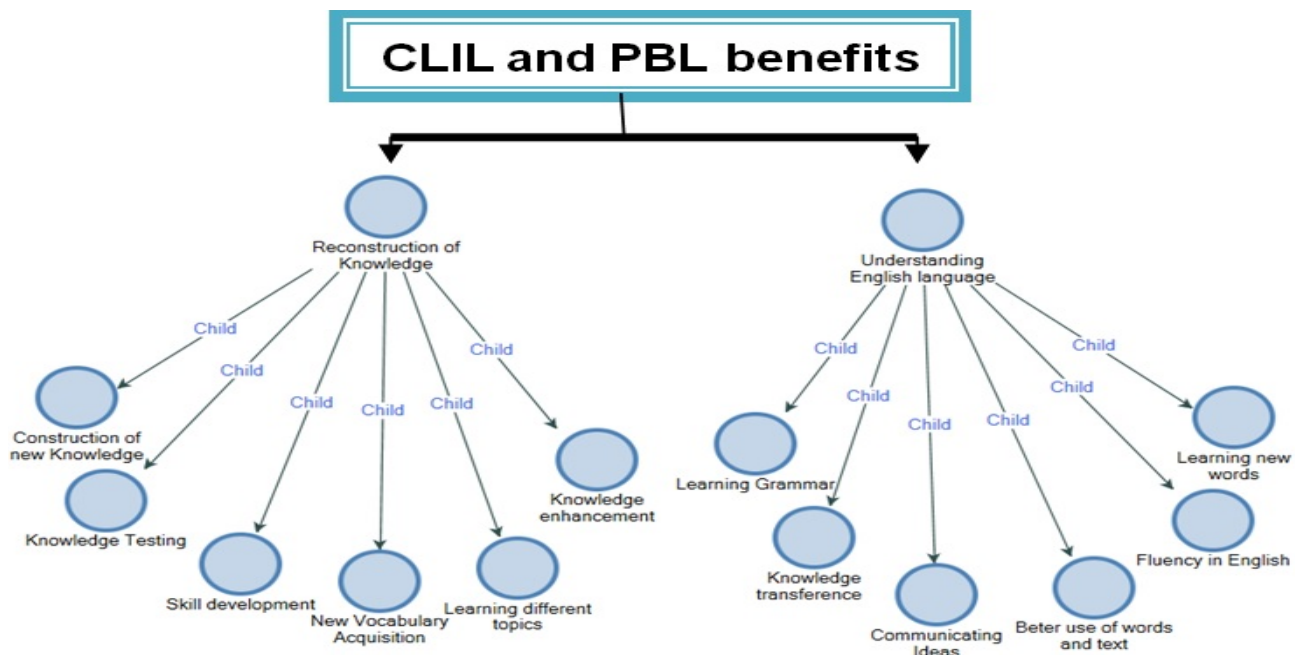
**Table 36** *Benefits After Studying Intercultural Content and Using Projects (Intervention I)*

Themes	Subthemes	Frequency	Evidence Reported
-English language understanding	-Use of words and texts	23	Participant 7 “It benefits me by learning knowledge of other cultures through the activities and assignments, and it helps me in my future career and life.”
	-English Fluency	27	Participant 18 “It benefits me for the future, and I learn English more interestingly. I learned about topics that I didn't know about.”
	-English Grammar	15	Participant 20 stated, “I learned knowledge of cultures, beliefs, and traditions, and English.”
	Communication of ideas	10	Participant. 29 “I think it helps me to understand better topics that I didn't understand, and it helps me develop my skills.”
	-New expressions	6	Participant 44 “It benefits me in many aspects; I learned many English words, about cultures, and varied topics.”
-Knowledge construction	-New knowledge	13	Participant 54 “To practice critical thinking, to solve problems that arise in real life and to raise awareness about the world, societies and myself.”
	-Knowledge enhancement	11	Participant 60 “It benefits me for my future job.”
	-Knowledge transference	23	Participant 76 shared his perspective by explaining that “I studied about different cultures, which is very important when learning another language, to be honest, it has helped me in my learning process.”
	-Knowledge testing	9	Participant 97 believed that through projects and content, his/her confidence improved “I feel more confident when interacting with my partners during the video discussions and homework.”
	-Learning different topics	24	Participants 107 and 119 shared similar perspectives by stating that “It helped to get more vocabulary to express myself better” and “It helped me learn about different topics while learning more words in English”.
	-Skill development	11	Participant 103 stated, “The vocabulary, content studied, and projects done in the course enriched my knowledge.”

*Note.* Q.1 How do you feel the content studied and the project work benefits you in your learning of English?

A graphical representation of the themes pattern is displayed in Figure 25, where the two themes that concurrently appear in the data nodes are knowledge and language. Both learning elements are particularly important to learners' ICC development. Knowledge is seemingly associated with cognitive processes that involve construction, enhancement, and assessment which undoubtedly activate thinking skills. Language benefits were noticed in linguistic and communicative progression.

**Figure 25** *CLIL and PBL Benefits:(Intervention I)*



### 7.3.2 Question # 1: Benefits after studying intercultural content \_ Intervention II

For intervention II, Table 37 and Figure 26 show that data categorization and nodes point to two major themes: language and content knowledge. These themes were mentioned in intervention I, suggesting that similar learning gains are maintained after the intervention II. Participants asserted benefits in learning English as a foreign language in connection to

intercultural content acquisition. In this sense, students have sustained their positive perspectives about the method applied during intervention II. For instance, they have highlighted advances in practice for real intercultural communication, cultural understanding, and cultural knowledge growth. Besides, after participating in Intervention II, learners have also linked their learning benefits to gaining more opportunities to practice and improving the target language in a new virtual modality due to the pandemic. They believed they were given chances to practice the language, discuss ideas, and learn more content and vocabulary words. Their comments disclosed a clear awareness of their progression in the foreign language in connection to intercultural matters. The detailed thread of comments reinforces that content and projects had a significant impact on intercultural growth, enabling and preparing students for intercultural communication, understanding, transference, and adaptation. Moreover, it is interesting to notice the growth, clarity, and direct emphasis found in the qualitative data. Answers to some of the research questions denote the effectiveness of the learning experience infused by CLIL and PBL teaching principles in enhancing English language progression and fostering intercultural competence. As quantitative findings did, qualitative data reinforce the hypothesis that a hybrid approach enhances ICC and linguistic progression within EFL contexts.

**Table 37** *Q.1 Benefits After Studying Intercultural Content and Using Projects (Intervention II)*

Themes	Subthemes	Frequency	Shreds of Evidence Reported
Resource ful content Language	-Intercultural communication	45	Participant 2 found intercultural content and project helpful; she/he stated, “It is beneficial because we can better communicate with foreign people since we know a little of their culture, we also know a little more of our own.”
	-Knowledge transference	22	
	-Cultural understanding	25	

-Culture learning	19	Participant 62 stated, “to get more knowledge about the behavior of other cultures.”
-Motivation to learn	8	Participant 102 “I learned important content to communicate with other people.”
-Cultural adaptation through behavior	6	Participant 88 said, “I had no idea of certain topics; it is a good method.” Participant 9: “It benefited me because every week we learned new and important topics for everyday life.”
-Linguistic knowledge practice and improvement	9	Participant 17. “It benefited me a lot because I have learned many vocabulary words and the importance of intercultural content in the English class.” Participant 20. “It helped me learn very important aspects about my culture and others, at the time of speaking with people from other countries this will help me in my future profession.”
Vocabulary improvement	21	Participant 26. “It expanded my knowledge; I improved and practiced my English.” Participant 30. “Broadened my knowledge and skills in English.”
-Ideas and content discussion	14	Participant 54 “I consider that I benefited from the content studied and the realization of projects by improving my English.” Participant 72 “It helped me to interact virtually with my classmates and talk about our new knowledge.” Participant 85 “practicing for real communication in the future” Participant 97 “It benefited me a lot; the projects made me learn more English.” Participant 106 “The units contain a series of activities that promote the learning of English and other content.”

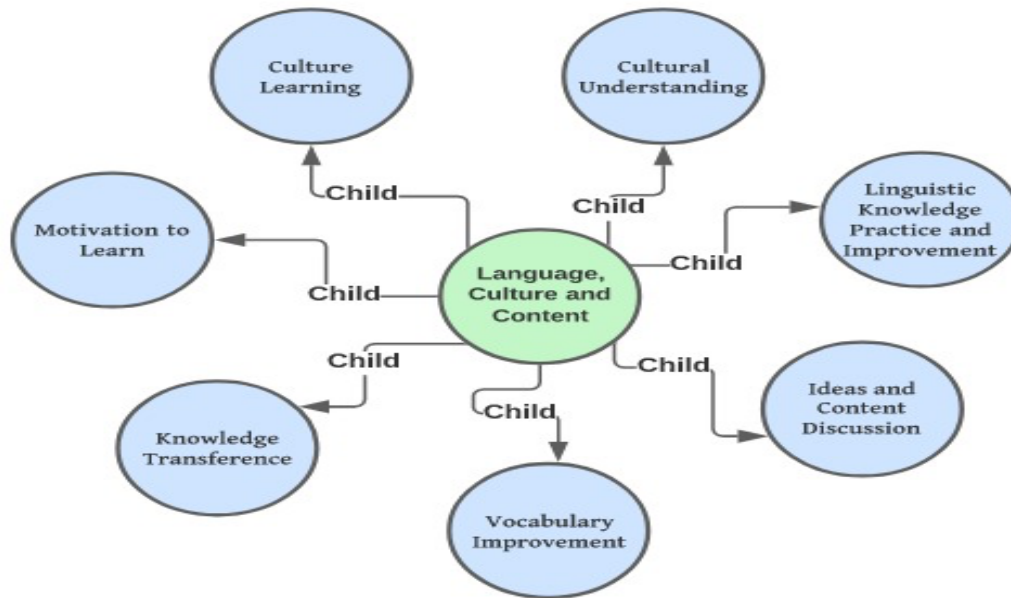
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*Note.* RQ 1: How do you benefit from the intercultural content studied and the projects carried out to your English learning process?

Qualitative findings show a similar path of the salient themes noticed in intervention I. However, for intervention II, some other comments favored the effect that learning intercultural content has on understanding, communication, adaptation, and linguistic improvement.



**Figure 26** *Project Mapping Themes: CLIL and PBL Benefits (Intervention II)*



### 7.3.3 Question # 2: Preparation for real intercultural interaction \_Intervention I

Responses to the question [How do you consider that the units developed during the combined methodology prepare you for real intercultural interaction using a foreign language?] show that an influential utility is given to the combined approach in building and preparing learners for real intercultural engagement. In this sense, one of the research questions posed in this study is answered through students' leading comments on the gains obtained after using the hybrid methodology. Table 38 and Figure 27 illustrate the most notorious observations of intercultural experience categorized in themes and subthemes. There seems to be a consensus in pointing specific benefits in communication, intercultural strategies, skills, new views, and perspectives development as critical elements that facilitate fruitful real-world engagement. Learners' perspectives on the intervention units were recognized as instrumental in reaching essential ICC gains for learners to raise genuine cultural understanding. Students acknowledged that intercultural

input enhances self-improvement and empathetic attitudes as a basis to avoid cultural misunderstandings. Again, participants supported and favored the use of the method as successful in preparing them to face intercultural scenarios as knowledgeable and cultivated learners. These findings have been corroborated by results from the ICC self-assessment scale, where gains in knowledge and cultural awareness were found after intervention I.

**Table 38** *Q2. Preparation for Real Intercultural Interaction After the Hybrid Approach (Intervention I)*

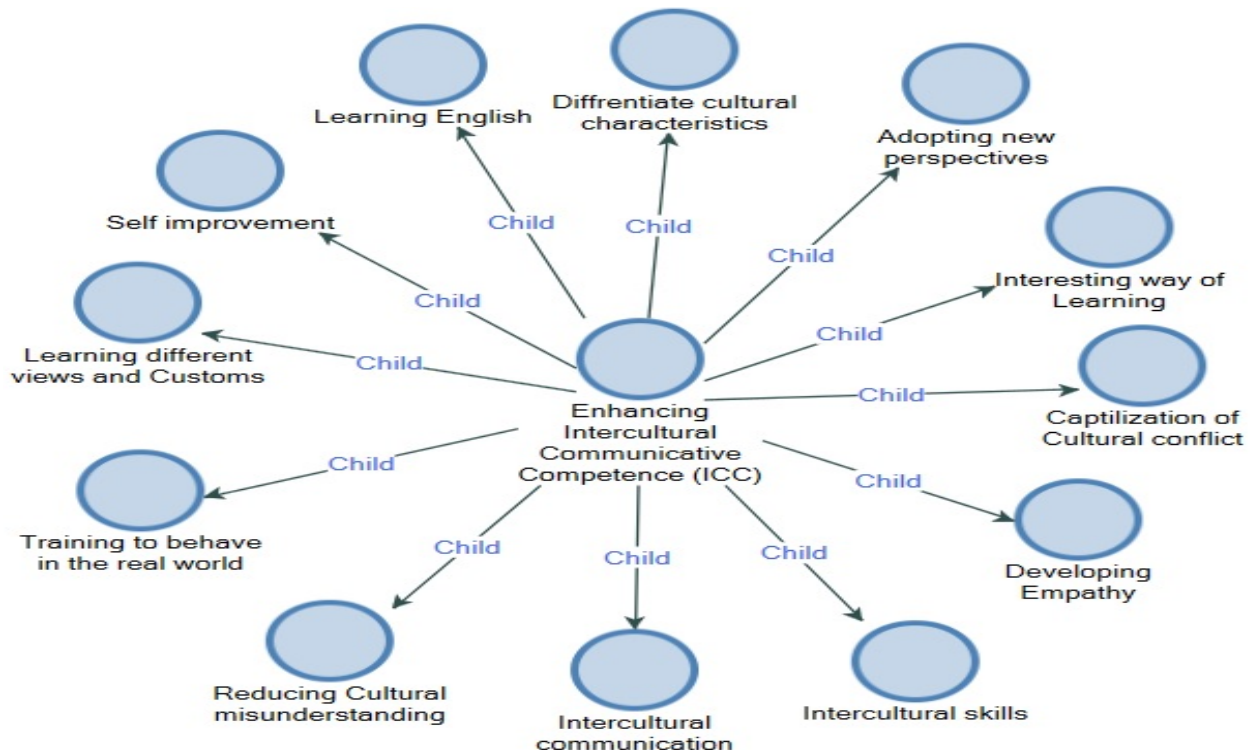
Themes	Subthemes	Frequency	Shreds of Evidence
Intercultural communicative competence	-Training for real world	19	Participant 2 reflected that “It allows me to improve all four language skills in addition to learning and reflecting more about cultures, even mine.”
	Intercultural communication	28	Participant 5 “I got new knowledge about cultures, new beliefs, and traditions.”
	-Cultural differences	9	Participant 4 “I learned English more interestingly and about topics that I didn’t know about.”
	-Self-improvement	7	Participant 12 quoted, “now I have a different perspective about people and their cultures. It is important to respect all cultures so that they can respect us.”
	-Adopting new perspectives	16	Participant 16 stated, “I was able to know many aspects of other cultures that can help me to avoid conflicts.”
	-Learning English	12	Participant 22 “I got important knowledge about correct ways to communicate with people from different cultures.”
	-Dynamic learning	17	Participant 29 quoted, “Knowing about other cultures is the basis for good communication.”
	-Reducing cultural misunderstanding	18	Participant 36 “The lessons prepared us in a practical way so that we can learn and communicate among different cultures.”
	-Learning different views and customs	24	Participant 50 concluded that “The lessons were a rehearsal for real-life communication in the future.”

-Culture conflict	4	While participant 96 communicated about different cultures that “Learning that there are things that I see as normal but in other cultures it is different.” Participant 104 informed that “By getting to know different aspects from cultures of the world, such as the United States, Japan, Korea among others and using that information to respect and behave well when interacting with others.”
-Developing empathy	7	
-Intercultural skills	26	

*Note.* Q.2: How do you consider that the units developed during the combined methodology prepare you for real intercultural interaction using a foreign language?

Qualitative findings in intervention I suggest effects on key ICC learning elements such as attitudes, self-improvement, empathy, communication as learning linguistic aspects of the target language.

**Figure 27** Mind Mapping Theme: *Preparation for Encounters (Intervention I)*



### 7.3.4 Question # 2: Preparation for real intercultural interaction \_ Intervention II

Table 39 and Figure 28 show the line of perspectives extracted from the collected data concerning how students perceived the combined methodology (CLIL and PBL) regarding preparation for real intercultural interaction using English in intervention II. For the second intervention, participants largely agreed on fundamental elements required for intercultural engagements. For instance, they believed the lessons were useful to develop positive attitudes and strategies to avoid or reduce cultural misunderstanding during intercultural exchanges. Similar findings have been reported by Liu (2020) and by González & Borham (2012) after using intercultural language lessons in the EFL class. Liu, for example, has found that students describe the instruction as an entertaining way to learn that nurtures intercultural competence and communication in English when discussing about various topics.

Participants in the experimental group agreed that cultural concepts allowed them to understand cultures and raise their cultural awareness. Along with these interpretations, students also considered that they were getting opportunities to practice and use English while preparing for the real world, which makes it more functional. The thread of comments reaffirms a prominent reference to cultural awareness enhancement in intervention II. Interestingly, cultural awareness was also the highest dimension in the self-assessment scale report in intervention II. Triangulated findings support the study's validity and support the body of literature that places CLIL and PBL as overlapping teaching methodologies with multivarious learning benefits.

**Table 39** *Q.2 Preparation for Real Intercultural Interaction After the Hybrid Approach (Intervention II)*

Themes	Frequency	Shreds of Evidence Reported
Intercultural interaction	39	The developed methodology (CLIL and PBL) has supported practice for intercultural interaction.

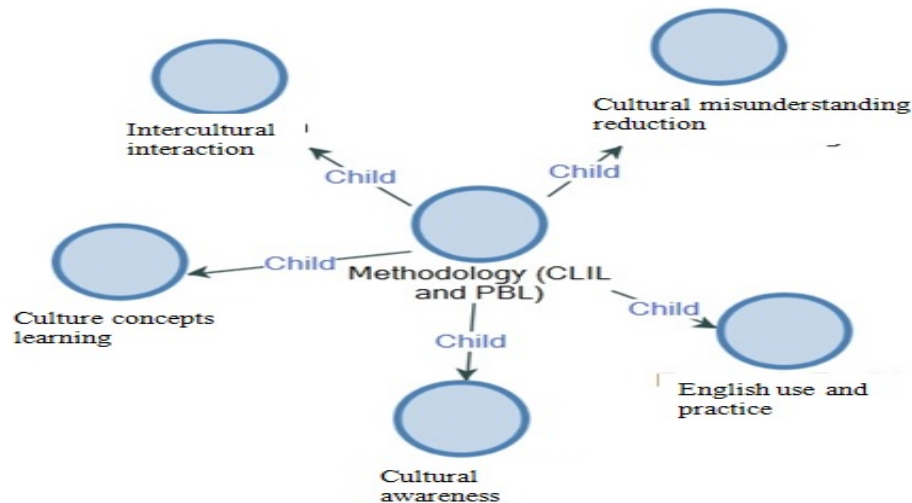
Cultural misunderstanding reduction	28	Participant 19 communicated that “the content was rich in analyzing the behaviors and expressions of the other person avoiding in my misinterpretations.”
Culture concepts learning	13	Participant 109 shared his views that “Because thanks to these units, I now have a different perspective about people and their cultures, and I know that it is of utmost importance to respect all cultures so that they respect ours.”
English use and practice	19	Participant 111 said that “Reinforcing my knowledge about different cultures and the importance of valuing and respecting them.”
Cultural awareness	63	Participant 118 stated that “I think it prepares me in terms of language and intercultural knowledge and skills.” Participant 74 “They are very beneficial because they contain information about other cultures that I didn’t know about manners and all that is important to know before interacting with other cultures.” Participant 17 “It broadens your horizons, it opens your, and you see things from a different perspective, cultural knowledge should be mandatory and in a language like English, in some cases becomes tiring it keeps you interested and eager to learn more.” Participant 19 “the units with different intercultural topics, allowed me to have an idea about foreign people, for example, stereotypes, behaviors, and other aspects, when communicating with people from those countries, we can have a better intercultural communication.” Participant 45 “It helps motivate us to learn more about English and other cultures.” Participant 54 “In groups of classmates we interacted in English, corrected each other and lost embarrassment when talking.” Participant 63 “We will be able to establish an intercultural conversation.” Participant 72 “Better attitude and competence development.” Participant 88 “They are quite interesting, and I improved even English is very difficult to learn.” Participant 100 “Very good learning process despite the virtual classes.” Participant 104. “Because it helps to raise awareness, to learn many things about my culture.” Participant 115 “With useful tools to face real life and use the language.” Participant 123 “Changing my preconceived ideas about learning English and cultures.”

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*Note.* RQ 2: How do you consider that the units developed and the combined methodology (CLIL and PBL) prepare you for real interaction with culturally different people using English as a foreign language?

Qualitative findings in intervention II suggest effects on key ICC learning elements such as culture knowledge, cultural awareness, and English language practice.

**Figure 28** *Project Mapping Themes: Preparation for Encounters(Intervention II)*



### 7.3.5 Question # 3: Change in perspective around one’s own culture \_ Intervention I

Regarding the question [How has your perspective on your own culture changed after the intervention units?], qualitative data gathered from the students’ responses point that studying and including native/home culture narratives is an important element that allows self-discovery, relearning, and rediscovering of home cultural identity, roots, and history. The use of home culture resources and involvement has been documented to play a dynamic role in developing cultural awareness and language acquisition (Dumitrašković, 2015; Byram, 2020). Students’ annotations in Table 40 and Figure 29 regarding the inclusion of native culture in the English class has been rated as positive and constructive. Learners’ identity and culture situate the learning process in a familiar context that provides comprehensible input to process information. Familiarity with the topic can promote reflection, analysis, comparison, awareness, and respect about home and foreign views.

The emerged subthemes in students' quotes revealed allusions to how the pedagogical intervention supported a change of views on native/home cultures, leading them to acknowledge the significance of learning a foreign language in nexus to culture. Besides, participants have suggested specific benefits such as increased motivation to learn, cultivated cultural awareness, relearned home cultural memories and practices. It is believed, therefore, that integrating home culture material in the foreign language class has important pedagogical implications in building the ICC dimensions (attitudinal, cognitive, behavioral, and criticality) to enable learners to grow as intercultural and critical citizens with local and foreign comprehensive perspectives (Larrea-Espinar & Raigón-Rodríguez, 2019). Findings confirmed a shift in perspective toward their own culture, considering it important to maximize their roots, identity, and awareness. Their comments clearly indicate how they view themselves as more open-minded toward other cultures and how cultures can coexist by recognizing alien and home similarities and differences.

**Table 40** *Q.3 Change in Perspective Around One's Own Culture (Intervention 1)*

Themes	Subthemes	Frequency	Shreds of Evidence Reported
Cultural awareness /perspectives	Cultural practices	15	Participant 12 shared, "The lessons helped to change my way of seeing my own culture."
	Relearning one's own culture	43	Participant 17 stated, "My perspective changed because now I value my identity more as a Costa Rican." Participant 21 "knowing about cultures is an extremely important aspect to be able to close deals and communicate better."
	Motivation to learn about others culture	29	Participant 26 "There are many more cultures, and we should know how to respect and communicate with them."
	Importance to learn about language and culture	41	Participant 32 "More awareness of my roots, similarities, and differences with other cultures." Participant 38 "Of course, in my new perspective I no longer feel that any culture is the best, in fact, no culture is better than any other"

Cultural awareness 23  
 Coexistence of similarities and differences 14

Participant 41 “Now I think that we should really value everything that characterizes us as a nation, we should appreciate our own and respect every culture.”

Participant 59 “It has helped me to appreciate my culture more, to be more interested in certain topics that I don’t know and to be able to share with others about my culture.”

Participant “Quite a lot. I have learned interesting things about my country.”

Participant 89 communicated that “It has changed a lot because thanks to this, I have been able to learn more about cultures that I did not know.”

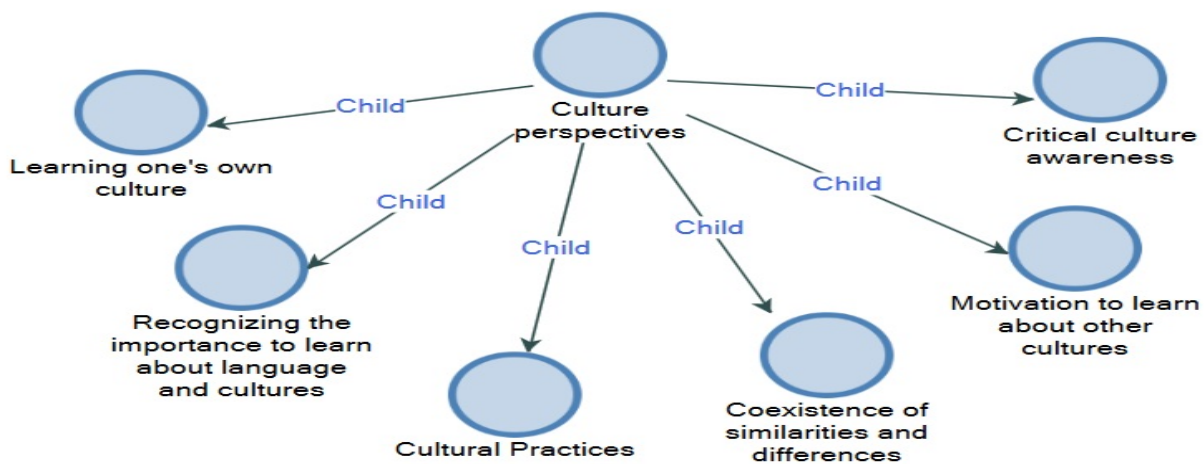
Participant 96 “My perspective has changed because now I value more my identity as a Costa Rican.”

Participant 122 said that “to understand the importance of learning about my own culture to see others.”

*Note.* Q.3 How has your perspective on your own culture changed after the intervention units?

Qualitative findings in intervention II claim effects on home/native culture knowledge, motivations to learn, acknowledgement of culture as fundamental component to language learning and cultural awareness.

**Figure 29** *Project Mapping Theme: One’s Own Culture Perspectives*





### 7.3.6 Question # 3: Change in perspective around one's own culture \_intervention II

Table 41 and Figure 30 illustrate participants' responses to question 3 [How has your perspective on your own culture changed after the intervention units?] with six major themes reflecting how their perspective regarding their own culture changed during intervention II. The most frequent theme accounts for having reinforced knowledge about their own culture and having experienced a rethinking process regarding the importance of culture and the need for cultural adaptability in any given encounter. Students recognized the crucial role of developing favorable attitudes such as empathy, openness, and learning disposition to carefully reflect on home and foreign cultural views, practices, and lifestyles. After implementing the combined methodology, intrinsic knowledge and awareness about intercultural matters and identity have been increased. The themes cited echoed the impact of intercultural learning on shifting cultural perspectives, increasing cultural knowledge, and fostering cultural awareness. To raise awareness is crucial to give students the chance to explore their own culture as a frame of reference to see and understand others. Giving sufficient attention to these learning factors via a hybrid methodology has proven to be applicable and beneficial in helping students prepare for effective intercultural communication. The methodology used is suitable and supportive for intercultural language instruction that takes advantage of authentic material. Target and home cultures are valuable resources to the foreign language learning environment as frames to familiarize learners with intercultural and literal comprehension and understanding in meaningful ways, arousing engagement, enjoyment, and interest in the classroom (Hakkı & Razi, 2009; Gürkan, 2012). The learning process seems to have influenced students' perspectives on learning a foreign language within an intercultural dynamic and learner-centered framework.

**Table 41** *Q.3 Change in Perspective Around One's Own Culture (Intervention II)*

Themes	Subthemes	Frequency	Shreds of Evidence
<b>Shift in Perspectives</b>	Cultural adaptability	23	<p>There are more positive perspectives regarding culture. Participants 14 said that “I now have a broader perspective about my own culture thanks to the unit tasks, which covered new information that I did not know before.”</p> <p>Participant 29 talks about cultural differences: “I have more tools and critical cultural awareness to understand cultural differences.”</p> <p>Participant 95 communicated that “To understand how varied cultures can coexist while adopting an open mind.”</p> <p>Participant 78 shared his views that “Increased my awareness of the world, my identity, and my history.”</p>
	Culture learning	21	Participant 3 “I think it has changed a lot since I can now give my opinion on intercultural topics and feel confident.”
	Importance of culture	17	Participant 6 “I am now more empathetic toward different views, customs and behaviors from other cultures.”
	Cultural views	11	Participant 8 “I have learned many differences and similarities between my culture and many others. This helps me see my culture with different eyes, besides realizing that I don't know many things about my own culture.”
	Cultural differences	26	Participant 35 “It changed in a positive way because now I am aware of the cultural diversity that is around us.”
	Strengthen knowledge about my culture	39	<p>Participant 41 “My perspective has changed in relation to my own culture after the units; there is so much behind the word culture that we need to understand.”</p> <p>Participant 44 “My awareness increased, and now I can see similarities and differences from different cultures.”</p> <p>Participant 51 “I have tools that can help to adapt and better interact in English.”</p> <p>Participant 62 “Before I was closed-minded and since I have done these units, I have opened my mind and learn to see the world in a different way.”</p> <p>Participant 69” It changed many points of view and increased my respect and empathy.”</p> <p>Participant 76 “I figured out that my culture is different compared to other countries but unique.”</p>

Participant 87” It increased my motivation toward learning about others and my own culture. I enjoyed the process.”

Participant 92 “how our culture was formed, and how it is changing.”

Participant 108” I am more tolerant toward others and respect them as they are”

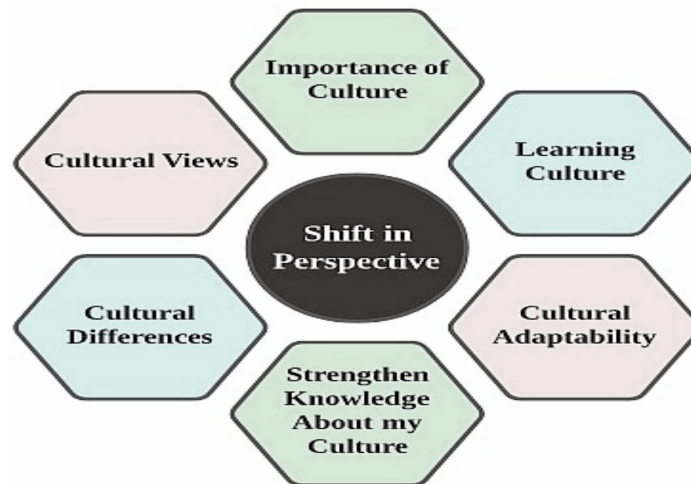
Participant 124” I realized that to know about culture is extremely important for future jobs and professional life.”

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*Note:* Q.3 How has your perspective on your own culture changed after the intervention units?

Figure 30 shows qualitative findings in intervention II with effects on cultural knowledge, shift in perspectives and cultural adaptability.

**Figure 30** *Project Mapping Themes: One’s Own Culture Perspectives ( Intervention II)*



### 7.3.7 Question #4 Relevant intercultural topics studied \_Intervention I

Table 42 shows the ranking of topics considered the most relevant during intervention I. A higher number of participants placed the topic of ‘Blue zones: Happiness and tempo’ as the most relevant. This topic explored the culture and healthy lifestyles and views of specific regions across the globe, including a zone of Costa Rican. The second-best ranked was ‘Globalization and the global market’. The selection of these particular topics provides interesting information about what

students find valuable and useful to their educational purposes, indicating an inclination towards learning familiar and purposeful content and topics to better approach the study home/foreign cultures.

**Table 42** *Q.4 Relevant Intercultural Topics Studied (Intervention I)*

Topics	Frequency
Globalization and the global market	25
Blue zones: Happiness and tempo	28
Intercultural citizenship: skills for the future	19

*Note.* Question 4: What units did you find interesting/important to your learning process?

### 7.3.8 Question #4 Relevant intercultural topics studied\_Intervention II

Table 43 exhibits the topics students enjoyed the most in the pedagogical intervention II. The selection follows a similar path of interest, focusing on topics that can be practical and useful to their professional profiles, such as those that train them in developing soft skills and competencies. Another unit that received salient mentions was related to Costa Rican history. Therefore, participants seem to agree on topics they can capitalize on and have a tangible and direct practical use in their daily lives and future employability.

**Table 43** *Q.4 Relevant Intercultural Topics Studied (Intervention II)*

Topics	Frequency
Workplace communication	34
Costa Rica: A look back	26
Global citizenship	17

*Note.* Q 4: What units did you find interesting/important to your learning process?

## 7.4 ICC hybrid Approach perspective questionnaire: Overall Findings & Discussion

The learning opportunities given during the pedagogical interventions mediated through a hybrid approach of teaching principles have proved to be practical and , according to students' responses. The examined thread of comments and salient perspectives regarding the pedagogical interventions demonstrated an increased and enhanced intercultural knowledge, emerging critical awareness, and ICC awareness, which have resulted in students' shift in perspectives towards recognizing the need to study home and foreign cultures as a learning platform to strengthening their English communicative competence and their skills and strategies to confidently engage in intercultural scenarios.

The analysis per item identifies relevant outcomes after learners' participation in both interventions. The first one directs to the effectiveness of the hybrid method of CLIL and PBL principles in the mediation (remote learning) of the English language as a foreign language to support:

- Learning and acquisition of new vocabulary, basic grammatical structures, and expressions in English
- Learning of varied and contextualized content and topic relevant to real situations
- Guiding learners to assume an active and autonomous role
- Engaging in authentic learning situations through the facilitated resources and materials (e.g., stories, videos, readings, movies, texts, photos, quotes, poems)
- Boosting their motivation to improve their English learning process
- Broadening their intercultural perspective and their role as global citizens.

These findings and outcomes seem to be in synchrony with the findings in the overall scale in which participants felt more likely to agree on the category of satisfaction regarding the item of whether the method helped them in increasing their awareness of the intercultural matters, including their role as global citizens at the time, they found a functional utility from the method used in their English learning process. It is found in the analysis a recurrence of reference in terms of language, content, and culture about how the method implemented led them to better understand the foreign language through their continuous exposure to the foreign language from which they found to have improved learning processes regarding knowledge construction, language fluency and forms, vocabulary use, and communication in an interesting way.

The results also showed a reemergence of the theme that addresses the stimulus obtained from the lessons in preparing them for actual intercultural engagements as practice or training for their future encounters or jobs by expanding their perspectives on their own culture as well as foreign cultures, from which they recognize there is a need to acknowledge their own roots, native culture(s) as other groups' differences to become much more aware and empathetic toward the study of culture in the language classroom. Thus, as the literature highlights, these two learning methodologies have also been helpful to raise students' motivation to learn (Lasagabaster, 2015; Lopes, 2020). Such remarks moderately appeared among the students' comments after participating in the pedagogical interventions.

As observed, learners' ideas provide detailed information about the beneficial elements of studying a foreign language infused with intercultural issues about home and foreign cultures. These pedagogical interventions provide comprehensive and familiar input to boost students' cognitive processes of understanding, knowledge construction, communication, and interest, helping learners accommodate new intercultural knowledge while learning different issues via the

foreign language. Hence, qualitative, and quantitative findings reveal an increase in their motivation to learn and progress in their language process in connection to intercultural issues. This means the interventions, even mediated in a novel-online learning modality under a hybrid approach, benefits students' ICC progression in knowledge, attitudes, critical awareness, skills, and language as a crucial asset for their future job and life. In conclusion, it can be claimed that students expressed positive perspectives about the method applied during both interventions in terms of knowledge, culture, and the English language process.

## **CHAPTER 8: ICC ASSESSMENT TASKS**



## 8.1 ICC Assessment: Data Collection and Analysis

The process of assessing the ICC component within a foreign language class is an ongoing formative process that can be conducted through routinary task activities and under clear, contextualized, and realistic learning objectives set according to students' linguistic level. The complex nature of the ICC construct requires educators to monitor students' progress to make learning decisions with the aim of reinforcing learners' ICC development. During the pedagogical interventions conducted in the courses Integrated English I and then in Integrated English II (during two the academic semesters) some tasks and projects were selected to assess ICC levels of progression within the experimental group. A multiperspective assessment was used because it was considered to be an effective way of measuring the complexity of the intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2015). For the specific purpose of capturing an idea of ICC progression within the experimental group, project tasks, journal entries and unit exercises were used for assessment purposes. These formative tasks may have a double function since they may serve to develop and assesses ICC in the foreign language classroom. The use of formative assessment is considered more appropriate to visualize progress under contextualized learning environments. Some formative tools to assess include self-reports, e-portfolios, projects, simulations, and journals, among others (Lázár et al., 2007; Deardordoff, 2015; Byram, 2020).

During both interventions, students carried out different tasks with the objective to develop and assess their intercultural competence. To assess these tasks an intercultural-analytical rubric (Appendix E) was used, which allowed us to measure students' ICC progression in the dimensions of knowledge, attitude, critical cultural awareness, and language use. This rubric establishes five levels of competence: below (0 points), beginning (1 point), developing (2 points), accomplished

(3 points), and exemplary (4 points). A descriptive analysis is conducted to determine the percentages obtained by the experimental group in each dimension and the level achieved by learners. These percentages would serve as indicators of students' progress after having participated in the formative evaluative tasks.

### **8.1.1 Implementation Procedures**

The rubric used was partly inspired by the AACU LEAP intercultural knowledge and competence rubric. Once the rubric was designed, it was sent to other English language colleagues to get feedback and ensure its design was appropriate to measure what it intended to assess. Three assessment tasks were selected to track learners' progress in ICC performance during the intervention weeks over semesters I and II. The selected tasks were an intercultural unit, a project, and a journal entry, which were used to assess students twice during each semester/intervention.

The intercultural unit discussion and reflection exercises and situations were conducted during asynchronous and synchronous classes, during which students participated in intercultural and varied tasks monitored and guided by the teacher. Learners were asked to discuss with their partners, write an online reaction, and submit it for reflective feedback to the classroom app. Project tasks and journal entries were also used as assessment tools. The responses were evaluated and scored. Table 87 describes a guide of the formative assessment tasks used to evaluate/assess students' progression and provide evidence of ICC development.

**Table 44** *Formative Assessment Guide*

General Indicators	The intercultural speaker is involved in a process in which he/she knows about crucial cultural events; understands and displays cultural awareness, copes, applies skills and shares cultural insights of both native and target cultures; decenters to negotiate meaning, explores recognizing the transcendence of intercultural alliances and healthy ICC practices.				
Goal	Reflective observable evidence of ICC dimensions during synchronous and asynchronous mediation.				
	ICC Dimensions				
Tasks	Knowledge	Attitude	Cultural awareness	Skills	
Intercultural unit	√	√	√	√	
E-journal	√	√	√	√	
Intercultural Project	√	√	√	√	

## 8.2 ICC Dimensions: Formative Assessment Tasks Intervention I

Students' performance in the intercultural unit, journal and project tasks were scored according to the rubric categories at the middle of the intervention I and then again at the end of the intervention. Scores from each task were computed to determine percentages for each scoring category in order to draw a line of progression and a better picture of the level achieved. Table 45 displays the percentages obtained after assessing the formative tasks showing that, for these cohort of tasks assessed, no percentages were reported on the 'below' category. Lower percentages (from 5% to 21%) were obtained in the 'developing' category with an exception on the skills dimension in which the IU, EJ and IP obtained percentages of 44%, 48% and 40%, respectively. As for the 'accomplished' category, most of the tasks serve students in the process of building their

intercultural competence, as can be observed in the percentages ranging from 33% to 69%. Percentages in the ‘exemplary’ category were more spread ranging from 6% to 57%.

After analyzing these results, the ICC dimension that noted higher levels of accomplishment was the language dimension for the three tasks assessed, showing percentages of IU=69%; EJ=65%; IP=64% in the ‘accomplished’ category. These data suggest that language learning progresses at a much more rapid rate than any of the intercultural dimensions, perhaps because language encounters provide more language input inside and outside the classroom. The second dimension that recorded greater increase in the accomplished category was critical cultural awareness in the intercultural unit and project (IU=61% and IP=55%). However, the attitude dimension only reached the ‘exemplary’ category in the journal task (EJ=57%). Learners’ ICC progression in the assessed formative tasks suggests that the intercultural unit and project contributed to higher scores in knowledge and cultural awareness while the e-journal seems to contribute to higher scores in the attitude dimension in the ‘exemplary’ category. It is also evident that the ICC dimension that presented lower level of progression was the skills dimension.

**Table 45** *Sample Assessment 1 Semester I (Selected Projects, Journal, and Units)*

ICC	Knowledge			Attitude			Cultural Awareness			Skills			Language Use		
	IU	EJ	IP	IU	EJ	IP	IU	EJ	IP	IU	EJ	IP	IU	EJ	IP
4)Exemplary	36%	23%	48%	46%	57%	36%	19%	39%	16%	6%	—	—	10%	14%	15%
3)Accomplished	49%	48%	37%	38%	33%	40%	61%	44%	55%	48%	45%	52%	69%	65%	64%
2)Developing	13%	19%	5%	14%	7%	17%	18%	15%	21%	44%	48%	40%	19%	17%	15%
1)Beginning	2%	10%	10%	2%	3%	7%	2%	2%	8%	2%	7%	8%	2%	4%	6%
0)Below	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

*Notes.* \*IU: Intercultural unit \*EJ: E-journal \*IP: Intercultural projects.

The second time the assessment was carried out percentages in the ‘beginning’ and ‘developing’ category fluctuated in comparison with the first cohort of assessment results (Table

46). For instance, in the ‘developing’ category students’ performance in the intercultural unit, journal and project tasks ranges from 6% to 19%, while in the ‘accomplished’ category they ranged from 12% to 57%. A favorable change in the percentages is noticed in the highest category, reflecting a clear progression from the ‘developing’ and ‘accomplished’ categories towards the ‘exemplary’ category, ranging from 23% to 73%. These data reveal a clear progression in the ICC dimensions studied. For example, as Table 46 shows, the ICC knowledge dimension noted a significant improvement in the ‘exemplary’ category (IU=55%; EJ=51; IP 73%) during the second time the assessment tasks were conducted. It can also be observed that the percentages obtained in the attitude (IU=56%) and skills dimension (IU=50%) increased in the ‘exemplary’ scoring category. Thus, the language dimension remains to be the only dimension with higher percentages in the ‘accomplished’ category, ranging from 53% to 57%, in the three tasks and reporting a higher increase in the ‘exemplary’ category, which ranges from 23% to 35%, when compared to the first assessment in all the tasks assessed. A similar pattern of progression is detected in the critical cultural awareness dimension in the ‘accomplished’ scoring category (IU=47%; EJ=56%; IP 57%). Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of formative tasks is an appropriate and friendlier instruments to develop, assess and strengthen ICC dimension in meaningful ways.

**Table 46** *Sample Assessment 2 Semester I (Selected Projects, Journal, and Units)*

ICC	Knowledge			Attitude			Cultural Awareness			Skills			Language Use		
	IU	EJ	IP	IU	EJ	IP	IU	EJ	IP	IU	EJ	IP	IU	EJ	IP
4)Exemplary	55%	51%	73%	56%	47%	32%	35%	31%	21%	50%	47%	43%	35%	32%	23%
3)Accomplished	35%	35%	12%	35%	43%	51%	47%	56%	57%	34%	37%	35%	57%	53%	56%
2)Developing	8%	12%	12%	6%	6%	12%	14%	10%	16%	14%	14%	19%	6%	11%	18%
1)Beginning	2%	2%	3%	3%	4%	5%	4%	3%	6%	2%	2%	3%	2%	4%	3%
0)Below	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

*Notes.* \*IU: Intercultural unit \*EJ: E-journal \*IP: Intercultural projects.

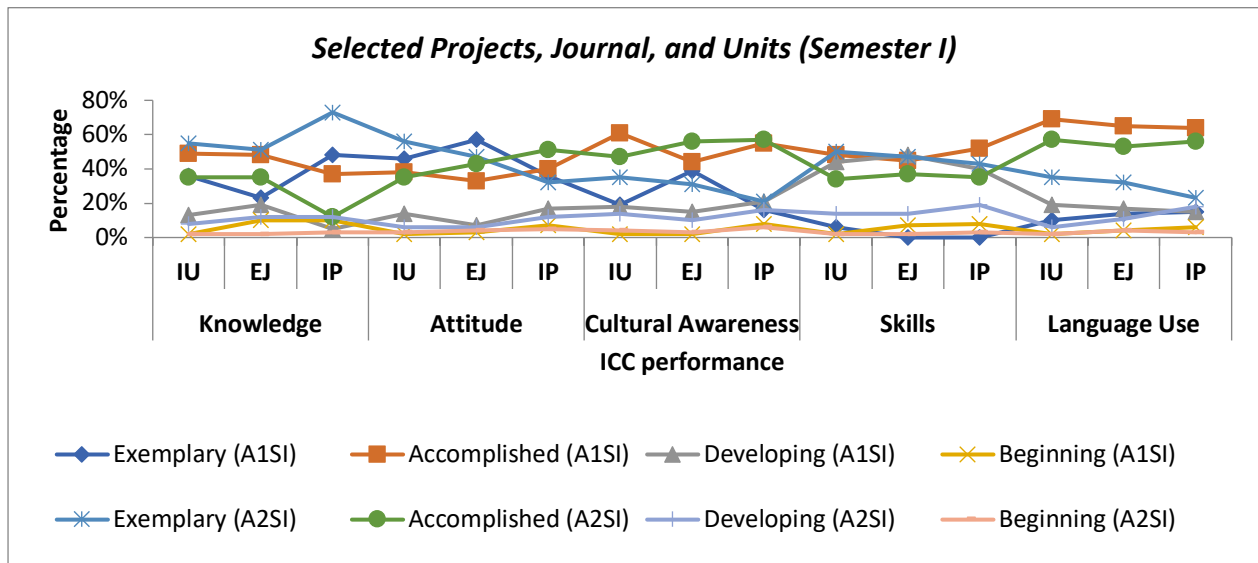
### 8.2.1 General Assessment Insights: Intervention I

When examining the percentages of students in the ‘accomplished’ and ‘exemplary’ scoring category for each ICC dimension and for each of the assessment tasks (Figure 31), it can be determined that the use of the hybrid methodology through the learning activities has had a significant effect on improving students’ ICC dimensions. Language seemed to progress at a much rapid rate than the other ICC dimensions through the three tasks during both interventions. It is also noticed that percentages moderately fluctuated towards the ‘exemplary’ scoring category in the intercultural dimensions of knowledge and attitude the second time the assessment was carried out. Findings indicate that skills take more time to develop to sustain applicability and were better supported through the intercultural units (IU=50%). In the second assessment process, tasks that were found most effective to support ICC development in the knowledge dimension were projects since, as shown in Figure 31, a high percentage of the students (IP=73%) achieved the ‘exemplary’ scoring category. Projects were also found beneficial to support intercultural critical awareness since the percentage of students (IP=57%) who scored in the ‘accomplished’ category in the second intervention was moderately high. As for the intercultural attitude, it is observed that the intercultural unit and the journal entries served as the most effective tools to measure and observe attitudinal progression since percentages remain steady from the first assessment to the second assessment. Interestingly, the second time the assessment was carried out the intercultural project reported an increase from 40% in the first assessment to 51% in the second assessment in the ‘accomplished’ category. These data suggest that projects can also be designed and implemented as a reliable assessment tool to observe intercultural attitude in the language classroom.

Overall, these findings suggest that the highest percentage in the ‘exemplary’ dimension was observed in the attitude dimension through the journals (EJ= 57%) in the first assessment and

in the knowlegde dimension through the project task (IP=73) in the second assessment. Thus, these results corelate to results found in the self-assessment ICC scale, where the knowledge dimension was the most affected of the ICC dimensions during intervention I.

**Figure 31** *Assessment tasks comparison: intervention I*



### 8.3 ICC Dimensions: Formative Assessment Tasks \_ Intervention II

During the second intervention the same tools were used to assess learners' ICC progression to visualize the path and the effects these learning tasks and activities had on students' performance and ICC learning process. The assessment was carried out at the middle and at the end of the pedagogical intervention. There line of progression displayed in the assessment results is similar to that of intervention I (Table 47). For example, in the 'accomplished' scoring category the ICC dimensions that have been most impacted are language (IU=64%, EJ=65, IP=71%) in all the three tasks assessed. Other ICC dimensions that increased the percentage of students in the 'accomplished' category were the knowledge dimension after assessing the journal (EJ=56%) and critical cultural awareness in the project task (IP=55%). In the 'exemplary' scoring category higher

percentages indicating major levels of impact were found in the attitude dimension after assessing a journal task (EJ=69%) and a project (IP 56%) and in the knowledge dimension (IP=56%) after assessing a project task.

**Table 47** *Sample Assessment 1 Semester II (Selected Projects, Journal, and Units)*

ICC	Knowledge			Attitude			Cultural Awareness			Skills			Language Use		
	IU	EJ	IP	IU	EJ	IP	IU	EJ	IP	IU	EJ	IP	IU	EJ	IP
4)Exemplary	65%	29%	56%	57%	69%	56%	32%	36%	27%	9%	11%	11%	31%	20%	17%
3)Accomplished	28%	56%	29%	32%	27%	30%	53%	45%	55%	46%	41%	50%	64%	65%	71%
2)Developing	5%	13%	8%	9%	2%	14%	11%	17%	15%	37%	40%	36%	3%	13%	9%
1 Beginning	2%	2%	7%	2%	2%	—	4%	2%	3%	8%	8%	3%	2%	2%	3%
0 Below	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

*Notes.* \*IU: Intercultural unit \*EJ: E-journal \*IP: intercultural projects.

The second time the tasks were assessed a steady, although slight, progression in ICC was noticed in the different dimensions (Table 48)., for the language dimension, the percentages of students in the ‘accomplished’ category for was IU=58%, EJ=57%, IP=52%, showing that the percentage of students decreased in the accomplished category but increased in the exemplary category. Results indicate that the level of language competence has greatly increased in all the three activities evaluated. Regarding the cultural awareness, the improvement from the first to the second time they were assessed is almost imperceptible when analyzing the ‘exemplary’ (IU=32, EJ=37% and IP=22%) and accomplished (IU=57%, EJ=56%, IP=68%) categories individually; however, when considering both categories together, it can be observed that the sum of the percentages of students in both categories are IU=89%, EJ=93% and IP=90%, indicating tht most students have acquired cultural awareness. As for skills, a high percentage (IP=58%) in the ‘accomplished’ was only observed in the project task. In the ‘exemplary’ category an exponential progression is noticed in the attitude dimension (IU=61%, EJ=72%, IP=62%) in all three assessed



tasks and knowledge (IU=69%, IP=71%) in the intercultural unit and project tasks. These findings suggest that learners' attitude and knowledge potentially reach the exemplary levels thanks to the hybrid method of learning, but skills and critical cultural awareness remain in the accomplished category. It is suggested that these two dimensions require more time, training, sustained input, and intercultural exposition to move towards exemplary.

**Table 48** *Sample Assessment 2 Semester II (Selected Projects, Journal, and Units)*

ICC	Knowledge			Attitude			Cultural Awareness			Skills			Language Use		
	IU	EJ	IP	IU	EJ	IP	IU	EJ	IP	IU	EJ	IP	IU	EJ	IP
4)Exemplary	69%	43%	71%	61%	72%	62%	32%	37%	22%	31%	40%	29%	37%	33%	36%
3)Accomplished	24%	47%	20%	27%	24%	28%	57%	56%	68%	39%	35%	58%	58%	57%	52%
2)Developing	7%	8%	9%	10%	4%	7%	8%	7%	8%	27%	23%	10%	3%	8%	9%
1)Beginning	—	2%	-%	2%	-%	3%	3%	-%	2%	3%	2%	3%	2%	2%	3%
0)Below	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

*Notes.* \*IU: Intercultural unit tasks \*EJ: E-journal \*IP: intercultural projects.

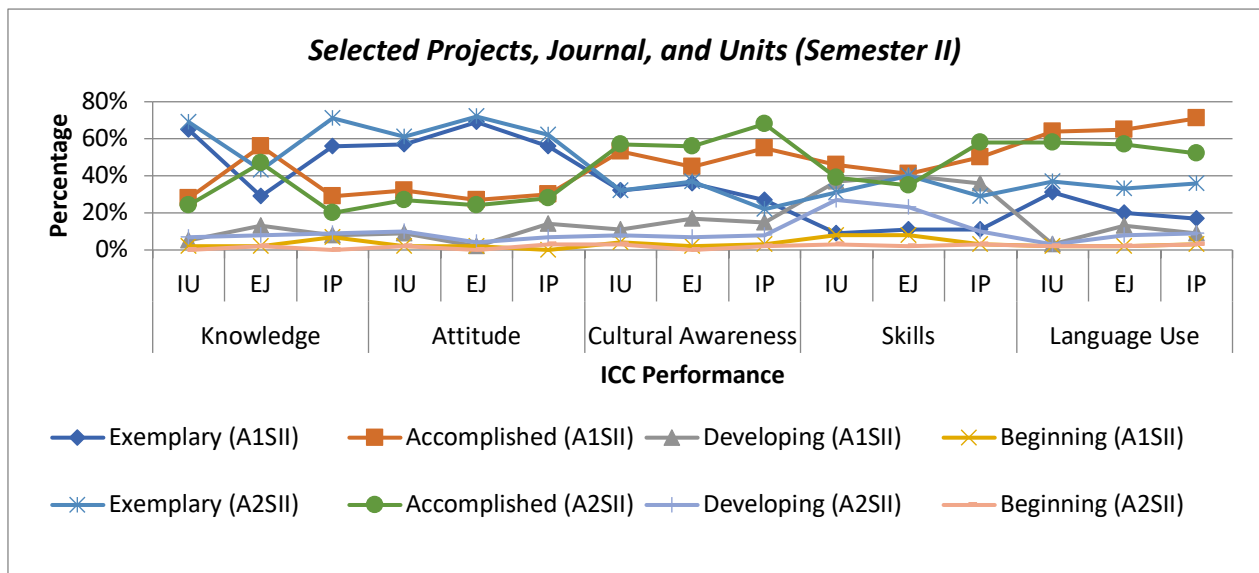
### 8.3.1 General Assessment Insights: intervention II

When analyzing the percentages obtained in each of the tasks assessed during the intervention II, it was found that students slightly moved towards the 'exemplary' scoring category in certain ICC dimensions (Figure 32). The most impacted dimensions in all the tasks assessed in the intercultural unit and project tasks were attitude and knowledge. The cultural awareness, skills and language dimensions did not reach the 'exemplary' level and remain in the 'accomplished' category during the two times the tasks were assessed in the second intervention. It is also learned from these data that the lowest percentages are in the skills dimension. These lower percentages indicate that students need to undertake more practice, and opportunities through varied means under a learning platform to achieve and develop their skills and cultural awareness.

It is interesting to notice the journals and projects were the tasks that account as the learning activities that most contributed to higher scores in the exemplary category in the ICC dimensions of attitude and knowledge. These results, support the idea that the use of varied tools as the intercultural units, journals, and projects can support alternative ways to successfully assess the ICC dimensions including the target language. Findings correlate with the ICC self-assessment scale in which participants perceived the attitude dimension to have progressed slightly higher than the rest of the ICC dimensions during the second intervention.

Besides, it is also concluded that the use of the hybrid methodology infused in the learning activities has had a significant effect on improving students' ICC dimensions, more specifically it has affected them on attitude and knowledge. Overall, these finding are in line with the nature of teaching and learning intercultural competence comprehended as malleable, developmental, and interactive (Griffith et al., 2016; Eisenberg, 2013).

**Figure 32** *Assessment tasks comparison: intervention II*



#### **8.4 Assessment Discussion and Insights: Intervention I & II**

Overall, assessment findings reveal the functional applicability of the alternative tasks to serve both learning objectives, teaching, and assessing the process of teaching the intercultural component. These tasks have provided valuable information and a comprehensive picture of the ICC learning process trajectory after implementing a EFL Syllabus through a hybrid teaching and learning principles approach. It was generally perceived that learners could not fully reach to develop and demonstrate intercultural skills conceptualized through the tasks as the ability to interpret a document and event and relate it to their own cultural background while negotiating intercultural insights. It is believed that demonstrating these skills requires much more practice and simulation, which found limits within the remote learning mode caused by the pandemic. On the contrary, the attitude and knowledge dimensions were easier to exhibit during the selected assessment tasks. In general, these measurements yielded positive outcomes, which can inspire language educators to pursue an intercultural language experience at their own pace. The experimental group showed openness to collaborate among cultures and showed their eagerness to learn about other world views and teach about their own cultures.

Information of this nature can be helpful to construe better teaching practices and pedagogical implications to improve the procedures used to choose and design the most appropriate instruments to measure each of the dimensions. In order to learn to assess the complexities entitled to the ICC construct, providing a context for the intercultural experience plays a fundamental role. Therefore, a needs analysis, reflection, and feedback are also essential for both the teacher and the students. This process is a crucial stage in guiding language educators to comprehend the effectiveness of the selected teaching strategies to mediate the intercultural component. Students

as resources of the learning experience offer data that need to be considered in order to make decisions.

Feedback has fundamental implications when using nontraditional teaching language methods. Educators need to be aware of how students react, assimilate, and process input and content to support what is working and adjust what is not. Educators are to make decisions about how, when, and how frequent to assess the IC component. By using alternative assessment tasks, many advantages are noticed in students' performance. For example, during the interventions, a generalized willingness to participate, contribute and make their best effort was perceived in the assessment outcomes. It is believed that the novelty of the topics, the kind of tasks, and the nature of the method used played an influential role. Thus, it is considered that these tasks helped achieve the expected objectives due to the similarity of the structure of the tasks that were used on a regular basis in their lessons. The tasks familiarity allowed learners to gain confidence, triggering cognitive processes while supporting learning to perform better. It is also perceived that, since tasks have been repeated throughout the intervention weeks, anxiety, stress, and pressure are reduced compared to the discomfort that traditional testing can have on learners.

Assessing the intercultural component should be a formative process where scores are valued only in terms of progression, language support, and decision making, moving away from demonstrating what they can recall and reproduce (Huerta- Macias, 1995). Throughout the process of conducting the two interventions, students provided useful information which provided the basis to structure realistic assessment tasks under principles of practicality, authenticity, usefulness, purposefulness (Coombe et al., 2007), language recycling, and linguistic level accordance. Thus, educators should envision what and how learners are expected to incorporate or modify to make students interested in valuing ICC as a fundamental binomial to language learning.

## 8.5 Qualitative analysis: journal entries significance and perspectives on the intercultural language learning experience

Journal task entries were proposed and used with the objective to give learners opportunities to review themes, content, and language studied during the sessions. These were assigned as simple tasks for students to reflect on some of the intercultural issues introduced in their English classes. After scrutinizing and analyzing qualitative data obtained from students' journal entries, it can be stated that learners' positive comments highlight the benefits perceived when learning intercultural content in the EFL classroom. Various participants shared in their journal entries constructive ideas reporting the holistic impact of intercultural issues on their learning process, language learning, academic and professional areas. Ideas gathered from the students' excerpts materialize the effects of the treatment on ICC progression, especially in attitudinal and cognitive regards and on accelerating shifting on preconceived views or ignored domains. Therefore, their reflections provide evidence of a developed and genuine willingness to demonstrate respect, openness, empathy, sensitivity, discernment, and positive attitudes during intercultural engagements.

The following entries support the effectiveness and significance of exposing learners to learn much more than just the foreign language itself. Their entries show both their opinions on ICC issues and their perceptions on their linguistic and cultural gains along the process. For example, a student reflected on the importance of studying one's own native culture to relearn aspects that can help improve lifestyles and world views. *"In this unit, I learned that we do not have a lifestyle like people from Nicoya; they had a really healthy lifestyle. Besides, they are people with very strong values. Cultural themes like these are very important in order to appreciate our ancestors"* (Student 96).

Some students made indicative comments on intercultural knowledge progression and how becoming knowledgeable allowed them to perceive an attitude shift towards the need to study the national memory of home and foreign cultures: *“In this class, I learned about the indigenous regions, their activities, their food, their traditions, and their importance. Many people discriminate against indigenous groups, not knowing the importance of preserving customs, traditions, and the legacy left by our ancestors which is part of who we are”* (Student 15). Another student pinpointed key topics learned during the interventions: *In this unit, I learned some things about different kinds of culture. I learned that my culture is collectivistic, and that explains many of our Ticos’ ways, our values and behaviors are reflected on that way”* (Student 28).

Journal entries mirrored students’ high level of openness, empathy, respect, and awareness as the building blocks to adopt strategies and tools to interrelate and negotiate in diverse intercultural environments. A participant remarks that one of the essential elements in intercultural communication is appreciating and respecting different cultures: *“I learned to appreciate all cultures, humans, and the environment around us. In order to have conversations with diverse people, it is important to always respect their opinions because not everyone thinks in the same way”* (Student 73).

Many entries display indicators of a reshaped perception and a modification of views, and attitudes towards intercultural aspects while learning English, as the following quote confirms: *“Respect is a key aspect of my identity, and when we decide to open our mind to new things, we need to always respect cultures and lifestyles. This incredible new world of knowledge lets us share our differences and learn good things from others. In the process of learning new things is*

*important to know and respect our culture, where we come from and what we are, to be proud of who we are” (Student 87).*

Besides, students referred to the idea of being active citizens and recognizing their potential to contribute by adopting a functional role within the community as global citizens engaged through notions of interculturality: *“I have learned many positive things. I must help with my actions, my city, and my community and not just think about myself but also about others. Every action is very important in a globalized world, so we must always be aware of our behaviors and have an open mind to learn new things” (Student 117).* In the same vein, another student claims that advancing in ICC helps develop as a whole person empowered to act and generate change: *“I increase my general cultural knowledge, it makes me a better person, more respectful and empathetic. All this new knowledge makes us agents of change” (Student 12).*

Some other participants reflected and wrote their entries making emphasis on the impact that learning intercultural components can have on their professional, academic, and personal lives: *“Knowing how to communicate is really important and more if it is at work, good work communication allows us productivity, a more pleasant environment, and more committed workers. We know that various elements such as body language, verbal communication, and culture are involved in communication” (Student 69).* Similarly, another participant highlighted that learning about cultures trains them on how to engage in efficient communication and acquire key knowledge to avoid intercultural communicative mistakes *“I learned that verbal and non-verbal communication is different depending on the culture. There are signs or words that in one culture mean something good, and in another it can be offensive” (Student 58).* Concurrent entries suggest the usefulness and practicality entitled to the beneficial role of culture in providing relevant

cultural knowledge and strategies for them to develop a conscious understanding of key elements in intercultural communicative encounters: *In this lesson, I learned about business etiquette and communication this is really important because it is necessary to have a correct and respectful way to express our ideas*” (Student 01).

Students reflected on the various intercultural topics facilitated from multiple perspectives. Table 49 shows some journal entry excerpts in which participants expressed their reactions and opinions on the themes and lessons studied during both pedagogical interventions:

**Table 49** *Journal Sample Remarks: Intervention Group Participants*

Entry	Statements and highlights (attitudinal & Cognitive)
1.	“Investigating and learning about common communication problems that happen in the workplace between Costa Rican workers and other people from diverse cultures is helpful for my future job.” (Student 124 )
2.	“I see my own culture as something unique, as a combination of beliefs, practices, and views. I would like to learn more about the culture of Costa Rica in the English class.” (Student 65 )
3.	“Learning about culture is super important not only your culture, but of other countries, we can find things that seem very odd to us but to others are totally normal. Learning this in the English language is new and of utmost importance. It makes you change ideas, learn new things, and a good English practice.” (Student 31)
4.	“We are currently living in a globalized world; barriers are disappearing between people, and it is much easier to live with a person who belongs to another culture. We have been taught to be cautious with our words, to know when the right time is to speak or when to say something. We cannot forget our body, our movements, and little things that seem insignificant to us for other cultures are very important.” (Student 98)



- 
5. “The topic about gender roles is relevant to understand the opportunities and limitations that affect both women and men. In other countries, women have more difficulties accessing education and financial resources, limiting their mobility, access, and participation in society. Learning about this opens our eyes to other realities.” (Student 49 )
  6. “Every culture is different, and people have their own idea of beauty, is important to remember when communicating with diverse people be empathic, tolerant, and patient. Our differences are positive aspects that give us a different vision of diversity.” (Student 33)
  7. “In this class, I learned about the indigenous regions, their activities, their food, their traditions, and their importance. Many people discriminate against indigenous groups, not knowing that what they want is to preserve their customs and traditions, taking into account the legacy that their ancestors have left.” (Student 71)
  8. “Knowing how to communicate is really important and more if it is at work, good work communication allows us productivity, a more pleasant environment, and more committed workers. We know that various elements such as body language, verbal communication, and culture are involved in communicating.” (Student 120)
  9. “I would like to learn more about other cultures to learn about differences and avoid misunderstandings. It is very interesting to learn about differences in the way people from other cultures communicate because nonverbal communication can cause misunderstandings; we need to be prepared for that.” (Student 102)
  - 10 “I studied about how important it is to learn more about our country, its culture, traditions, and part of the history that our ancestors left, it is important to know part of it because this way we can inspire our families and tourists to know part of our culture such as traditions, values, history, ethnic groups, gastronomy and more.” (Student 39)
  - 11 “I learned that every culture has its differences and similarities and how important it is to know about them before giving an opinion.” (Student 51)
  - 12 “I learned about collectivism and individualism, Costa Rica is a collectivistic country, and I would like to learn more about other cultures to know if there are similarities.” (Student 91)
-

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- 13** “It is important to understand the culture of the people we interact with. I learned that there are different people, and they can be more understanding and tolerant if they learn well from their cultures and about other cultures. It is good to know about different cultures because many things can be learned.” (Student 44)
- 14** “The new knowledge and skills I gained from developing my journal ideas can be of use every day. Culture is relevant. If we do business, we have to know what we say because we can offend others. There are many differences between cultures, so I need to learn more about cultures from other countries.” (Student 18)
- 15** “Know more about the different cultures that exist around the world, since this is very important to avoid making mistakes while socializing with people from different cultures.” (Student 23)
- 16** “When communicating with diverse people, we need to know certain information to understand that there are no wrong or right cultures, just different ways of living. Keeping an open mind to new knowledge and new people is useful to everyday life. (Student 88 )
- 17** “I used to feel so insecure when sharing with others, and that fear increased when I talk with someone from other culture because sharing a clear message of what you think in English is difficult, but now, I feel more confident and ready to show humbleness, respect, and positive attitude to communicate and learn new things.” (Student 64)
- 18** “I would like to continue the analysis of movies and series, trying to see the cultural messages represented as it a good way to understand other people. It is important to continue researching related topics and try to always cooperate in our community in any way possible to live peacefully”. (Student 78)
- 19** “What I learned in these units is that culture is important not only your culture but also of other countries. We can find aspects that seem very strange to us but to others is customary. Learning about these topics in the English language it is of utmost importance and interesting because it makes you learn more English and share more ideas which is good practice.” (Student 44)
- 20** “You cannot have good communication if you ignore the culture. Learning about different cultures makes a difference in understanding and communicating because cultures have unique ways to do things.” (Student 12)
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21 “I learned about important rules: Make a conscious decision to establish friendships with people from other cultures, respect them, seek or put ourselves in situations where we meet people from other cultures, examine our prejudices and ask other people about their cultures, customs, and opinions to grow as intercultural speakers.” (Student 105)

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Students’ journal entries represent a window that allows materializing the intercultural learning process within the foreign language classroom. Qualitative data extracted from students’ entries were valuable to identify students’ opinions and reactions, and provide useful information about how they incorporated into their communicative repertoire content, tools, and strategies that potentially support changes in attitudes, behaviors, and skills in intercultural situations. Findings about students’ reactions correlated with the data obtained in the self-assessment scale, where students demonstrated that both interventions had a significant impact on their intercultural attitude, awareness, and knowledge. These findings also replicate the recurrent beneficial perspective found in the self-report questionnaire, where it was inquired about the significance of the hybrid method's effectiveness to mediate ICC.

The degree of satisfaction with the method and the strategies used show a consistent line of positive reactions among most learners in the experimental group. This reaffirms the value of taking an intercultural path within EFL contexts because it fulfills current global collaboration needs and offers the foreign language field an invigorating pedagogical alternative based on effective-proven learning principles. Learners’ satisfaction with the hybrid method proves its potential didactic value to meet diverse and multipurpose learning objectives. It is noteworthy to mention that students had chances, first, to acknowledge and learn the role that culture plays in pursuing effective communication and perceive how it contributes to educating the whole person as integral, active, and aware citizens.

The journal entries portray the benefits obtained and perceived from the explicit teaching of varied intercultural content study, allowing students to become fully informed of what it means to become interculturally competent.

Students' comments on the benefits of the content and topics learned helped them boosting their understanding, awareness of others, questioning and relearning about their own cultural roots as bases for meeting, conversing, and engaging with others and becoming better prepared for the professional world. Comments allowed them to rethink, acquire and discover new notions, while unveiling unconscious bias that may interfere in transparent intercultural engagements even with people from the same home/native culture. Through the records of their journals, students captured the nature of culture as diverse and dynamic and opened up to listening and sharing each other's perspectives on home/ foreign culture(s) and intercultural matters. Students showed evidence of their constructive attitude and positive standpoints towards these themes acquiring cultural values and meaning mediated by the use of various language tasks and projects within the hybrid approach.

Classroom observations were also conducted on a regular basis as part of each pedagogical intervention. This research technique is considered an appropriate instrument for collecting qualitative data in educational contexts such as classrooms where diverse interactions and processes occur. Cohen et al. (2011, p. 474) argue that observations are "powerful tools for gaining insight into situations." These observations complement the quantitative data collected and provide insight into the impact of the pedagogical interventions on the foreign/second language-learning process and perspectives towards the methodology, topics, material, tasks, and projects facilitated for participants in the experimental group. Photos of students work and interaction samples provide evidence of students learning intercultural language experience (Appendix H).

During Intervention I, observations showed that students were attentive, open, and willing to interact, gain, and use linguistic tools they had already acquired to communicate their ideas even at a basic level. Notably, not many students offered excuses for not completing tasks due to language barriers, content comprehension, or limited intercultural experience. However, since the remote modality was new, students needed more time to adjust. Language educators offered additional support and guidance as well as after-hours assistance throughout the lessons.

As recommended by Shadiev and Huang (2016), topic selection was extracted from students' real-life contexts in order to raise their motivation and interest levels. Attention and thoughtful preparation was given to designing the learning activities and to conducting the intervention lessons in order to avoid stressful learning situations. During the online lessons and exchanges, the learning atmosphere was friendly and respectful. Students responded positively to the material and interacted on ICC issues by sharing their points of views, commenting on the material, responding to each other's posts or journal entries and providing feedback to their classmates' project ideas when required. These learning opportunities gathered students' reflections, perspectives, and opinions on the selected topics. The content used for the lessons sparked students' interest because they could relate it to their interests and personal experiences as well as to their home culture. For example, the concept of beauty and indigenous populations in Costa Rica helped students recognize and understand the richness of ideas, practices, and views within their home country. Their final projects recollected key contributions from these groups about how indigenous populations had helped shape the Costa Rican culture.

The field notes collected during the observations showed students' openness to the learning activities. The instructors sensed a non-threatening, safe environment, and friendly atmosphere during both synchronous and asynchronous lessons. Students felt free to express their opinions,

personal views, experiences, observations, and proposals. They could process the information about the selected topics with no significant difficulties. For example, when studying and reflecting on specific intercultural topics (e.g., cultural diversity, communication, lifestyles), students were able to point out how certain stereotypes about neighboring cultures can spread. A majority of students showed receptiveness towards the intercultural content and activities. To maximize student-centeredness of the lessons, students' voices were taken into account throughout the interventions by listening to their ideas, needs, topics of interests, feedback on the lesson topics and so forth. This created favorable conditions for efficient ICC learning. The overall recorded evidence of students' reactions was positive.

The observations yielded interesting data regarding students' attitudes, collaboration, language use, and cognition activation during the learning process. In addition, students seemed energized by sharing varied sources of content material and information and by working collaboratively on the lesson's tasks and activities infused with foreign/home cultures' content. The lessons employed a hybrid methodology combining CLIL and PBL principles, helping students reflect on intercultural issues, acquire knowledge, and use the language and content for real purposes. This increased their willingness to apply new ideas and ICC notions when required.

Another element noticed during the pedagogical interventions was in relation to the assigned projects. Students were motivated to get together via digital platforms to collaborate, discuss, organize, and create different projects linked to varied content and intercultural issues. Their efforts allowed them to create attractive and effective projects, and findings confirmed students' positive attitudes, motivation, and interest in working under the hybrid methodology of learning about their home and foreign cultures while learning English. Such tasks revealed

students' ability to treat, process, and share their own ideas about a particular content. Observers noted that these students were willing to try communicating as they best could.

Students were given opportunities to use the target language with a sense of purpose, expressing ideas that have not usually been the subject of attention in traditional English lessons. Observers also noted that students supported each other on language needs, backing up each other as supportive peers in the learning process especially when conducting project work. The interaction among participants involved all participants helping students who were not confident enough in using the target language. The contextualized tasks gave students a comprehensive anchor and helped them retrieve previously acquired knowledge on lesson topics. In this way, students had the possibility to contribute to the discussion because topics and tasks drew from their reality and local and international surroundings. Collaboration, ideas, thoughtful opinions, and reflections expressed in English seemed to help boost students' confidence in cognition, knowledge management, communication, and language learning. By reading and researching about a variety of topics while making connections to intercultural issues students overcame content and language barriers effectively. Students seemed to have developed a stronger sense of autonomy and independence in using digital resources to support their research process or complete other tasks. Students completed independent/autonomous homework tasks, which provided more opportunities to develop and improve their ICC competence, ensuring their progress in the target language.

Students were taught strategies for communicating and thinking about other cultures. Students could use the target language at a basic level to express comparisons (similarities and differences) among familiar cultures. For instance, they were able to identify differences between the American and the Costa Rican culture in various aspects related to notions/values of time, money, family, and communication. When establishing these comparisons, many students showed

curiosity, and some were surprised to learn about commonalities and about different world visions and ways of thinking between these two cultures.

During the second pedagogical intervention II, carried out in semester II, cognition and content management were much more visible due to the previously acquired confidence, awareness, and resolution reflected in students' communication, production (output), projects, and interactions. Their willingness to work in groups through the available digital platforms allowed them to make real time connections with their peers. In addition, students seemed much more aware of how cultural issues influence different areas of life while recognizing their relevance for learning English to communicate in the real world. It was observed that the intercultural experience and knowledge gained during Intervention I contributed to boosting students' confidence and supported their independent learning. Students conducted further research about the related content or cultures, and when encountering difficulties, they looked for support, clarification, and help from the teacher or peers. Teachers' friendly attitude and positive encouragement throughout the process was important for achieving the learning objectives. The participants from the experimental group gained familiarity with the tasks and project activities framed using a hybrid methodology of CLIL and PBL. Observations support results from quantitative data showing that the integration of intercultural language tasks and projects fosters and develops students' ICC and language progression, especially their ICC knowledge and attitudes. Data collected from the observations carried out during the interventions correlate with the results obtained by Larzén-Östermark (2008), who states that the teachers in her study believed students enjoyed learning about ICC issues.



**CHAPTER 9**  
**ENGLISH AND INTERCULTURAL LEARNING PERSPECTIVE**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS**

## 9.1 English and Intercultural Learning Questionnaire Analysis: Control vs Intervention Groups

The sample consisted of 219 participants divided into a control group ( $N = 95$ ) and an experimental group ( $N = 124$ ). Each group was administered a pretest and posttest questionnaire in each of the two semesters the research took place. The experimental group followed the hybrid methodology while the control used a traditional approach without emphasizing ICC. All variables were categorical variables with two or four categories. McNemar's  $\chi^2$  test was used to assess the difference between the pretest vs. posttest percentages of the two groups. The null hypothesis was that the proportions were equal, and the alternative hypothesis was that proportions were different. A  $\chi^2$  test and Fisher's exact probability test were used to test for the difference in the distribution of the categorical variables between control and experimental groups to determine statistical differences. A P-value of  $<0.05$  was considered to indicate statistical significance.

Table 50 shows the questionnaire results of the control and intervention groups for pretest and posttest. It displays the p-values regarding the pretests and posttests results obtained in the interventions I and II. During the first pedagogical intervention I (semester I) it was observed that among the pretest scores there was not a significant difference ( $p > 0.05$ ) between the control group and intervention group, except for question 3 ( $p$ -value  $< 0.001$ ) and question 20 ( $p$ -value = 0.018). These non-significant p-values in the pretest reveal that, before the pedagogical interventions started, perspectives among the two groups were similar, except for questions 3 and 20, suggesting that on the majority of the issues consulted participants' responses were homogenous. This means that both groups had similar perspectives around most of the issues consulted in the questionnaire.

In relation to posttest scores, a significant statistical difference across the majority of the questions and categories between the control and intervention groups was found. Based on these test results, it can be interpreted that students in the experimental group changed their perspectives on most of the issues consulted on the questionnaire after the intervention I. As for the second pedagogical intervention, Table 50 also shows control and intervention results for pre- and posttest p-values. During the second semester/Intervention II, there were no significant differences in the pretest results between the control and intervention groups in the questions 6, 7, and 14 ( $p$ -value > 0.05). However, there was a statistically significant differences in the rest of the items ( $p$  < 0.05). Regarding posttest scores, a significant statistical difference between the control and intervention groups were reported in all of the items ( $p$ -value < 0.001). The majority of the p-values between the control and experimental groups in both interventions yielded statistically significant results, implying that the pedagogical interventions influenced experimental participants' perspectives and responses in the varied issues consulted about English and intercultural learning in the language classroom.

**Table 50** *Questionnaire P-value Results: Control vs. Intervention Groups*

Questions	Intervention I (Control vs. Intervention group)		Intervention II (Control vs. Intervention group)	
	Pretest <i>P</i> -value	Posttest <i>P</i> -value	Pretest <i>P</i> -value	Posttest <i>P</i> -value
1. Why do you study English?	0.881	<0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001
2. How would you self-assess your performance in English?	0.106	<0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001
3. What language skills have you focused on in your English classes?	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001
4. What do you consider as your strength in the English language?	0.176	<0.002	<0.003	< 0.001
5. Do you think that the teaching methods have been effective in your English learning process?	0.697	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001

6. Do class assignments and activities benefit your English learning process?	0.924	< 0.001	0.322	< 0.001
7. Do you enjoy participating, reflecting, analyzing, questioning, and sharing ideas in your English class?	0.220	< 0.001	0.397	< 0.001
8. Is communication, reflection, analysis, and discussion of varied intercultural content encouraged in your English classes?	0.576	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001
9. What areas of the English language would you like to improve?	0.271	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001
10. Do you know what intercultural communicative competence means?	0.633	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001
11. How would you self-assess your intercultural communicative competence?	0.781	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001
12. Have you learned intercultural content from your own culture and that of other cultures in your English classes?	0.146	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001
13. Do you access references, digital resources, or watch videos, documentaries, and movies in English to learn about other cultures and your own?	0.220	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001
14. How important is it to learn about cultural aspects of both your own culture and other cultures in your English classes?	0.370	< 0.001	0.064	< 0.001
15. Do you think learning about cultures benefits you academically and professionally?	0.625	< 0.001	< 0.011	< 0.001
16. How important is it to learn about foreign cultures to reinforce your knowledge of your own culture?	0.614	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001
17. Are you interested in learning about foreign cultures and Costa Rican (or native) culture while learning English?	0.781	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001
18. Do you believe that the English teaching methods have been effective in developing intercultural communicative competence?	0.202	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001
19. Do you consider that intercultural communicative competence is promoted by the content activities, projects, and homework assigned in your English classes?	0.436	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001
20. How beneficial have been the authentic, digital (audiovisual) resources used in the English class in your English performance and development of intercultural communicative competence?	0.018	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001
21. Do you believe that the intercultural content should be included in the English language teaching curriculum?	0.787	< 0.001	< 0.004	< 0.001
22. Have you studied English using the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) method?	0.538	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001
23. How effective are English classes that use the language as a vehicle to learn varied and intercultural content?	0.984	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001

24. Have you studied English using the Project-Based Learning (PBL) approach?	0.220	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001
25. Do you consider that the use of projects engages students in active, collaborative, and effective English language skills development?	0.172	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001
26. Is English language learning through a combined approach (CLIL/PBL methods) effective and meaningful to develop intercultural communicative competence?	0.785	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001
27. Do you think that the combination of methods (CLIL/PBL) increases your motivation toward learning English by offering varied learning activities?	0.892	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001
28. How beneficial is project-based learning and content and language integrated learning in the development of cognition, communication, and critical thinking?	0.931	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001
29. Do you agree that English language teaching can be more beneficial when two teaching methods are combined to improve linguistic ability and intercultural communicative competence?	0.902	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001
30. Do you agree that English classes should integrate the intercultural component by combining CLIL and PBL methodologies?	0.607	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001

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A series of questions were analyzed to explore participants' perspectives on specific elements that interplay in learning English as a foreign language. The questions below were considered for the analysis:

Q1. Why do you study English?

Q8. Are communication, reflection, analysis, and discussion of varied intercultural content encouraged in your English classes?

Q11. How would you self-assess your intercultural communicative competence?

Q12. Have you learned intercultural content from your own culture and that of other cultures in your English classes?

Q13. Do you access references, digital resources, or watch videos, documentaries, and movies in English to learn about other cultures and your own?

Q17. Are you interested in learning about foreign cultures and Costa Rican (or native) culture while learning English?

Q18. Do you believe that the English teaching methods have been effective in developing intercultural communicative competence?

Q19. Do you consider that intercultural communicative competence is promoted by the content activities, projects, and homework assigned in your English classes?

Q20. How beneficial have been the authentic, digital (audiovisual) resources used in the English class in your English performance and development of intercultural communicative competence?

Q22. Have you studied English using the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) method?

Q24. Have you studied English using the Project-Based Learning (PBL) approach?

Q26. Is English language learning through a combined approach (CLIL/PBL methods) effective and meaningful to develop intercultural communicative competence?

Q29. Do you agree that English language teaching can be more beneficial when two teaching methods are combined to improve linguistic ability and intercultural communicative competence?

Q30. Do you agree that English classes should integrate the intercultural component by combining CLIL and PBL methodology?

### **9.1.1 Questionnaire Pretest and Posttest Results among Control and Experimental groups: Intervention I and Intervention II**

#### **9.1.1.1 Q.1 Reasons for studying English \_Intervention I**

Table 51 and Figure 33 reveal interesting information about students' reasons for studying English. Participants in both control and experimental groups responded that they study English because they like it and because it benefits their personal and professional lives. The percentage of those choosing that response in the control group increased from 57.8% in the pretest to 62.1% in the posttest. However, the experimental group experienced only a moderate increase in those choosing that response, going from 61.3% in the pretest to 71% in the posttest. This increase within the experimental group may be a direct result of the intercultural hybrid learning experience during the hybrid pedagogical intervention I. The percentage of experimental group participants

responding ‘because it is a required course’ decreased from 31.5% in the pretest to 9.7% in the posttest. This may be due to a growing awareness of the need to learn the English language to increase their chances for employability, especially in an interconnected economy.

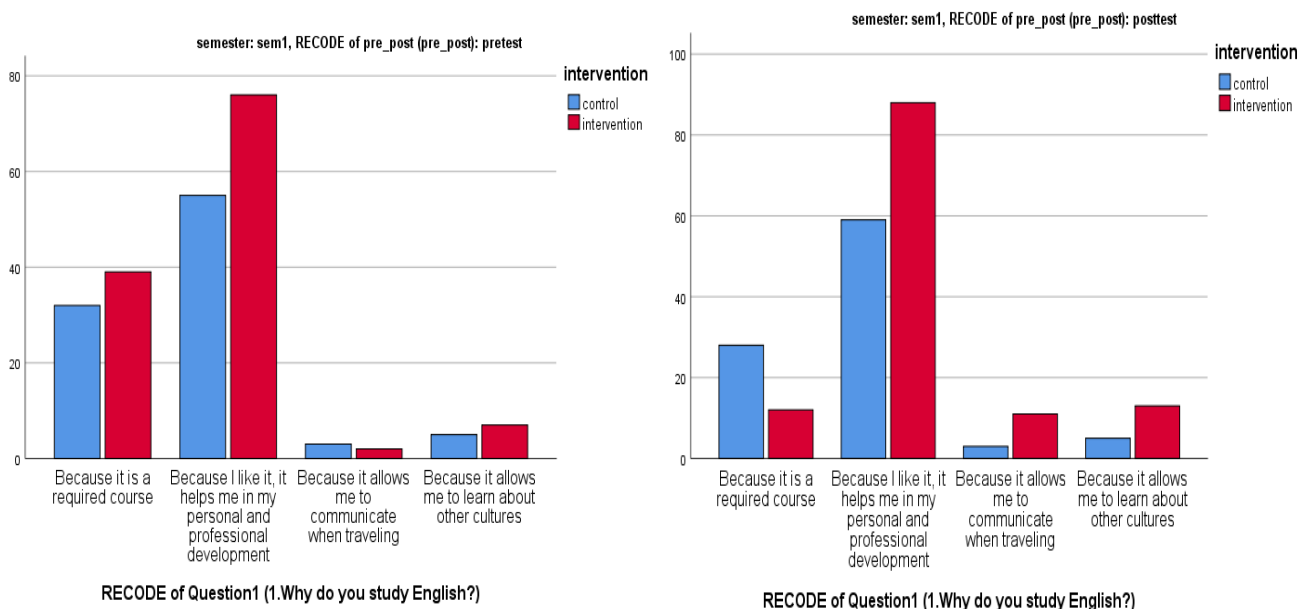
**Table 51** *Q.1 Results: Control vs. Experimental Group (Intervention I\_ Semester I)*

	<b>Control Group</b>		<b>Experimental Group</b>	
	Absolute Values/ Relative Values %		Absolute Values/ Relative Values %	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
Because it is a required course	32(33.7%)	28(29.4%)	39(31.5%)	12(9.7%)
Because I like it/, it helps me in my personal and professional development	55(57.8%)	59(62.1%)	76(61.3%)	88(71%)
Because it allows me to communicate when traveling	3(3.2%)	3(3.2%)	2(1.6%)	11(8.8%)
Because it allows me to learn about other cultures	5(5.3%)	5(5.3%)	7(5.6%)	13(10.5%)
Total	95(100%)	95(100%)	124(100%)	124(100%)

*Note.* 1.Why do you study English?

Figure 33 below shows the differences in percentages between the experimental and control groups. Both groups agree on the instrumental use of English. However, the experimental group noted higher values in the posttest.

**Figure 33** *Q.1 Comparison for pre and posttest\_intervention I*



### 9.1.1.2 Q.1 Reasons for studying English \_ Intervention II

A similar trend was observed in regards to Intervention II (Table 52). Both groups tended to respond that they studied English ‘because I like it/ it helps me in my personal and professional growth.’ The levels of response remained relatively unchanged across pre-and posttest results. In the control group, 64.2% of respondents chose this response in the pretest, and 55% chose it in the posttest. The experimental group levels were slightly higher, with 71% choosing the response in the pretest and 71.8% choosing it in the posttest. These results reinforce the belief that learning English in the Costa Rican context meets personal and instrumental motives.

**Table 52** *Q.1 Results: Control vs. Experimental Group (Intervention II\_ Semester II)*

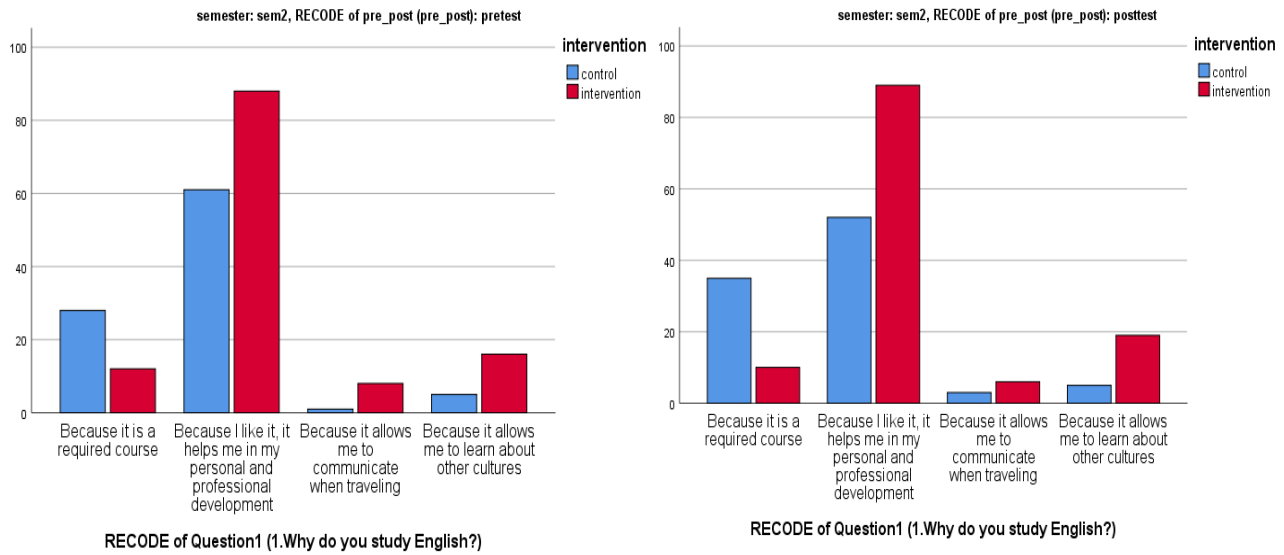
	Control Group		Experimental Group	
	Absolute Values/ Relative Values %		Absolute Values/ Relative Values %	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
Because it is a required course	28(29.4%)	35(37%)	12(9.7%)	10(8.1%)
Because I like it/, it helps me in my personal and professional development	61(64.2%)	52(55%)	88(71%)	89(71.8%)
Because it allows me to communicate when traveling	1(1.1%)	3(3%)	8(6.5%)	6(4.8%)
Because it allows me to learn about other cultures	5(5.3%)	5(5%)	16(12.8%)	19(15.3%)
Total	95(100%)	95(100%)	124(100)	124(100%)

*Note.* 1. Why do you study English?

Figure 34 below shows the differences in the experimental and control groups' percentages. For the second intervention, both groups maintained their responses in the category of ‘because I like it/ it helps me in my personal and professional growth.’ However, the experimental group noticed higher percentages in the posttest results.



**Figure 34 Q.1 Comparison for pre and posttest\_intervention II**



### 9.1.1.3 Q. 8 Varied Intercultural Content Discussion \_ Intervention I

Concerning the discussion of varied intercultural content in English classes, both groups showed notable differences in the pre- and posttests results (Table 53). In response to the question ‘Are communication, reflection, analysis, and discussion of varied intercultural content encouraged in your English classes?’, the experimental group experienced a notable increase in the percentage of those responding ‘almost always’, from 12.9% in the pretest to 41.1% in the posttest. The increase in those answering ‘almost always’ was much smaller in the control group, going from 8.4% to 12.6%. The difference between the two groups reflects a positive effect of the pedagogical intervention by including opportunities to discuss intercultural content in the English class.

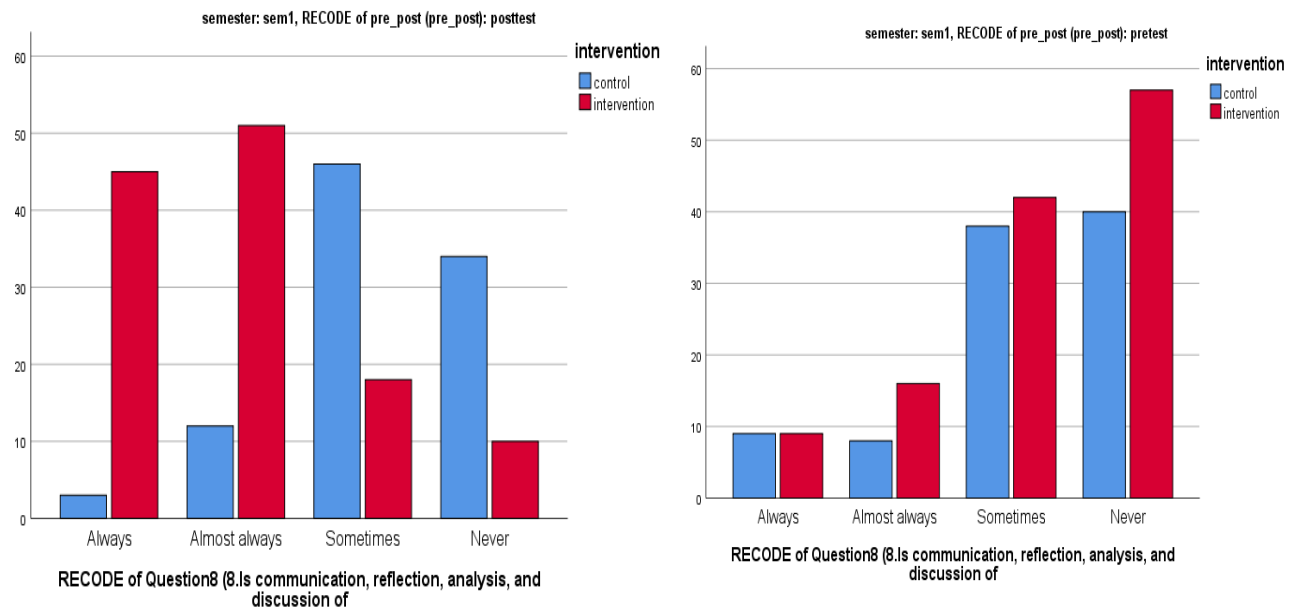
**Table 53** *Q. 8 English Classes Discussion of Varied Intercultural Content: Intervention I/ Semester I*

	<b>Control Group</b>		<b>Experimental Group</b>	
	Absolute values/ Relative values %	Absolute values/ Relative values %	Absolute values/ Relative values %	Absolute values/ Relative values %
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
Always	9(9.5%)	3(3.2%)	9(7.3%)	45(36.3%)
Almost always	8(8.4%)	12(12.6%)	16(12.9%)	51(41.1%)
Sometimes	38(40%)	46(48.4%)	42(33.8%)	18(14.5%)
Never	40(42.1%)	34(35.8%)	57(46%)	10(8.1%)
Total	95(100%)	95(100%)	124(100%)	124(100%)

*Note.* Q8. Are communication, reflection, analysis, and discussion of varied intercultural content encouraged in your English classes?

Figure 35 below shows the differences in the experimental and control groups' percentages. In intervention I, the experimental group's percentages displayed a shift in values in the question responses 'Are communication, reflection, analysis, and discussion of varied intercultural content encouraged in your English classes?' which shifted from the pretest in the 'never' category to the 'almost always' in the posttest.

**Figure 35** *Q. 8 Comparison for pre and posttest\_intervention I*



### 9.1.1.4 Q. 8 Varied Intercultural Content Discussion\_ Intervention II

Results obtained from the same question following intervention II are shown in Table 54 and Figure 36. Here, the two groups showed important differences in the percentages answering ‘always’ and ‘almost always’ in the posttest results. In the control group, only 3.2% of participants responded ‘always,’ compared to a much higher percentage of participants in the experimental group (43.5%). Similarly, 11.6% of control group participants responded ‘almost always’ in the posttest compared to 47.6% in the experimental group. These differences in percentages suggest that the hybrid approach of activities used during intervention II was effective in promoting communication, reflection, analysis, and discussion of varied intercultural content in the English classroom. In contrast, the traditional English teaching model experienced by the control group appears not to offer enough opportunities for teaching intercultural content and related thinking skills.

**Table 54** *Q. 8 English Classes Discussion of Varied Intercultural Content: Intervention II/Semester II*

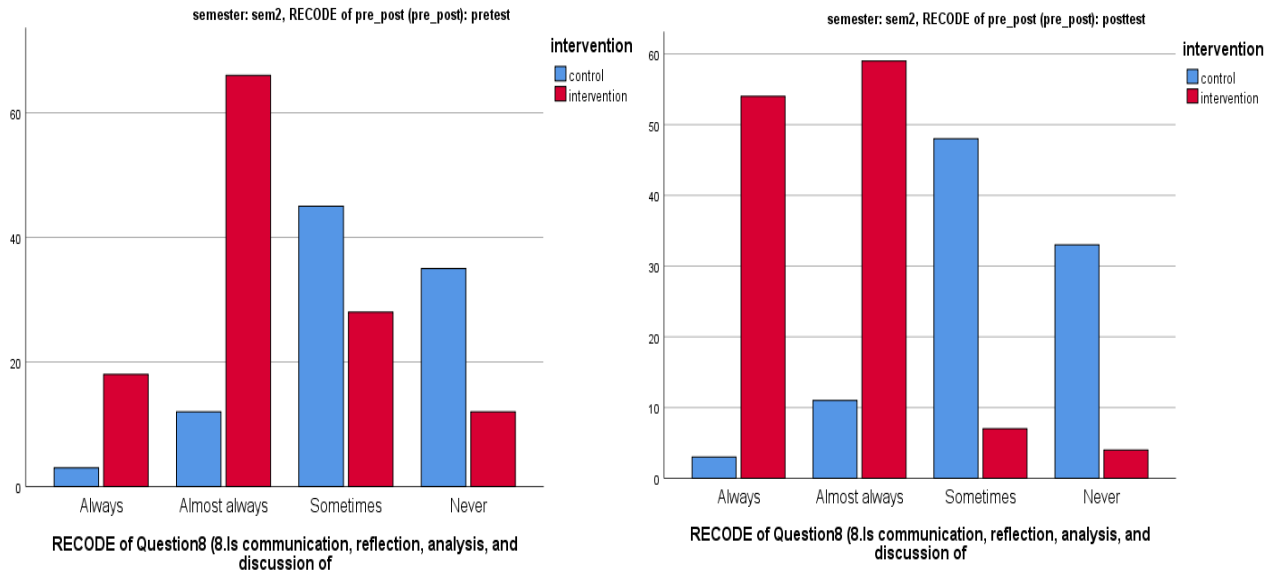
	<b>Control Group</b>		<b>Experimental Group</b>	
	Absolute Values/ Relative Values %		Absolute Values/ Relative Values %	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
Always	3(3.2%)	3(3.2%)	18(14.5%)	54(43.5%)
Almost always	12(12.6%)	11(11.6%)	66(53.2%)	59(47.6%)
Sometimes	45(47.4%)	48(50.5%)	28(22.6%)	7(5.7%)
Never	35(36.8%)	33(34.7%)	12(9.7%)	4(3.2%)
Total	95(100%)	95(100%)	124(100%)	124(100%)

*Note.* Q8. Are communication, reflection, analysis, and discussion of varied intercultural content encouraged in your English classes?

Figure 36 below shows that for intervention II, the experimental group’s percentages displayed an increase in the posttest values in their responses to the question [Are communication,

reflection, analysis, and discussion of varied intercultural content encouraged in your English classes?]) portraying a major emphasis in the ‘almost always’ and ‘almost’ categories.

**Figure 36 Q. 8 Comparison for pre and posttest\_intervention I**



**9.1.1.5 Q11. ICC Self-assessment\_Intervention I**

Table 55 and figure 37 show the results for Q11. How would you self-assess your intercultural communicative competence?. Responses to this question help comprehend how students self-assess their Intercultural Communicative competence(ICC). For intervention I, both control and experimental groups self-assessed their ICC competence as ‘deficient’ in the pretest, responding 71.6% and 70.9%, respectively. Participants in the control group responding ‘good’ experienced no increase between the pre- and posttest, coming in at 8.4% after both interventions. However, in the experimental group, participants responding ‘good’ increased from 6.5% in the pretest to 50% in the posttest. 61.1% of participants in the control group categorized themselves as ‘deficient’ in ICC even in the posttest. This compares to a notable decline in control group

participants rating themselves as ‘deficient,’ dropping from 70.9% in the pretest to 11.3% in the posttest. These data support that ICC may be developed by using an appropriate methodology (Lane, 2012;Kohler, 2020).

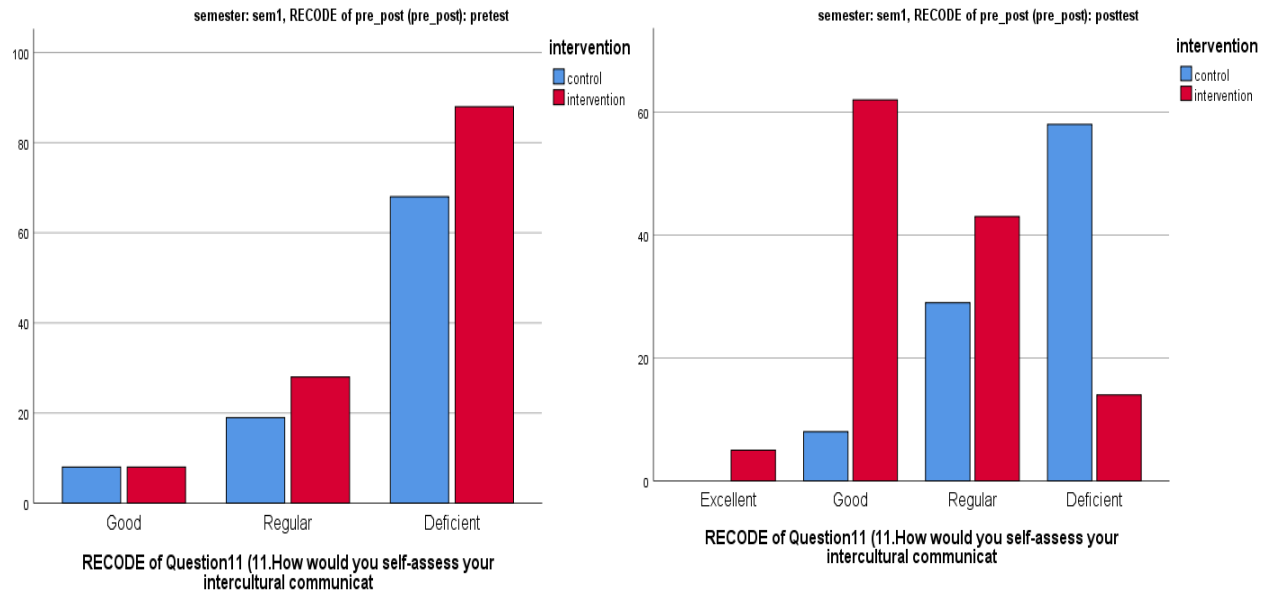
**Table 55** *Q. 11 Intercultural Communicative Competence Self-assessment: Intervention I/Semester I*

	<b>Control Group</b>		<b>Experimental Group</b>	
	Absolute Values/ Relative Values %		Absolute Values/ Relative Values %	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
Excellent	—	0(0%)	—	5(4%)
Good	8(8.4%)	8(8.4%)	8(6.5%)	62(50%)
Regular	19(20%)	29(30.5%)	28(22.6%)	43(34.7%)
Deficient	68(71.6%)	58(61.1%)	88(70.9%)	14(11.3%)
Total	95(100%)	95(100%)	124(100%)	124(100%)

*Note.* Q11. How would you self-assess your intercultural communicative competence?

Figure 37 below shows that for intervention I, both groups, experimental and control, self-assess their ICC as poorly since many answers falls in the ‘deficient’ category. The posttest results, though, show differences among the groups. The experimental group noted an increase in the ‘good’ ‘category’ and highest percentage in the control group remained in the ‘deficient’ category.

**Figure 37** *Q. 11 Intercultural Communicative Competence Self-assessment: Intervention I /Semester I*



**9.1.1.6 Q11. ICC Self-assessment Intervention II**

Table 56 and Figure 38 illustrate the percentages reported for the ICC self-assessment category for intervention II. Findings revealed similar results between the control and experimental groups as those found in intervention I. In the control group, the highest percentage of participants categorized themselves as ‘deficient’ in ICC, with levels remaining steady across the pre- and posttests, going from 63.2% to 65.3%. In the experimental group, the highest percentages of participants answered ‘good’ as in intervention I (but coming in slightly lower), going from 23.4% in the pretest to 44.4% in the posttest. Experimental group participants categorizing themselves as ‘excellent’ in ICC also increased from 6.5% in the pretest to 30.6% posttest, indicating a progression within this group in confidently self-assessing their ICC. The results show that the systematic exposure to and explicit training in intercultural language tasks and projects in the

English classroom develops students’ confidence in and preparation for engaging in multicultural contexts.

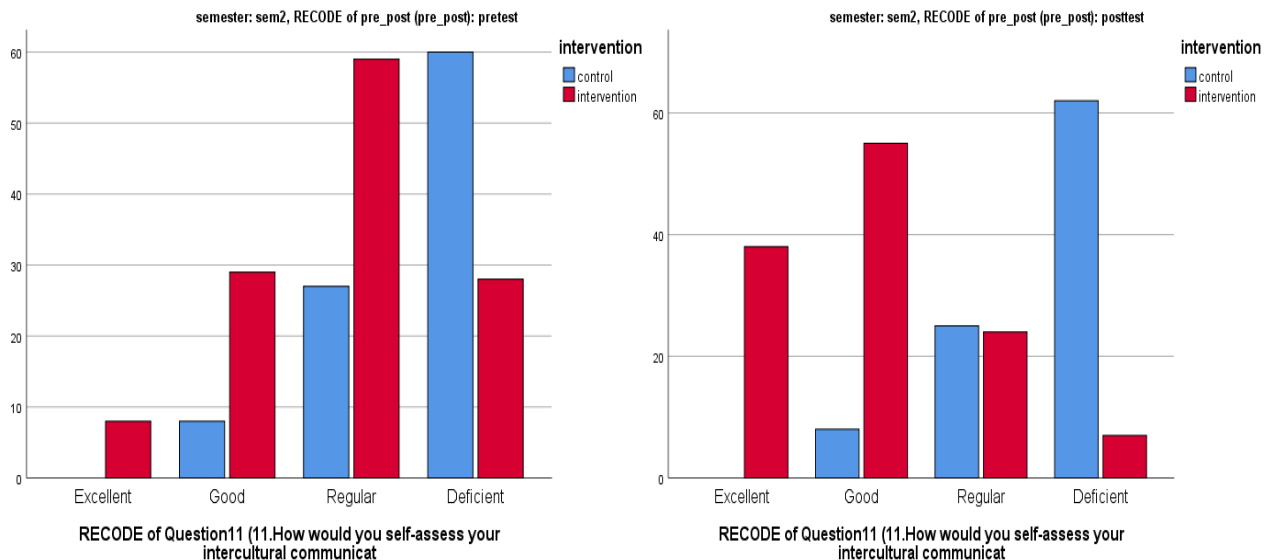
**Table 56** *Q. 11 Intercultural Communicative Competence Self-assessment: Intervention II/Semester II*

	<b>Control Group</b>		<b>Experimental Group</b>	
	Absolute Values/ Relative Values %		Absolute Values/ Relative Values %	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
Excellent	0(0%)	0(0%)	8(6.5%)	38(30.6%)
Good	8(8.4%)	8(8.4%)	29(23.4%)	55(44.4%)
Regular	27(28.4%)	25(26.3%)	59(47.6%)	24(19.4%)
Deficient	60(63.2%)	62(65.3%)	28(22.5%)	7(5.6%)
Total	95(100%)	95(100%)	124(100%)	124(100%)

*Note.* Q11. How would you self-assess your intercultural communicative competence?

Figure 38 below shows that for intervention II, the experimental group outworked the control group in the way they self-assess their ICC progression. The control group did not experience significant progression, while the experimental group kept and noted positive ICC self-perception as the results in the ‘good’ and ‘excellent’ categories indicate.

**Figure 38** *Q. 11 Intercultural Communicative Competence Self-assessment: Intervention II /Semester II*



### 9.1.1.7 Q. 12 Intercultural Content Learned in English Classes \_ Intervention I

As observed in table 57 and figure 39, inquiries about the intercultural content learned in English classes differ significantly between the control and experimental groups. In response to the question ‘Have you learned intercultural content from your own culture and that of other cultures in your English class?’, the percentage of control group participants responding ‘no’ went from 71.6% in the pretest to 69.5% in the posttest – a very modest change. In contrast, the experimental group experienced a significant increase in those answering ‘yes,’ moving from 19.4% in the pretest to 97.6% in the posttest. These results support the need to adopt a foreign language methodology that trains students to develop critical competences like ICC.

**Table 57** *Q. 12 Intercultural Content Learned in English Classes: Intervention I-Semester I*

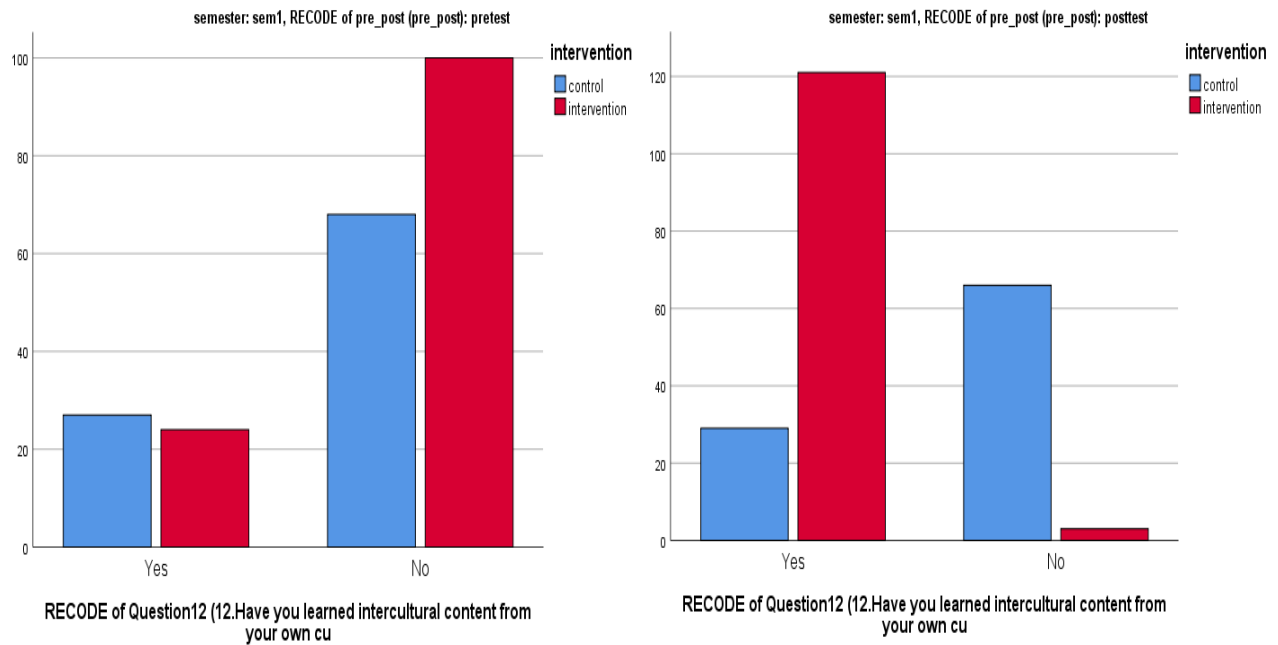
	<b>Control Group</b>		<b>Experimental Group</b>	
	Absolute Values/ Relative Values %		Absolute Values/ Relative Values %	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
Yes	27(28.4%)	29(30.5%)	24(19.4%)	121(97.6%)
No	68(71.6%)	66(69.5%)	100(80.6%)	3(2.4%)
Total	95(100%)	95(100%)	124(100%)	124(100%)

*Note.* Q12. Have you learned intercultural content from your own culture and that of other cultures in your English classes?

In intervention I, the responses about the intercultural content learned in the English class in the pretest indicate that both groups agree in similar tendencies in the ‘no’ category (Figure 39). As for the posttest, differences are noticed since there is a higher percentage ‘yes’ category in the experimental group, while the control did not account for significant changes in the categories.



**Figure 39** *Q. 12 Intercultural Content Learned in English Classes: Intervention I*



### 9.1.1.8 Q. 12 Intercultural Content Learned in English Classes \_ Intervention II

As for the second intervention, table 58 and figure 40 show notable differences across the two groups, although the change in participants' responses in the experimental group was not as dramatic as with intervention I. The vast majority of the experimental group acknowledged having received intercultural content, with 97.6% of participants answering 'yes' in the posttest. In contrast, 70.5% of participants in the control group answered 'no' in the pretest, and 72.6% answered 'no' in the posttest. Again, differences across the two groups are striking. However, unlike with intervention I, the change in the percentage of experimental group participants responding 'yes' from pre- to posttest was relatively modest, going from 88.7% to 97.6%. The process of systematically working and learning with ICC tasks and material in a previous semester allowed them to hold on to their positive perspectives on the content learned. These outcomes support what scholars and experts in the field have argued for years, insisting that ICC is a crucial

component of foreign language education. Introducing intercultural content is essential to learners’ skills and competence development since it does not automatically develop; instead, it requires constant exposure, conscious mediation, and access to intercultural matters.

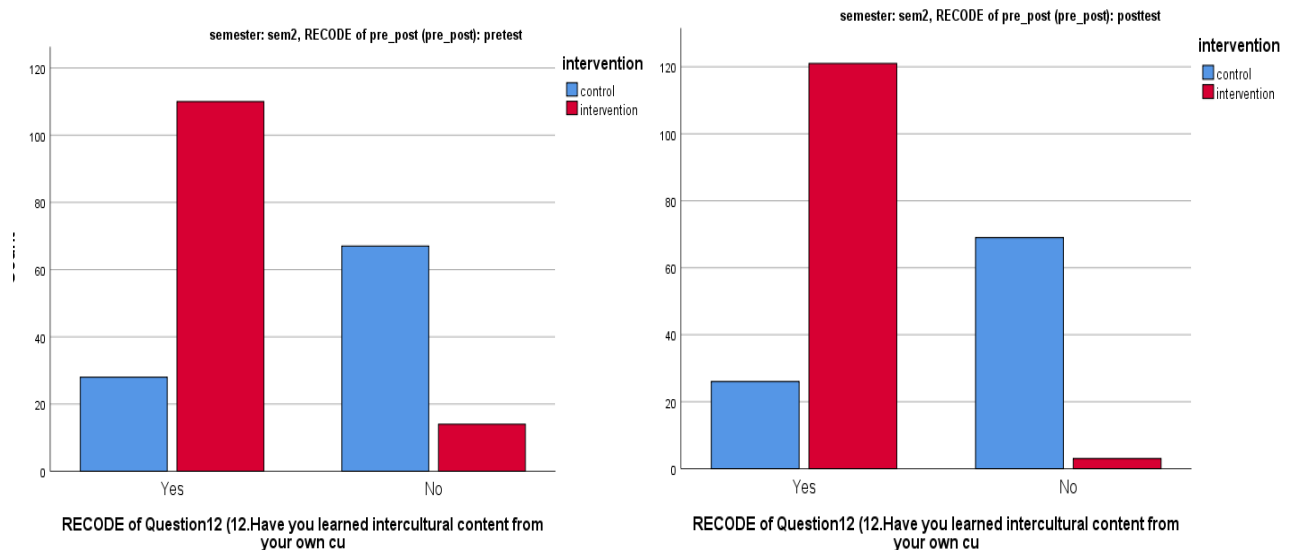
**Table 58** *Q. 12 Intercultural Content Learned in English Classes: Intervention II/Semester II*

	Control Group		Experimental Group	
	Absolute Values/ Relative Values %		Absolute Values/ Relative Values %	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
Yes	28(29.5%)	26(27.4%)	110(88.7%)	121(97.6%)
No	67(70.5%)	69(72.6%)	14(11.3%)	3(2.4%)
Total	95(100%)	95(100%)	124(100%)	124(100%)

*Note.* Q12. Have you learned intercultural content from your own culture and that of other cultures in your English classes?

Figure 40 shows that for intervention II, the question about intercultural content learned in the English class displays significant differences among both groups in the pre and posttests. The experimental group reported higher percentages of agreement in the ‘yes’ category than those found in the control group, which did not account for any significant changes in the ‘yes’ category.

**Figure 40** *Q. 12 Intercultural content learned in English classes: Intervention II/ Semester II*



### 9.1.1.9 Q. 13 Consulting references to learn about cultures \_ Intervention I

Table 59 and figure 41 show results regarding question [Q13. Do you consult references, digital resources, or watch videos, documentaries, and movies in English to learn about other cultures and your own?]

In the control and experimental groups. In the pretest, the percentage of participants in both groups responding ‘almost always’ was similar: 11.6% in the control group and 8.1% in the experimental group. However, control group participants experienced a modest decrease to 9.6% in the posttest, while experimental group participants experienced a marked increase to 54.8%. Regarding those responding ‘sometimes,’ the percentage of control group respondents went from 29.5% in the pretest to 50.5% in the posttest. In comparison, the percentage of respondents in the experimental group went from 37.9% to 21%. These differences in rates among the groups indicate that the experimental group experienced more chances and opportunities to engage and be interested in learning about other cultures.

**Table 59** *Q. 13 Consulting references to learn about cultures: Intervention I/Semester I*

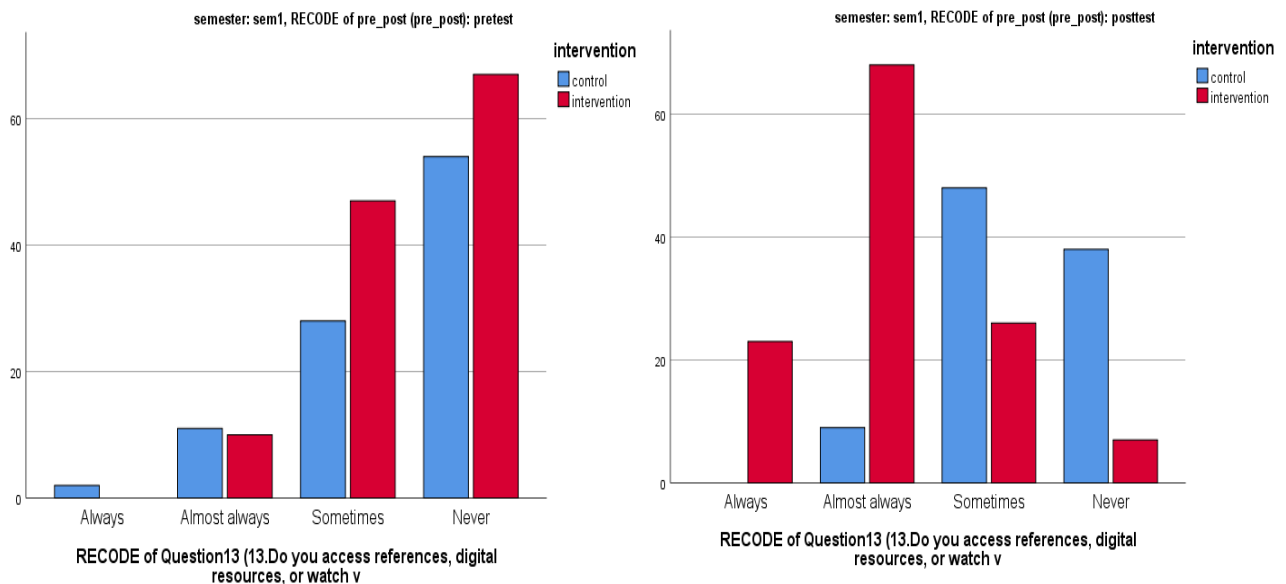
	<b>Control Group</b>		<b>Experimental Group</b>	
	Absolute Values / Relative Values %		Absolute Values/ Relative Values %	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
Always	2(2.1%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	23(18.5%)
Almost always	11(11.6%)	9(9.5%)	10(8.1%)	68(54.8%)
Sometimes	28(29.5%)	48(50.5%)	47(37.9%)	26(21%)
Never	54(56.8%)	38(40%)	67(54%)	7(5.7%)
Total	95(100%)	95(100%)	124(100%)	124(100%)

*Note.* Q13. Do you consult references, digital resources, or watch videos, documentaries, and movies in English to learn about other cultures and your own?

Figure 41 below shows that percentages in respect to the question on consulting references to learn about cultures are similar in both groups in the pretest in the ‘never’ category however,

posttest results show significant differences between both groups. Particularly, it can be observed that the experimental group scored higher in the ‘almost always’ category, while the control group did in the ‘sometimes’ category.

**Figure 41** Q13 Consulting references to learn about cultures: Intervention I/Semester I



**9.1.1.10 Q.13 Consulting references to learn about Cultures \_Intervention II**

Findings represented in Table 60 and figure 42 illustrate that for Intervention II, in response to question Q13. [Do you consult references, digital resources, or watch videos, documentaries, and movies in English to learn about other cultures and your own?] both groups reported an increase from pretest to posttest in the ‘always’ and ‘almost always’ categories. In the control group, the percentage of participants answering ‘sometimes’ and ‘never’ remained relatively steady across the pre- and posttests, going from 52.6% to 50.5% and 37.9% to 36.8%, respectively. In the experimental group, participants responding ‘never’ dropped notably between the pre- and

posttests, going from 19.4% to 4%. Participants responding ‘sometimes’ dropped from 45.9% to 21%. Participants responding ‘almost always’ went up from 25.8% to 36.3%. In addition, participants in the experimental group answered ‘always’ at higher rates than the control group in both the pre- and posttests but also at higher rates than in the first intervention. These differences can be attributed to the resources, content, and activities promoted during the pedagogical interventions. Using authentic intercultural resources and presenting intercultural material through contextualized English lessons can potentially trigger students’ interest in accessing and treating ICC content fostering ICC development.

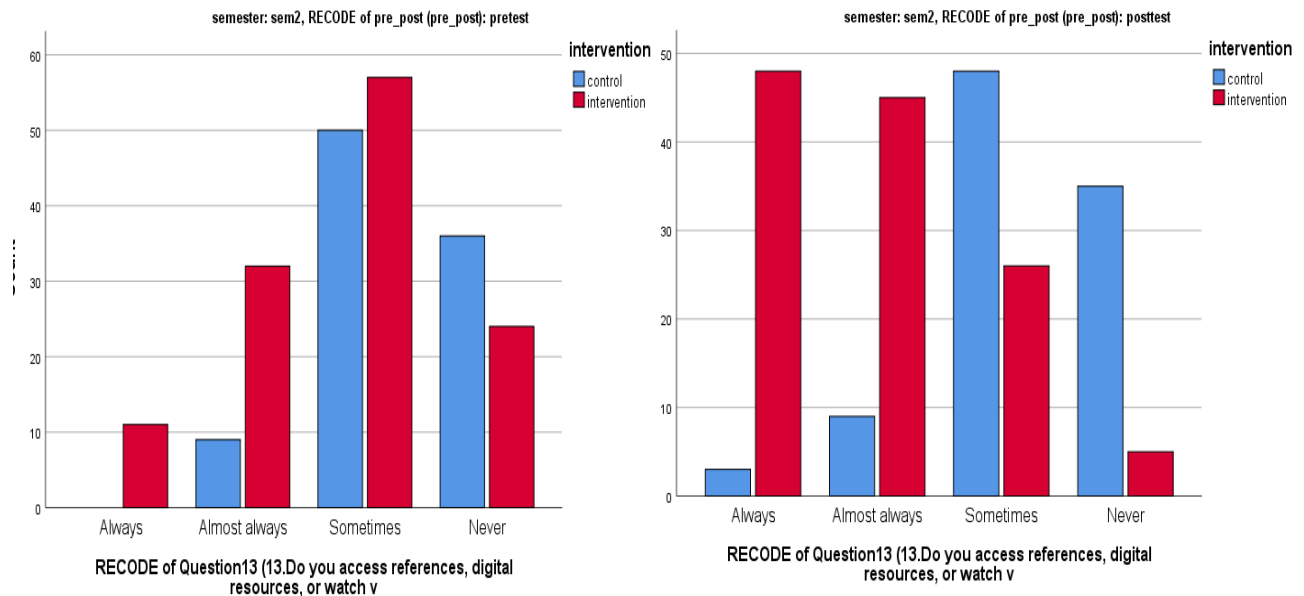
**Table 60** *Q13 Consulting references to learn about Cultures: Intervention II/Semester II*

	<b>Control Group</b>		<b>Experimental Group</b>	
	Absolute Values/ Relative Values %		Absolute Values/ Relative Values %	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
Always	0(0%)	3(3.2%)	11(8.9%)	48(38.7%)
Almost always	9(9.5%)	9(9.5%)	32(25.8%)	45(36.3%)
Sometimes	50(52.6%)	48(50.5%)	57(45.9%)	26(21%)
Never	36(37.9%)	35(36.8%)	24(19.4%)	5(4%)
Total	95(100%)	95(100%)	124(100%)	124(100%)

*Note.* Q13. Do you consult references, digital resources, or watch videos, documentaries, and movies in English to learn about other cultures and your own?

As for intervention II regarding consulting references to learn about cultures, Figure 42 shows significant differences among both groups. The experimental group percentages in the posttest were significantly different in the ‘almost always’ and in the ‘always’ category, while the control group did not experience any significant percentages and remained in the ‘sometimes’ category.

**Figure 42** Q13 Consulting references to Learn about Cultures: Intervention II/Semester II



**9.1.1.11 Q17 Interest in learning about Foreign and the Costa Rican Culture  
\_Intervention I**

Responses to question Q17. [Are you interested in learning about foreign cultures and Costa Rican (or native) culture while learning English?] reveal interesting information about the significance given to learning about native and foreign cultures in English class by both groups. This is reflected in the pretest and posttest results. Table 61 and figure 43 demonstrate that in intervention I, both groups claimed to be interested in learning about foreign cultures. Still, changes between the pre- and posttests were highly marked in the experimental group. The percentage of respondents answering ‘yes’ went from 62.1% in the pretest to 94.4% in the posttest. In comparison, the percentage of respondents answering ‘yes’ in the control group went only from 60% in the pretest to 65.3% in the posttest. It can be deduced that an appropriate, contextualized, active, and appealing use of intercultural material from the native/home culture can increase

students’ interest in learning more about their home cultures, specialty about historical memory, values, and other issues.

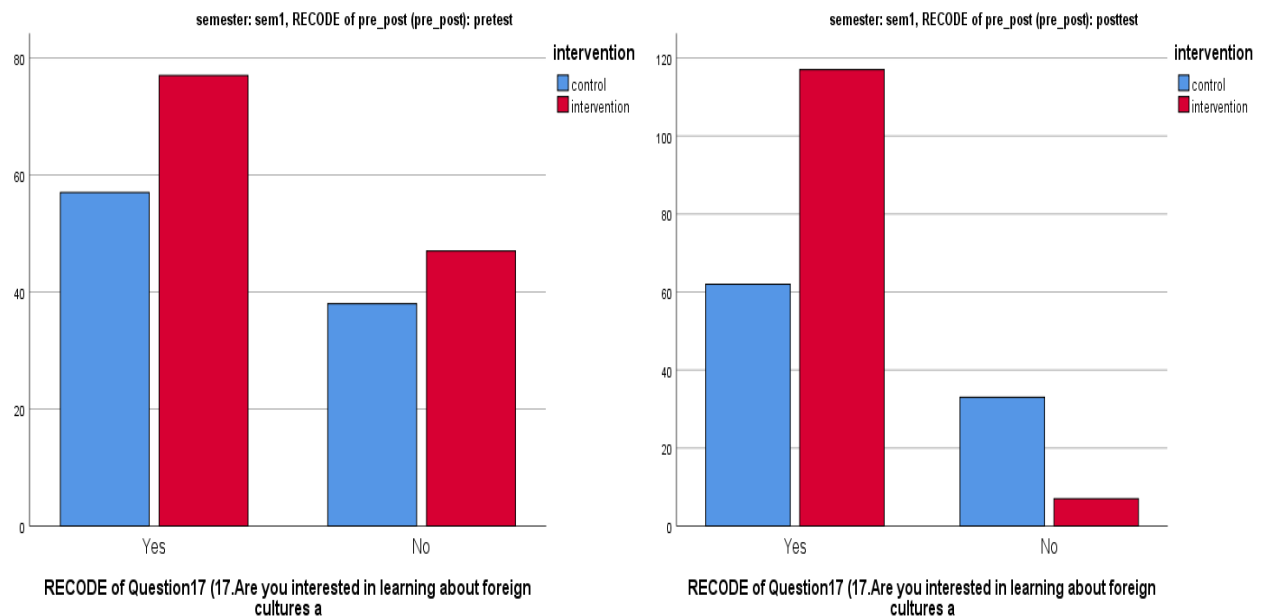
**Table 61** *Q17 Interested in learning about Foreign and the Costa Rican Culture: Intervention I*

	<b>Control Group</b>		<b>Experimental Group</b>	
	Absolute Values /		Absolute Values/	
	Relative Values %		Relative Values %	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
Yes	57(60%)	62(65.3%)	77(62.1%)	117(94.4%)
No	38(40%)	33(34.7%)	47(37.9%)	7(5.6%)
Total	95(100%)	95(100%)	124(100%)	124(100%)

*Note.* Q17. Are you interested in learning about foreign cultures and Costa Rican (or native) culture while learning English?

Figure 43 below focusing on the question about [interest in Learning about Foreign and the Costa Rican Culture] in intervention I displays similarities in the pretest and the posttest in the ‘yes’ category; however, the experimental group accounted for much higher degrees.

**Figure 43** *Q17 Interest in Learning about Foreign and the Costa Rican Culture: Intervention I*



### 9.1.1.12 Q17 Interest in learning about Foreign and the Costa Rican Culture

#### Intervention II

Results in intervention II were similar to those of intervention I in terms of student interest in learning about foreign and home Costa Rican cultures while learning English (Table 62). In the control group, similar percentages of those answering ‘yes’ were maintained across the pretest (66.3%) and posttest (64.2%) results. Participants answering ‘yes’ in the experimental group showed a much more significant increase in the posttest, going from 89.5% in the pretest to 96% in the posttest. The experimental group slightly increased the posttest percentage of those answering ‘yes’ compared to intervention I. These results further support the need to integrate intercultural content and tasks in the foreign language class under a framework that can sufficiently meet learners’ needs and learning styles and develop crucial competences such as ICC development, thinking skills, autonomy, and collaborative skills.

**Table 62** *Q17 Interested in Learning about Foreign Cultures and the Costa Rican Culture: Intervention II*

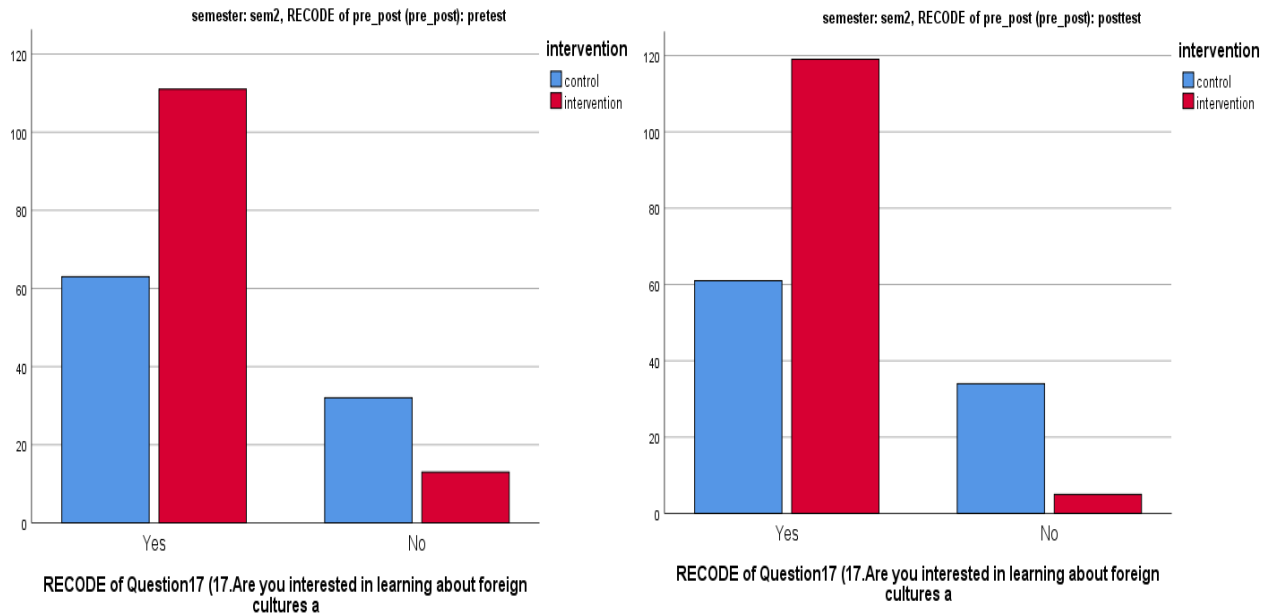
	<b>Control Group</b>		<b>Experimental Group</b>	
	Absolute Values/ Relative Values %		Absolute Values/ Relative Values %	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
Yes	63(66.3%)	61(64.2%)	111(89.5%)	119(96%)
No	32(33.7%)	34(35.8%)	13(10.5%)	5(4%)
Total	95(100%)	95(100%)	124(100%)	124(100%)

*Note.* Q17. Are you interested in learning about foreign cultures and Costa Rican (or native) culture while learning English?

Figure 44 reveals that for the question [interest in Learning about Foreign and the Costa Rican Culture] the results obtained in the intervention II are similar to those found in intervention I in the ‘yes’ category in both groups. However, the posttest ‘yes’ category noted higher percentages in the experimental group than the control group.



**Figure 44** *Q17 Interest in Learning about Foreign Cultures and the Costa Rican Culture: Intervention II*



**9.1.1.13 Q18 English Teaching Method Effectiveness in Developing ICC \_Intervention I)**

Similarly, findings regarding the question [Do you believe that the English teaching methods have been effective in developing intercultural communicative competence?] reveal differences between the control and experimental groups, specifically in the changes in pre- and posttest results (Table 63). The high percentages of participants responding ‘no’ in the pretest in both groups (78.9% and 86.3% for the control and experimental groups, respectively), indicate that teaching methods until now have not been effective in ICC development, according to the participants. The percentage of respondents in the experimental group answering ‘yes’ went from 13.7% to 89.5% in the pre- and posttests. The proportion of those answering ‘yes’ in the control group effectively remained the same in the pre- and posttests (going from 21.1% to 23.2%). This positive change in perspective in the experimental group can be attributed to their intercultural

language experience implemented through the English lessons, which combined teaching-learning principles from CLIL and PBL approaches.

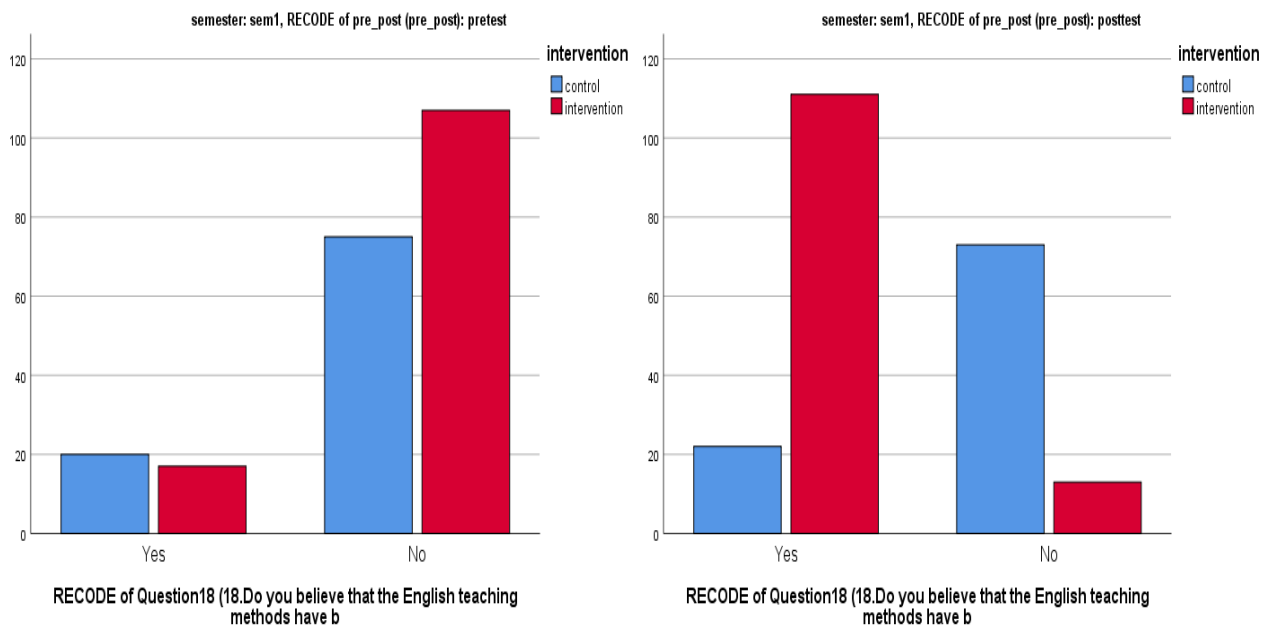
**Table 63** *Q18 English Teaching Method Effectiveness in Developing ICC: Intervention I/Semester I*

	Control Group		Experimental Group	
	Absolute Values/ Relative Values %		Absolute Values/ Relative Values %	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
Yes	20(21.1%)	22(23.2%)	17(13.7%)	111(89.5%)
No	75(78.9%)	73(76.8%)	107(86.3%)	13(10.5%)
Total	95(100%)	95(100%)	124(100%)	124(100%)

*Note.* Q18. Do you believe that the English teaching methods have been effective in developing intercultural communicative competence?

Figure 45 shows that for the question [English Teaching Method Effectiveness in Developing ICC] in the intervention I similarities are found in both groups in the ‘no’ category. It is noticed, though, that in the posttest there is a shift in the experimental group towards the ‘yes’ category.

**Figure 45** *Q18 English Teaching Method Effectiveness in Developing ICC: Intervention I Semester I*



### 9.1.1.14 Q18 English Teaching Method Effectiveness in Developing ICC\_Intervention II

Table 64 shows results from intervention II. The percentage of experimental group respondents answering ‘yes’ to the question [Do you believe that the English teaching methods have been effective in developing intercultural communicative competence?] went from 86.3% in the pretest to 95.2% in the posttest. In contrast, the percentage of respondents in the control group answering ‘no’ did not significantly change from the pre- to posttest, going from 82.1% to 85.3%. These findings further support that a theoretical foundation for English teaching praxis is fundamentally important to achieving intercultural language goals and ICC advance in all its dimensions.

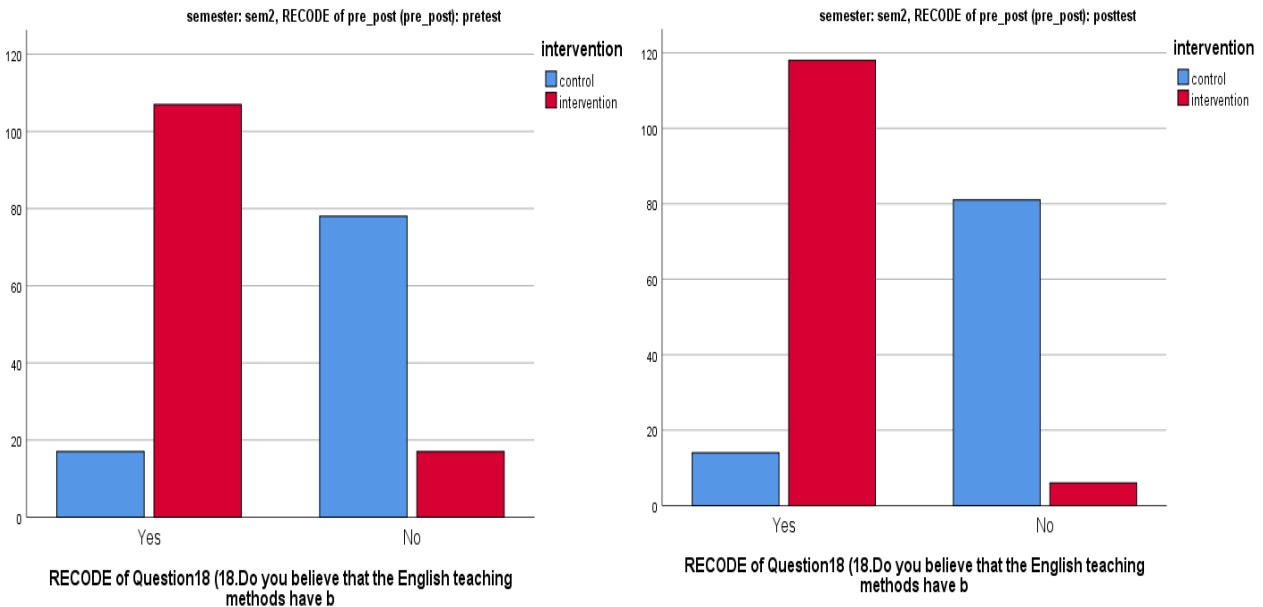
**Table 64** *Q18 English Teaching Method Effectiveness in Developing ICC: Intervention II /Semester II*

	<b>Control Group</b>		<b>Experimental Group</b>	
	Absolute Values/ Relative Values %		Absolute Values/ Relative Values %	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
Yes	17(17.9%)	14(14.7%)	107(86.3%)	118(95.2%)
No	78(82.1%)	81(85.3%)	17(13.7%)	6(4.8%)
Total	95(100%)	95(100%)	124(100%)	124(100%)

*Note.* Q18. Do you believe that the English teaching methods have been effective in developing intercultural communicative competence?

Figure 46 reveals that for the question [English Teaching Method Effectiveness in Developing ICC] in intervention II, differences are found between both groups. It is noticed that the experimental group experienced a modest increase in the ‘yes’ category in the posttest. Higher percentages are found in the ‘no’ category in the control group.

**Figure 46** *Q18 English Teaching Method Effectiveness in Developing ICC: Intervention II /Semester II*



**9.1.1.15 Q19 Promotion of Intercultural Communicative Competence \_Intervention I**

Table 65 shows responses to the question Q19. [Do you consider that intercultural communicative competence is promoted by the content activities, projects, and homework assigned in your English classes?]. In the pretest, similar percentages in both groups responded ‘never’ and ‘sometimes’: 47.7% and 38.9% respectively in the control group and 41.9% and 47.6% in the experimental group. However, experimental group results showed significant changes across the pre- and posttests in all four categories of responses. For example, in the pretest, no respondents answered, ‘always’ while in the posttest, nearly 30% answered ‘always.’ In the pretest, 41.19% answered ‘never’ while in the posttest, only 6.5% answered ‘never’. This is in stark contrast to control group results, where the levels of those answering ‘always’, ‘almost always’, ‘sometimes’, and ‘never’ all stayed relatively steady (the largest change across the pre- and posttest results was in the ‘never’ category, going from 47.4% to 40%). Again, differences between the control and

experimental groups regarding the use of activities, projects, homework to promote ICC growth and development are linked to the decisive teaching narrative focused on a learner-centeredness approach and a direct innovative language teaching philosophy from combined learning principles from CLIL and PBL.

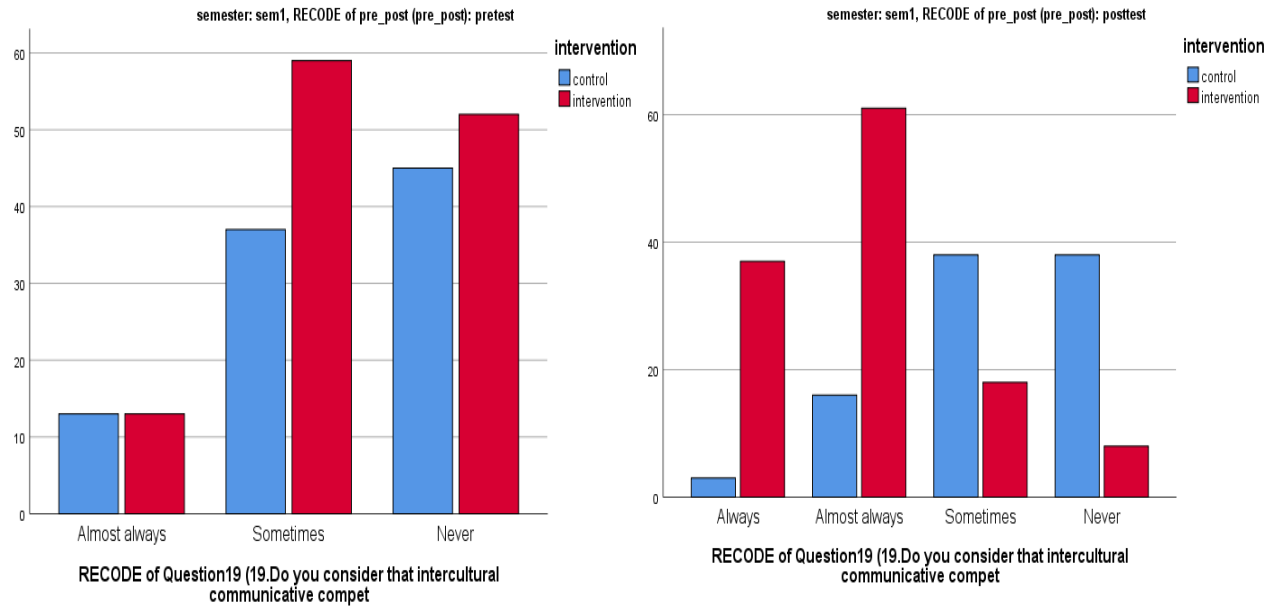
**Table 65** *Q19 Promotion of Intercultural Communicative Competence: Intervention I/Semester I*

	<b>Control Group</b>		<b>Experimental Group</b>	
	Absolute Values / Relative Values %		Absolute Values/ Relative Values %	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
Always	—	3(3.2%)	—	37(29.8%)
Almost always	13(13.7%)	16(16.8%)	13(10.5%)	61(49.2%)
Sometimes	37(38.9%)	38(40%)	59(47.6%)	18(14.5%)
Never	45(47.4%)	38(40%)	52(41.9%)	8(6.5%)
Total	95(100%)	95(100%)	124(100%)	124(100%)

*Note.* Q19. Do you consider that intercultural communicative competence is promoted by the content activities, projects, and homework assigned in your English classes?

Figure 47 reports on the results obtained for the question regarding the promotion of intercultural communicative competence through activities and language. The graphs present similarities between the experimental and control groups in the ‘sometimes’ category in the pretest. Findings reveal an increase in the percentages in the ‘almost always’ and ‘always’ categories in the posttest. On the contrary, the control group reported no change.

**Figure 47** Q1 19 Promotion of Intercultural Communicative Competence: Intervention I/ Semester I



**9.1.1.16 Q19 Promotion of Intercultural Communicative Competence \_Intervention II**

Table 66 shows the results in intervention II regarding the promotion of intercultural communicative competence through activities, projects, and homework. The percentage of control group respondents answering ‘sometimes’ stayed relatively steady, coming in at 42.1% in the pretest and 43.2% in the posttest. On the other hand, even in the pretest the participants from the experimental group answered ‘always’ at a higher rate than control group participants (12.1%) and experienced a marked increase (to 51.6%) in the posttest. The change of percentages from the pretest to the posttest among the participants of the experimental group was the largest in the ‘always’ category (going from 12.1% to 51.6%). The experimental group participants also had higher pretest (50%) and posttest (32.3%) ‘almost always’ responses compared to the control group. These data support the idea that ICC can effectively and positively be promoted through varied teaching strategies and careful content selection and lesson design.

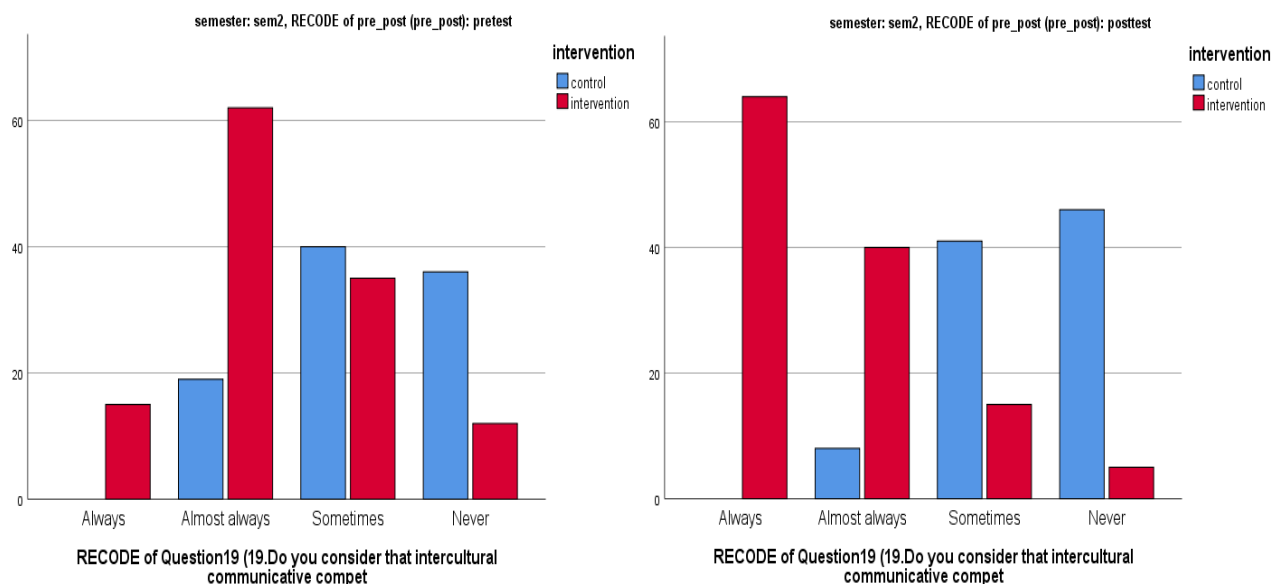
**Table 66** *Q19 Promotion of Intercultural Communicative Competence: Intervention II/ Semester II*

	<b>Control Group</b>		<b>Experimental Group</b>	
	Absolute Values/ Relative Values %		Absolute Values/ Relative Values %	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
Always	0(0%)	0(0%)	15(12.1%)	64(51.6%)
Almost always	19(20%)	8(8.4%)	62(50%)	40(32.3%)
Sometimes	40(42.1%)	41(43.2%)	35(28.2%)	15(12.1%)
Never	36(37.9%)	46(48.4%)	12(9.7%)	5(4%)
Total	95(100%)	95(100%)	124(100%)	124(100%)

*Note.* Q19. Do you consider that intercultural communicative competence is promoted by the content activities, projects, and homework assigned in your English classes?

Figure 48 shows the results obtained for the question regarding the promotion of intercultural communicative competence through activities and projects. The graphs present significant differences between both the experimental and control group. Findings in the experimental group showed a considerable increase in the posttest in the ‘always’ category. On the contrary, the control group rates remained in the ‘sometimes’ category.

**Figure 48** *Q19 Promotion of Intercultural Communicative Competence: Intervention II Semester II*



### 9.1.1.17 Q20 Benefits of Authentic, Digital (Audiovisual) Resources Intervention I

Table 67 and figure 49 show results for responses to question Q20. [How beneficial have the authentic, digital (audiovisual) resources used in the English class in your English performance and development of intercultural communicative competence?] after the first intervention. The two groups obtained similar, relatively high percentages in the ‘not at all beneficial’ category (42.1% for the control group; 33.9% for the experimental group). However, the experimental group experienced visible changes between pre- and posttest results, with the percentage of those responding ‘beneficial’ going from 11.3% to 48.4% and the percentage of those responding ‘very beneficial’ going from 0% to 31.5%. Only 5.6% of participants in the experimental group answered ‘not at all beneficial’ in the posttest.

In contrast, the control group’s percentages responding ‘not at all beneficial’ remained effectively unchanged, going from 42.1% in the pretest to 47.4% in the posttest. The differences between the two groups support the belief that ICC development and advancement, especially in new scenarios like remote learning (online classes), enforced abruptly by the COVID-19 pandemic, required a sympathetic language educator capable of seeking, providing, adapting, and design authentic material to achieve the intercultural language objectives without losing sight of students’ needs, language level, and demands. In order to achieve intended goals through the use of authentic intercultural and language material, educators must ensure their comprehensibility, context connections, visual attractiveness, practicality, and communicative potential.



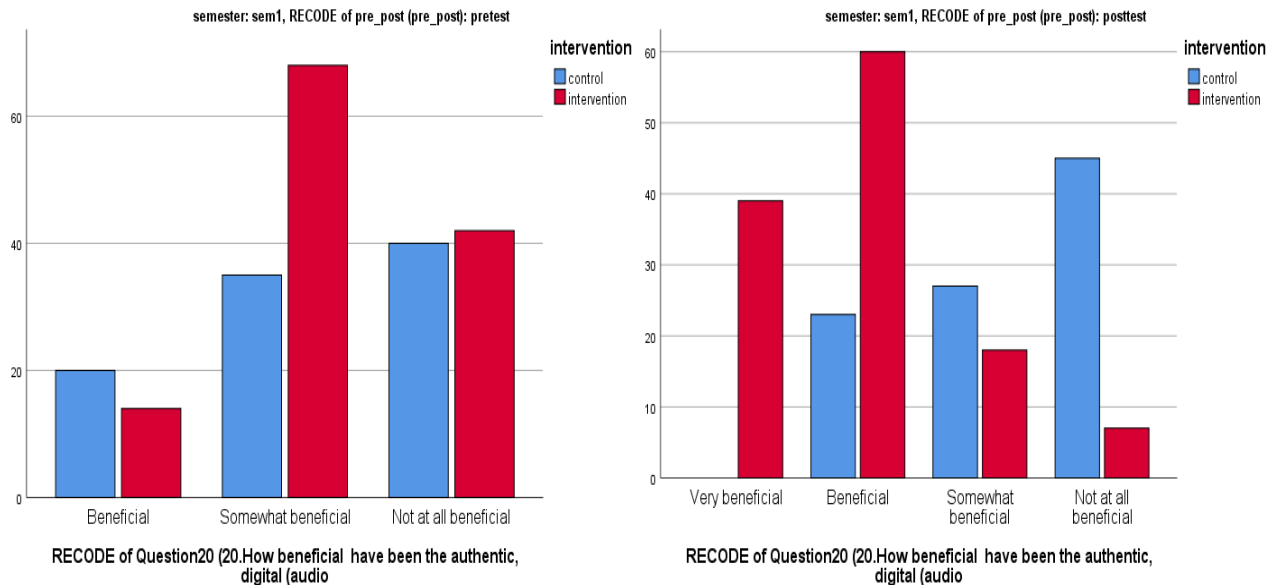
**Table 67** Q20 Benefits of Authentic, Digital (Audiovisual) Resources: Intervention I/Semester I

	<b>Control Group</b>		<b>Experimental Group</b>	
	Absolute Values/ Relative Values %		Absolute Values/ Relative Values %	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
Very beneficial	—	0(0%)	—	39(31.5%)
Beneficial	20(21.1%)	23(24.2%)	14(11.3%)	60(48.4%)
Somewhat beneficial	35(36.8%)	27(28.4%)	68(54.8%)	18(14.5%)
Not at all beneficial	40(42.1%)	45(47.4%)	42(33.9%)	7(5.6%)
Total	95(100%)	95(100%)	124(100%)	124(100%)

Note. Q20. How beneficial have been the authentic, digital (audiovisual) resources used in the English class in your English performance and development of intercultural communicative competence?

Figure 49 shows the results obtained in question 20 [benefits on authentic, digital (audiovisual) resources used in the English class to English performance and ICC development], which indicate significant differences between both experimental and control groups in the posttest in the ‘beneficial’ and ‘very beneficial’ categories; however, the control group percentages from pre to posttest did not change significantly.

**Figure 49** Q.20 Benefits of Authentic, Digital (Audiovisual) Resources: Intervention I /Semester I



### 9.1.1.18 Q20 Benefits of Authentic, Digital (Audiovisual) Resources \_ Intervention II

Table 68 and Figure 50 show that the trends in responses in the control and experimental groups in intervention II were similar to those obtained in intervention I. In both groups, no participants responded ‘beneficial’ in the pretest, while 30.5% and 28.2% responded ‘somewhat beneficial’ in the control and experimental groups, respectively. Differences between the two groups were clear in the posttest results. There, the highest proportion of control group participants responded, ‘not at all beneficial’ (47.4%) and ‘somewhat beneficial’ (30.5%), while in the experimental group posttest results, the highest proportions responded ‘beneficial’ (38%) and ‘very beneficial’ (55.6%). Conclusions support the effectiveness of using authentic and audiovisual resources to mediate ICC and target language advancement. The benefits of using these resources presuppose a contextualized background for students to capitalize on pre-knowledge activation, thinking skills, engagement, and purposeful communication while helping foster ICC dimensions. These resources offer natural and real-world opportunities to use reinforcements to target language while learning intercultural content.

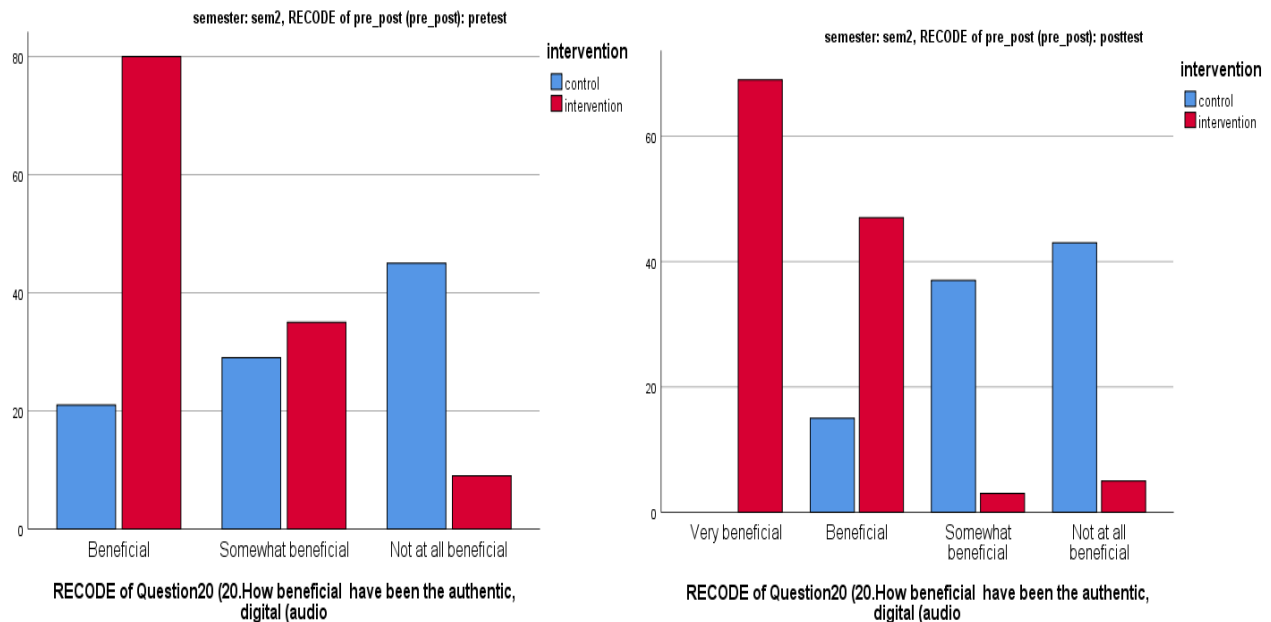
**Table 68** *Q20 Benefits of Authentic, Digital (Audiovisual) Resources: Intervention II/Semester II*

	<b>Control Group</b>		<b>Experimental Group</b>	
	Absolute Values/ Relative Values %		Absolute Values/ Relative Values %	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
Very beneficial	—	0(0%)	—	69(55.6%)
Beneficial	21(22.1%)	15(15.8%)	80(64.5%)	47(38%)
Somewhat beneficial	29(30.5%)	37(38.9%)	35(28.2%)	3(2.4%)
Not at all beneficial	45(47.4%)	43(45.3%)	9(7.3%)	5(4%)
Total	95(100%)	95(100%)	124(100%)	124(100%)

*Note.* Q20. How beneficial have been the authentic, digital (audiovisual) resources used in the English class in your English performance and development of intercultural communicative competence?

As for intervention II, figure 50 shows the results obtained from question 20 [benefits on authentic, digital (audiovisual) resources used in the English class to English performance and ICC development]. Results denote significant differences among both experimental and control groups in which the experimental group noted an increase in the posttest percentages in the ‘beneficial’ and ‘very beneficial’ categories while the control group percentages noted value tendencies in the posttest in the ‘not at all beneficial’ and ‘somewhat beneficial’ in the categories.

**Figure 50** *Q20 Benefits of Authentic, Digital (audiovisual) Resources: Intervention II /Semester II*



### 9.1.1.19 Q. 26 English Language Learning Through a Combined Approach CLIL/PBL \_Intervention I

Concerning question Q26. [Is English language learning through a combined approach (CLIL/PBL methods) effective and meaningful to develop intercultural communicative competence?] for intervention I, participants in both groups considered that English learning through a combined approach effectively contributes to achieving ICC objectives. However,

differences between the two groups support the conclusion that the pedagogical intervention influenced the experimental group. Table 69 and figure 51 show the responses to this question in both groups. In the control group, the percentage of those responding ‘yes’ went from 47.4% in the pretest to 53.7% in the posttest. In the experimental group, the proportion of those responding ‘yes’ went from 45.2% in the pretest to 91% in the posttest – a much larger increase. These results clearly show that the experimental group favored the combined approach due to their participation in the intercultural learning experience through CLIL and PBL lesson principles.

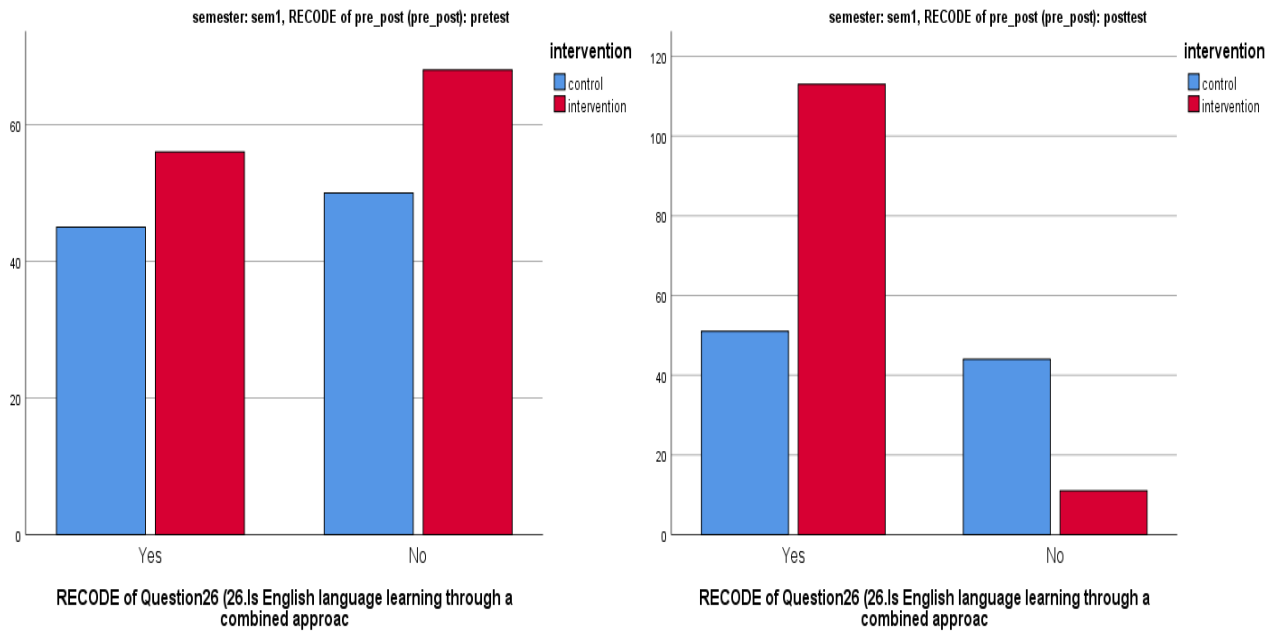
**Table 69** *Q. 26 English Language Learning Through a Combined Approach (CLIL/PBL): Intervention I*

	<b>Control Group</b>		<b>Experimental Group</b>	
	Absolute Values/ Relative Values %		Absolute Values/ Relative Values %	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
Yes	45(47.4%)	51(53.7%)	56(45.2%)	113(91%)
No	50(52.6%)	44(46.3%)	68(54.8%)	11(9%)
Total	95(100%)	95(100%)	124(100%)	124(100%)

*Note.* Q26. Is English language learning through a combined approach (CLIL/PBL methods) effective and meaningful to develop intercultural communicative competence?

The figure 51 shows the distribution of students considering English learning through a combined approach to develop ICC during intervention I. Results are similar for the two groups in the pretests, but significantly different in the posttest. The experimental group noted a much higher percentage of agreement in the posttest in the ‘yes’ category than the control group.

**Figure 51** *Q. 26 English Language Learning Through a Combined Approach (CLIL/PBL): Intervention I*



**9.1.1.20 Q. 26 English Language Learning Through a Combined Approach CLIL/PBL  
\_Intervention II**

Table 70 and Figure 52 reveal that during Intervention II the control group experienced a notable increase in the percentage of those responding ‘yes’, going from 52.6% in the pretest to 80% in the posttest. This increase was much more modest in the experimental group, going from 80% in the pretest to 96% in the posttest. This increase was much more modest in the experimental group, going from 82.3% in the pretest to 96% in the posttest. In addition, the percentage of those answering ‘yes’ in the experimental group increased moderately from intervention I to II (going from 91% to 96%). Again, it is clear that the pedagogical intervention positively impacted those students participating in the learning intervention under a hybrid framework methodology of teaching principles. However, it should be noted that intervention II did not seem to have the same effect among study participants as intervention I, where the increase in the percentage of experimental group participants responding ‘yes’ was much more significant. This can be explained by the fact that

participants in the experimental group had already been familiar with the hybrid methodology during intervention I. In general, The hybrid approach obtained favorable perspectives and reactions among participants since the various learning tasks promoted intercultural appealing content and chances for students to engage in communicative real-life conversation, analysis, and reflection. Training and developing essential skills for employability and integral citizenship emergent attitude.

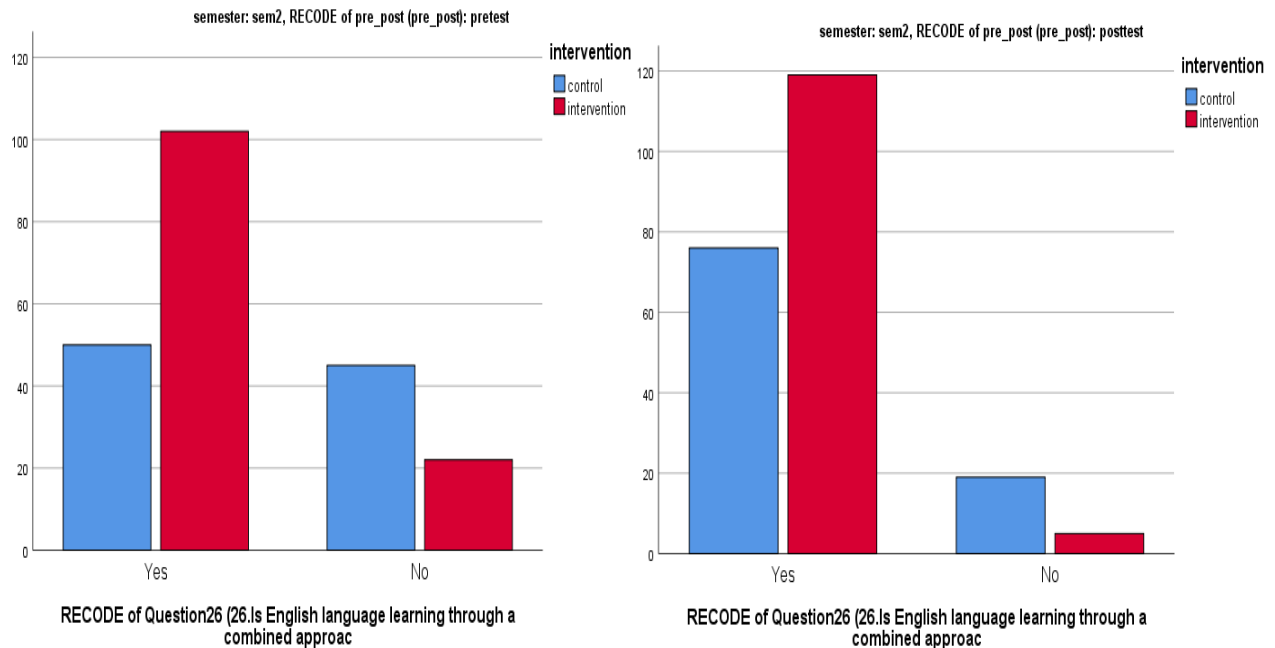
**Table 70** *Q. 26 English Language Learning Through a Combined Approach (CLIL/PBL): Intervention II*

	<b>Control Group</b>		<b>Experimental Group</b>	
	Absolute Values/ Relative Values %		Absolute Values/ Relative Values %	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
Yes	50(52.6%)	76(80%)	102(82.3%)	119(96%)
No	45(47.4%)	19(20%)	22(17.7%)	5(4%)
Total	95(100%)	95(100%)	124(100%)	124(100%)

*Note.* Q26. Is English language learning through a combined approach (CLIL/PBL methods) effective and meaningful to develop intercultural communicative competence?

The figure 52 shows the distribution of students' opinions on English learning through a combined approach to develop ICC during intervention II. Percentage results among control and experimental groups are different. The experimental group displayed higher percentages of agreement in the posttest in the 'yes' category than the control group.

**Figure 52** *Q. 26 English Language Learning Through a Combined Approach (CLIL/PBL): Intervention II*



**9.1.1.21 Q. 29 Combined Method to Improve Linguistic Ability and ICC Intervention I**

Regarding question Q29. [Do you agree that English language teaching can be more beneficial when two teaching methods are combined to improve linguistic ability and intercultural communicative competence?], Table 71 and Figure 53 show that, for intervention I, both groups seem to agree that a combined methodology is effective for achieving linguistic and ICC advancement. However, as earlier responses have shown, the experimental group showed higher percentages of agreement, particularly in posttest responses, providing evidence of the benefits perceived from the hybrid method of learning principles in the language classroom. The control group reported a slight increase in those answering ‘yes’, going from 51.6% in the pretest to 55.8% in the posttest. Those answering ‘yes’ experienced a much higher increase in the experimental group, going from 52.4% in the pretest to 89.5% in the posttest.

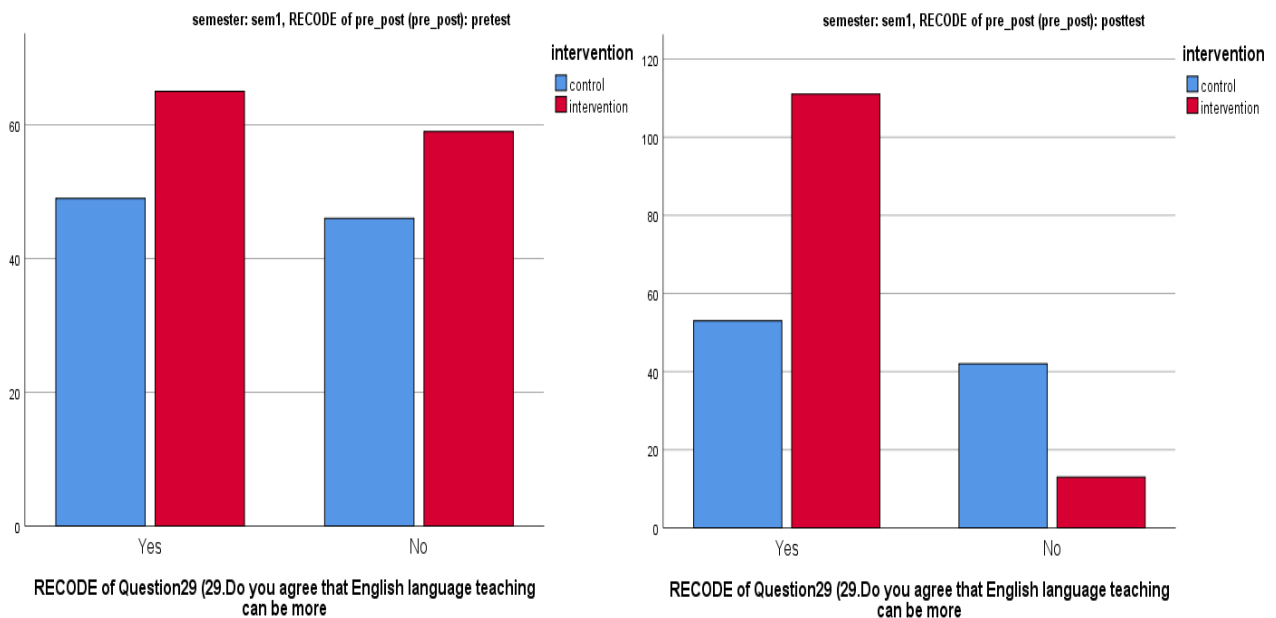
**Table 71** *Q. 29 Combined Method to Improve Linguistic Ability and ICC: Intervention I/Semester I*

	<b>Control Group</b>		<b>Experimental Group</b>	
	Absolute Values/ Relative Values %		Absolute Values/ Relative Values %	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
Yes	49(51.6%)	53(55.8%)	65(52.4%)	111(89.5%)
No	46(48.4%)	42(44.2%)	59(47.6%)	13(10.5%)
Total	95(100%)	95(100%)	124(100%)	124(100%)

*Note.* Q29. Do you agree that English language teaching can be more beneficial when two teaching methods are combined to improve linguistic ability and intercultural communicative competence?

Figure 53 displays rates regarding students’ opinions on question 29 asking whether English language teaching can be more beneficial when two teaching methods are combined to improve linguistic ability and intercultural communicative competence and yields a statistically significant difference. The experimental group showed a higher percentage of agreement in the ‘yes’ category than the control group in the intervention I.

**Figure 53** *Q. 29 Combined Method to Improve Linguistic Ability and ICC: Intervention I /Semester I*





### 9.1.1.22 Q. 29 Combined Method to Improve Linguistic Ability and ICC\_Intervention II

Table 72 and figure 54 show that in intervention II both groups seem to agree on the assertion that a combined methodology helps improve language and ICC competence. The control group percentages responding ‘yes’ are lower (going from 58% in the pretest to 62% in the posttest) than those noted in the experimental group (going from 79% in the pretest to 96% in the posttest). These results additionally underscore the benefits of using and creating language tasks facilitated with intercultural content in collaborative and autonomous ways.

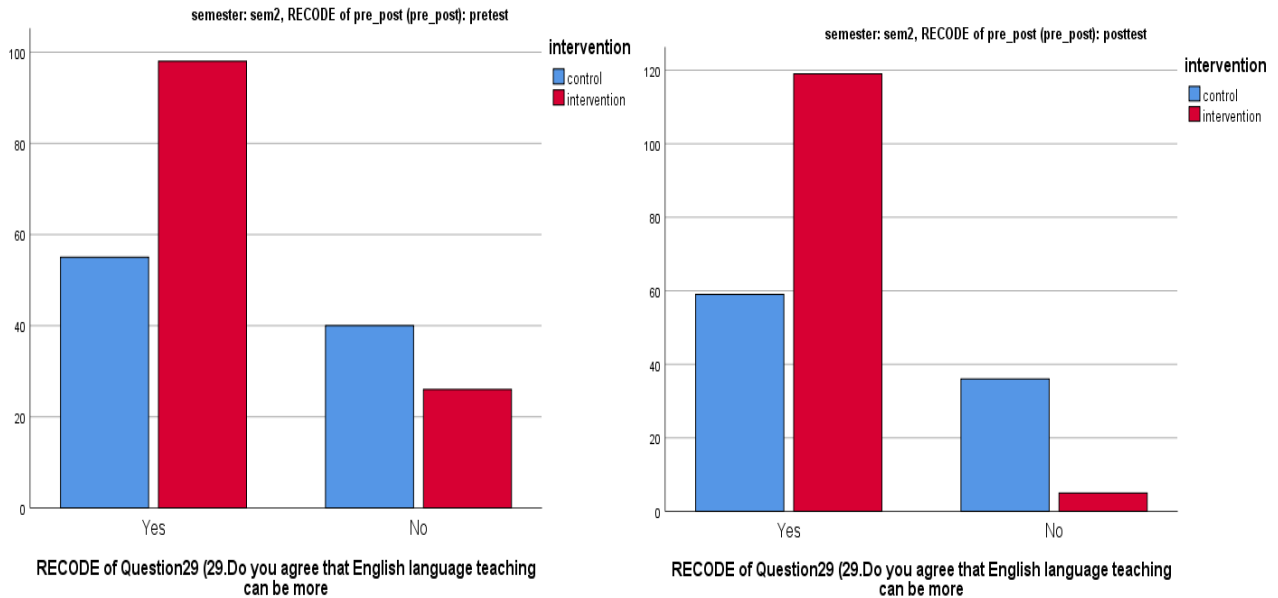
**Table 72** *Q. 29 Combined Method to Improve Linguistic Ability and ICC: Intervention II/ Semester II*

	<b>Control Group</b>		<b>Experimental Group</b>	
	Absolute Values/ Relative Values %		Absolute Values/ Relative Values %	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
Yes	55(58%)	59(62%)	98(79%)	119(96%)
No	40(42%)	42(38%)	26(21%)	5(4%)
Total	95(100%)	95(100%)	124(100%)	124(100%)

*Note.* Q29. Do you agree that English language teaching can be more beneficial when two teaching methods are combined to improve linguistic ability and intercultural communicative competence?

Figure 54 shows the tendencies of agreement to question 29 that explores whether English language teaching can be more beneficial when two teaching methods are combined to improve linguistic ability and intercultural communicative competence in intervention II. The variations in percentages show significant differences between both groups. The experimental group showed a higher percentage of agreement in the posttest in the ‘yes’ category than the control group.

**Figure 54** *Q. 29 Combined Method to Improve Linguistic Ability and ICC: Intervention II /Semester II*



### 9.1.1.23 Q. 30 Integrating the Intercultural Component \_Intervention I

The level of agreement on Q30. [Do you agree that English classes should integrate the intercultural component by combining CLIL and PBL methodologies?] in both groups is indicative of the need and request for change in the way English teaching as a foreign language is facilitated in the Costa Rican context. Any novelty added to the process introduces elements that can potentially strengthen students' learning process. Table 73 presents the results for the question ‘Do you agree that English classes should integrate the intercultural component by combining CLIL and PBL methodologies?’ Among control group participants, the levels of those responding ‘yes’ remained relatively steady across the pre- and posttest results, at 50.5% to 56.8%, respectively. However, among experimental group respondents, those answering ‘yes’ increased from 54% in the pretest to 88.7% in the posttest, experiencing a notable change. This highlights the importance of combining CLIL and PBL learning principles to teach the foreign language along with the

intercultural component, which supposes a significant contribution and shift from the way a foreign language has traditionally been taught.

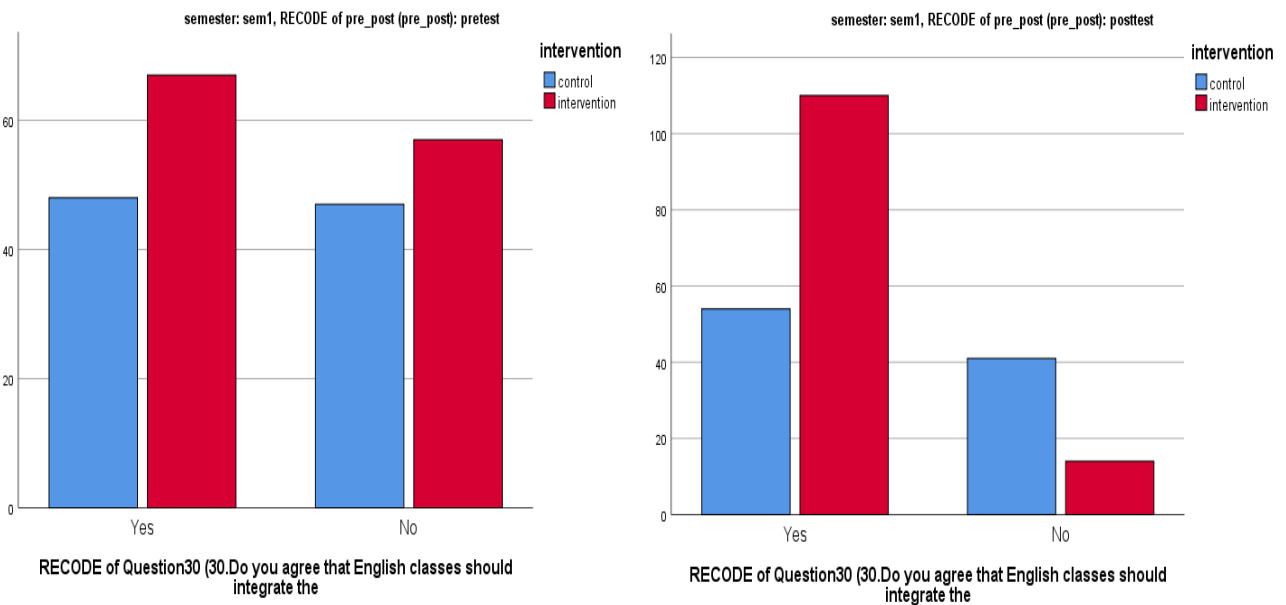
**Table 73** *Q. 30 Integrating the Intercultural Component: Intervention I/Semester I*

	<b>Control Group</b>		<b>Experimental Group</b>	
	Absolute Values/ Relative Values %		Absolute Values/ Relative Values %	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
Yes	48(50.5%)	54(56.8%)	67(54%)	110(88.7%)
No	47(49.5%)	41(43.2%)	57(46%)	14(11.3%)
Total	95(100%)	95(100%)	124(100%)	124(100%)

*Note.* Q30. Do you agree that English classes should integrate the intercultural component by combining CLIL and PBL methodologies?

Figure 55 shows the tendencies of agreement to integrate the intercultural component by combining CLIL and PBL methodology. In intervention I, it is seen that pretests yielded similar percentage values in the pretest ‘yes’ category. As for the posttest, significant differences among the groups are evident. The experimental group showed a higher percentage of agreement in the posttest in the ‘yes’ category than the control group.

**Figure 55** *Q. 30 Integrating the Intercultural Component: Intervention I/ Semester I*



### 9.1.1.24 Q. 30 Integrating the Intercultural Component \_ Intervention II

Table 74 shows that for intervention II, both groups seem to agree that a hybrid CLIL and PBL approach can effectively reach more holistic and ambitious language objectives. Results show that the experimental group's experience and participation in varied opportunities for language and intercultural content advancement materialized the benefits of exposure and systematic discussion, analysis, and construction of intercultural and varied content through tasks and projects. The percentage of those in the control group answering 'yes' went from 54.7% in the pretest to 60% in the posttest, while the percentage of those answering 'yes' in the experimental group went from 81.5% in the pretest to 96% in the posttest. These results support the need to open more possibilities and innovative approaches to teach and include intercultural content matters through a hybrid approach that addresses linguistic and intercultural aims to develop and prepare learners for employability and real-world scenarios entitled with crucial skills.

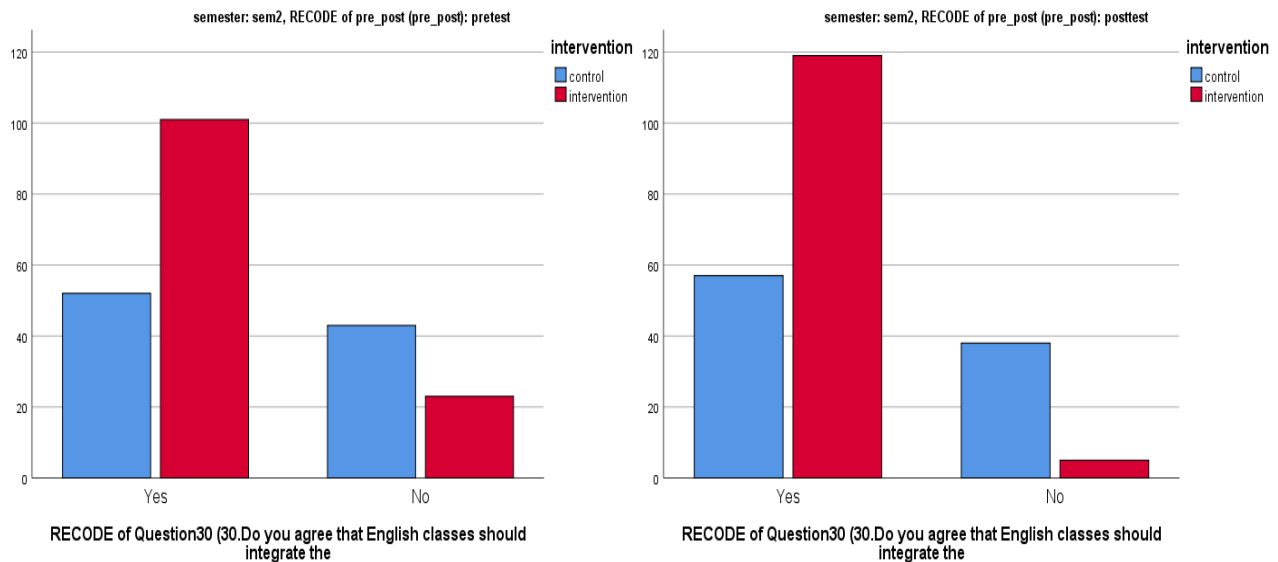
**Table 74** *Q. 30 Integrating the Intercultural Component: Intervention II/Semester II*

	<b>Control Group</b>		<b>Experimental Group</b>	
	Absolute Values/ Relative Values %		Absolute Values/ Relative Values %	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
Yes	52(54.7%)	57(60%)	101(81.5%)	119(96%)
No	43(45.3%)	38(40%)	23(18.5%)	5(4%)
Total	95(100%)	95(100%)	124(100%)	124(100%)

*Note.* Q30. Do you agree that English classes should integrate the intercultural component by combining CLIL and PBL methodologies?

Figure 56 shows the tendencies of agreement to integrate the intercultural component by combining a CLIL and PBL methodology. In intervention II, percentage values in the 'yes' category significantly differ between both groups. The experimental group showed a higher percentage of agreement in the posttest in the 'yes' category than the control group.

**Figure 56 Q. 30 Integrating the Intercultural Component Intervention II /Semester II**



## 9.2 Pretest Results and Findings: Intervention I

After analyzing findings from the key questions of the questionnaire applied to the control and experimental groups at the beginning and end of each pedagogical intervention implemented during two semesters, it can be observed that the pretest data findings reveal relevant information on how participants from both groups perceive certain factors related to the English learning process and the issue of developing intercultural communicative competence in the foreign language classroom. Both groups report similar tendencies in some of the explored questions. For instance, the level of agreement found on the instrumental use of the language among both groups demonstrates an underlying interest in learning English to fulfill personal and professional aims. It is also found that the self-assessment they do in terms of ICC proficiency is considered to be ‘regular’, which is likely related to the lack of facilitation and exposure of intercultural training in the EFL traditional classroom. This statement is supported by the higher percentages in the ‘no’ category on whether the intercultural content is learned in English classes. Similar trends are seen

in the report regarding the consultation of references to learn about cultures, where similar percentages are displayed in the ‘sometimes’ category. Data in this respect support the belief that developing ICC does not happen automatically but involves a systematic and progressive learning exposure making the classroom a great place to start or strengthen the intercultural competence. Students seem to be ready to take on the intercultural component within the language class. Moreover, pretest results pinpoint a common interest in learning about the Costa Rican and foreign cultures. This interest is extrapolated from student general agreement that the EFL curriculum should integrate the intercultural component as a novel plan in the English teaching context since the ICC component is not effectively integrated into the language mediation. Evidence of such assertion is noticed in the weight given to the ‘sometimes’ category regarding the promotion of intercultural competence in the FL classroom.

Moreover, it is interesting to notice that the idea of combining two methodology resonates with the participants as a viable and practical approach to improve linguistic and ICC progression. These findings obtained from the results of the pretest account for favorable and positive perspectives, which show the willingness of the participants to commit to achieving higher and multidivergent objectives in the context of foreign/ second language learning. Therefore, there is sufficient evidence for language educators of the need to strengthen intercultural language objectives through new teaching and hybrid methodologies. This shift in language praxis needs to be taken within a careful balance of varied elements, including students’ voices, needs, and language demands.

### **9.3 Overall Questionnaire Findings & Discussion: Control vs. Experimental Groups**

The general trend in the experimental group indicates that participants see the hybrid approach as having had a favorable effect on learners' English and ICC learning processes. The results suggest that the pedagogical interventions significantly contributed to participants' learning in various areas and helped them achieve linguistic and ICC objectives. The pedagogical hybrid method seems to have influenced participants' perspectives towards learning English framed with intercultural elements. The results offer valuable information and insights regarding key factors that influence the foreign language learning experience combined with the fundamental role of learning about native and target cultures, allowing the accommodation and adoption of new teaching praxis. The results from the questionnaire align with the results of the ICC self-assessment scale, and the questionnaire scale reports regarding ICC progression and satisfaction on methods used to foster linguistic and ICC development. They suggest that the hybrid approach received positive reactions because it is fundamentally learner-focused and resembles the real world. It is developmental, valuable, engaging, constructivist, practical, and purposeful. Through these methods, learners are encouraged to reflect on the benefits of language learning beyond linguistic objectives and comprehend that it can potentially be useful for achieving wide-ranging communicative and intercultural purposes.

Participants in the experimental group received two pedagogical interventions involving a hybrid English teaching approach facilitating intercultural tasks and projects supported by various authentic and digital resources and activities. Questionnaire results have supported the effectiveness of this nontraditional methodology as an effective learning tool that positively impacts students' language and intercultural learning progression. Integrating and exposing

learners to intercultural material through language tasks contributes to shifting perspectives on foreign language learning, skills development, personal growth, knowledge, attitudes, and competencies as training for real life.

Findings suggest that the hybrid learning experience is effective in the following ways: it is useful to provide reflection, analysis, and discussion of varied intercultural content; it supports the development and strengthening of the ICC dimensions of language learning; it supports the treatment of intercultural content in collaborative and autonomous ways; it offers independent access to authentic digital resources, videos, documentaries, and movies to learn about other cultures; it allows for rediscovering home or Costa Rican culture; and it offers the use of contextualized content activities, projects, and homework under a hybrid approach of CLIL and PBL principles.

#### **9.4 Overall Questionnaire Findings & Discussion: Experimental Group (Interventions I and II)**

Findings on the explored questions across the interventions I and II favored positive perspectives about ICC development facilitated by using hybrid CLIL and PBL principles in tasks and project activities in the EFL classroom. Participants' level of agreement and views displayed along the two interventions are supportive indicators that suggest the pedagogical interventions impacted participants' learning experience, language, ICC progression, and other supportive aspects linked to the process such as developing agency and autonomy, curiosity, openness, collaborative skills, thought process and content treatment. For the interest of this study, particular question findings were looked at in order to further understand the implications after conducting this research. For example, Q.2 about English performance self-assessment revealed interesting insights into students' perception of improvement in their English performance, which was



assessed as “good” after having participated in the intercultural language experience. Experimental group participants went from 25 (20,2%) in pretest intervention I to 73 (58.9%) in the posttest in intervention II.

Perspectives for the questions related to Q.6 about Class assignments and activities benefits, Q.7 about English class participation, reflection, analysis, and Q.8 about English classes discussion of varied intercultural content were also perceived as favorable. The use of content and project tasks seem to have allowed participants to become conscious of the benefits of this method to reinforce and develop their linguistic ability and ICC. Similarly, responses to question Q.11 about Intercultural communicative competence self-assessment showed a pivotal progression and development in language skills and intercultural communication. This was illustrated in the shift of the results, going from 8(6.5%) in the pretest intervention I to (44.5%) in the posttest in intervention II. Findings from question Q.21, inquiring about Intercultural content inclusion in the English curriculum, show that the participants’ agreement in the “yes” category to include the ICC in the English class such unity of agreement is as high as 114 (91,9%), which reaffirms the students’ readiness to take on new trends in the language classroom. As for question Q.23, related to the effectiveness of language as a vehicle to learn intercultural content, and Q.25, on the use of projects to active engagement and skills development, positive results were found in the posttest percentages in intervention II, in which participants consider that the English language is a “very effective” (61, 49.2%) vehicle to learn the intercultural content and that the use of projects have the potential to lead to active engagement in the classroom as to develop language skills (120, 96.8%). Furthermore, these findings further support previous data displayed in the ICC self-assessment scale and the hybrid method perspective questionnaire, where a correlation was established between the interventions applied to the ICC progression and the level of agreement on the effectiveness of using a combined/hybrid approach of principles in the language classroom.

Moreover, the results of the posttest in intervention II in item Q.26, related to English learning through a combined CLIL-PBL approach, yielded an exponentially higher frequency of experimental group participants (119, 96%) who consider the hybrid method is useful to learn English. Another interesting finding is found in the posttest in intervention II in question Q.27 inquiring about the combination of CLIL-PBL methods to increase motivation. The percentage obtained in this item is also remarkably high (120, 96.8%), suggesting that the hybrid method helped raise students' motivation to learn. Overall, these results emphasize and support the usefulness, practicality, and effectiveness of relying on a hybrid approach of principles from CLIL and PBL in designing language tasks and projects to achieve ICC objectives and progression in the EFL context.

## **CHAPTER 10 CONCLUSIONS**

## 10.1 Conclusions and Pedagogical implications

This thesis has aimed to explore the critical issue of enhancing intercultural competence in the foreign language classroom from a theoretical and experimental perspective. Data generated for this research was derived from students enrolled in English courses Integrated English I and II during the semester I and II at UNA, Costa Rica during 2020. The need to address this issue in the Costa Rican context at the tertiary educational level was approached in chapter 1, the review of literature where influential researchers and practitioners advocate for new theoretical views to effectively facilitate a shift from mere language-oriented models to teaching the intercultural communicative competence were explored throughout chapters 2 to 3. The research methodology, interventions proposal and design of an experimental pedagogy to explore the impact of merging CLIL and PBL learning principles to foster ICC in the courses Integrated English I and Integrated English II offered at the National University of Costa Rica, was described in chapters 4 and 5. Finally, the quasi-experimental results and discussion of the study among university language students who shared perspectives and views about ICC in the English classroom and on the pedagogical interventions are presented in chapters 6 to 9.

This concluding chapter presents practical and theoretical implications for the development of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in English as a foreign language in tertiary education. Conclusions and implications are drawn based on influential ICC literature examined throughout the course of the study and based upon the collected and analyzed data gathered through the experimental research. The practitioner researcher's teaching experience and professional views have also served as a source of reflection. The chapter presents conclusions derived from the questions and hypothesis posed at the beginning and from each of the research instruments used

addressing the research objectives proposed. Then some general recommendations and pedagogical implications are given regarding the Costa Rican context.

The purpose of this study has been to infuse a constructive discussion and reflection based on the need to address the fundamental role of culture in the context of foreign language classrooms. The motives for this research are fundamentally aimed at gaining a comprehensive view of the significant role the intercultural communicative competence plays in foreign language teaching and learning and directly on students' formation as professionals and citizens. Thus, there is a demand within the field not only due to the scarce experimental research on the intercultural issue, but also based on the fact that the 21st century requires citizens able to maintain effective communicative encounters across cultures. Theoretical approximations established since the 1990s keep on demanding more pedagogical interventions to support the scientific body of evidence to structure pedagogical guidance on practical ways to mediate an intercultural communicative learning experience. Thus, this study aims at filling such a gap.

Results from the different instruments used and, chiefly after conducting the quasi-experiment, suggest that significant pedagogical implications and guidance can be outlined after designing and implementing a contextual hybrid approach of learning and teaching principles to plan intercultural English learning lessons. To examine whether the research aims have been attained, it is necessary to revisit and answer the questions established for this study. The study results provide enough evidence that supports that, after systematically integrating ICC into the EFL classroom through a hybrid approach of CLIL/PBL learning principles, learners' intercultural communicative competence has improved. The main conclusions of the study in terms of the research questions are presented as follows:

RQ1: Does a combined approach of CLIL and PBL promote student intercultural communicative competence in tertiary education? If so, to what extent?; RQ2: Is the hybrid

approach correlated with the promotion/enhancing in the intervention group of students' intercultural communicative competence?

The experimental group was exposed to two pedagogical intervention periods during two English courses. During each of those interventions, test results revealed that their ICC was statistically significantly improved in terms of all ICC components: knowledge, critical cultural awareness, attitude, and skills. Language skills experienced a much faster rate of improvement, according to the formative assessment results and evidence from students' reports. Higher scores were obtained in the knowledge and attitude dimensions. However, the ICC components that progressed the most from pretest intervention I to posttest intervention II were in the knowledge and skills dimensions. The formative test results also reinforced the progression students made in handling intercultural knowledge and situations, which was corroborated by the higher grades obtained in the posttests mean results. Instruments applied to the control and experimental group yielded a strong correlation that supports the effectiveness of the method applied to foster and initiate the process of language and intercultural progression.

RQ3: Are there any significant differences in participants' pretest and posttest scores measuring ICC for both groups experimental and control group?

Significant differences were accounted for between both groups in the instruments used. For interventions I and II, the  $p$ -value ( $p > 0.05$ ) for each of the ICC components (knowledge, critical awareness, attitude, and skills) showed no significant difference in the control group after having followed a traditional approach to language learning. In contrast, the results reported in the experimental group for both intervention periods are a significant since the  $p$ -value ( $p < 0.05$ ). The posttest score results indicate a statistically significant mean difference between the control and intervention groups in the four categories: knowledge, critical awareness, attitude, and skills.

Scores in the ICC components in the intervention group are significantly higher than those reported in the control group.

RQ4: What are the benefits of teaching the intercultural dimension in the EFL classroom in Costa Rica?

General benefits are perceived in different ICC dimensions during the experimental process. ICC and language skills progression were especially noticed by learners in terms of the acquisition of new content and vocabulary, useful training for future encounters, and the rediscovery of key aspects about their own and other cultures. Students showed an open-minded attitude towards new visions and views, content, information, and practices both towards the language learning process and in regard to the relevance of culture in the English class. Their notion of culture shifted and became visibly important to student participants in the experimental group. Participants acknowledged the role that culture plays while learning a foreign language in an explicit and incidental way.

Through the units, lessons, and intercultural materials, participants discovered the fundamental role culture plays in the process of becoming independent English language users as they understand that this competence is inherently connected to a process of learning that never stops. Participants seemed to acknowledge that a foreign language learning process is part of a long-life learning that reinforces itself in each and every communicative act and encounter they might have in the context of a multicultural world. Reaching this level of understanding in the experimental group is perceived as a benefit that triggers motivation in learners to become and act as intercultural speakers. Students were also prompted to recognize their potential to become change agents and global citizens.

Through the intercultural content and projects conducted in class, students reflected and understood that they are part of a generation that has inherited a compromised world which has

already imprinted on them a positive and hopeful attitude towards intercultural issues. Students were perceived to have a willingness to learn through the units since they thought most of the content and tasks contributed to their learning process and growth while they practiced and used their English language skills. Moreover, cognition and scaffolding were also triggered during the two pedagogical interventions. Learning strategies such as reflection, analysis, comprehension, assessment, evaluation, summarizing, and creating were promoted through the assigned projects and tasks students conducted during the sessions, both mediated by the educators and in autonomous ways. The level of autonomy developed during the interventions was perceived as a crucial benefit as well.

RQ5: What challenges emerged when implementing CLIL and project-based learning to foster ICC?

Some challenges emerged during the implementation and conduction of this study. During this study, one of the most challenging experiences was the abrupt and sudden interruption of on-campus learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Intervention I, which had started in February 2020, was interrupted in mid-March 2020 by a novel, unexplored remote learning mode. That event presented a tremendous amount of uncertainty that was only lessened by the positive attitude of the participants in this study. Specifically, the pandemic forced the researcher to rethink, design and implement tasks, content, and projects that could be mediated through the new learning setting and facilitated remotely via online. The access to a reliable Internet connection was for some of the students a limitation. Fortunately, the connection was available for most of the student population participating in this intervention, and when it was not, some modifications were made to ensure the unit objectives were met. Likewise, UNA authorities coordinated some accommodations to grant students a data card with Internet connectivity. Similarly, accommodations were made to ensure learners were given a chance to practice their language and intercultural experience through



asynchronous and synchronous ways. Language educators in charge of facilitating the lessons and units took part in training and reinforcement of key instructional practices to facilitate intercultural matters under remote learning settings. Throughout the interventions, teachers in charge were constantly reviewing, discussing, and monitoring students' production, products, and performance. This unexpected scenario placed a certain amount of pressure on the teachers since it was a challenging, new teaching experience. It demanded a lot of time and dedication to rethink the pedagogical intervention that had been initially designed for face-to-face, to readapt on-campus learning to online mediation.

The selection, adaptation, and design of content and tasks was carried out within a contextualized and remote learning environment so that it was attractive enough for students to undertake independent and autonomous learning,. Furthermore, it was noted that this kind of learning requires a sympathetic language educator. Language educators involved in the interventions experienced, especially during intervention I, challenges regarding the novelty that remote learning posed on communication with students who were constantly seeking guidance, clarification, and further directions. Therefore, the educators and researcher found themselves being available to students on a regular basis even after working hours.

This changed during intervention II, when experience obtained after participating in similar tasks and projects gave experimental group participants the confidence and autonomy to self-direct their language and intercultural learning. In summary, challenges were observed in terms of material adaptation, design, careful selection of digital-friendly sources that would meet students' language level, context and needs, remote learning training and mediation, and the need for a sympathetic educator, committed to constantly train in intercultural matters to facilitate a practical, transparent, and bias- free intercultural experience.

RQ6: What is the perceived impact/effectiveness of the hybrid approach of CLIL and PBL principles in both linguistic competence and intercultural communicative competence among EFL students in tertiary education?

The hybrid approach of principles from CLIL and PBL potentially serves as a pedagogical platform to offer a varied and innovative learning experience where learners are exposed to a wide variety of content, including the intercultural content, which naturally focuses on their home/native cultures and context to facilitate learners scaffolding, language progression and fostering ICC in educational settings in tertiary education. Outcomes were reported in linguistic autonomy since participants progressively and gradually showed confidence in sharing their own opinions. They were also able to express their ideas in English about both language tasks and collaborative projects. With the correct and basic digital tools (smartphone or computer, meeting app, and internet connectivity), students were able to come up with impressive project creations and conversations. Progress was observed in both their communicative ability (according to their level) and on content acquisition based on how they approached intercultural ideas from both native and foreign cultures. Their intercultural awareness was captured in their opinions, reactions, journals, projects, and comments. Thus, it was remarkable to witness how those students intuitively and autonomously worked and met online to undertake part in collaborative projects, conversations, and other assignments. The adaptive capacity these students demonstrated proved to be highly rewarding and hopeful for future studies in the context of second or foreign language mediation.

The impact can be summarized in terms of intercultural and language progression, communicative confidence, scaffolding, student collaboration, initiation of lifelong learning, a shift in perspective of what learning a foreign language implies, creativity, self-directed learning, and self-assessment of their process and progress. There has been a shift in learner and educator's roles where both are perceived as life-long learners having a conversation on crucial themes. The

educator, of course, guides, reinforces directs and educates students to self-direct their learning in both explicit and incidental ways but also in recognizing that students are entitled to their own thinking and perspectives. The hybrid approach is effective in helping learners achieve multiple objectives that can be directed to tap into intercultural communicative competence while their language ability progresses and improves.

RQ7: What are the experimental students' perceptions of the hybrid CLIL/PBL approach?

The data collected showed that, interestingly, there was a unified, positive, receptive attitude and willingness to work and participate in the ICC proposal of tasks, activities, and projects. Most of the learner participants congruently agreed on and acknowledged the relevance the intercultural component plays in the context of learning a foreign language as well as on how they can take advantage of it. This perception aligns with what experts in the field have long been suggesting and supporting, that is, the value of intercultural knowledge, skills, attitude, and critical cultural awareness in an ever-connected multicultural, intercultural world which demands effective and empathetic communication goals.

The questionnaire results showed students' opinions favored the hybrid approach to including intercultural content within language learning. For instance, data collected reveal that participants considered English to be a "very effective" (49.2%) vehicle to learn intercultural content and that 'the use of projects has the potential to lead to active engagement and language skills development' (96.8%), according to the results from posttest questionnaire, intervention II. Additionally, students seemed to agree on the overall effectiveness of the hybrid approach in the English classroom (96%), as revealed in the posttest intervention II. They also agreed that the combination of methods (CLIL/PBL) through the use of varied tasks and projects could potentially increase their motivation (96.8%), as revealed from the data of posttest intervention II. Another aspect that is positively highlighted relates to the use of PBL and CLIL in the English classroom

as supportive and beneficial in developing cognition, communication, and critical thinking, as indicated by the percentage of students (44.4%) that expressed agreement with this item in the posttest intervention II.

Data obtained from students' questionnaires on the hybrid approach reveal that they favor a learning experience characterized by the exposure to and acquisition of new vocabulary, basic grammatical structures, expressions in English, fluency, and communication by using varied contextualized content. It had also been determined in their perspectives and opinions that they were pleased with the resources and materials facilitated (e.g., stories, videos, readings, movies, texts), and the methodology since it helped them to assume an intercultural perspective and recognition of their role as global citizens together with active, autonomous, and a collaborative role which they acknowledge as useful training for actual or future intercultural interactions. Based on their journal entries and comments, it is clear that they showed indications of ICC progression after studying intercultural content through the English language.

RQ8: What are some practical and useful strategies to integrate and mediate ICC in the foreign language classroom?

The strategies and tasks used throughout the pedagogical interventions intended to provide participants an intercultural language learning experience where key learning elements were combined and applied in certain doses to induce learners into a process of authentic, resourceful, and consistent opportunities to strengthen linguistic competence, content management, skills development, and intercultural competence growth. A holistic, hybrid approach of principles was considered when planning and facilitating the learning experience. The varied strategies used under the umbrella of CLIL and PBL principles provided a beneficial theoretical platform for a guided and organized English learning instruction which introduced intercultural and language content/input tasks during both synchronous and asynchronous class work.

Positive and effective results were observed when participants employed receptive, productive language skills, thinking skills, research, collaborative skills, and reflection promoted by the content and language tasks and the projects which served as rich input. Purposeful tasks that granted a sense of autonomy, self-efficacy, and independence under regular monitoring and guidance by the facilitators were also effective in reaching the proposed objectives. Specific learning strategies were also fostered through language tasks, projects, and mini projects, whose final products were indicators of significant progress, enjoyment, quality of content management, language use (both receptive and productive), vocabulary acquisition, and connection between home and foreign cultures. Students' dedication and motivation to deliver a well-prepared and designed product (video conference, infographic, webinar, video role-play, community project, intercultural party, among others) generally met expectations both in terms of language skills and intercultural communicative competence advancement.

The selection of instruction strategies included cognitive discourse engagement, where participants practiced and exercised the target language via contextualized content and scaffolding and practices strategies such as classification, definition, description, evaluation, and self-assessment, among others. Moreover, the global vision developed in the "ISUACAFO" procedural steps for ICC mediation experience developed by the researcher under the umbrella of the hybrid method provided clarity to the pedagogical intervention planning process. These procedural steps were complemented by the general instruction guidelines stated by Gagné (1985) that summarized and highlighted critical stages to guide instruction. Strategies and classroom tasks directed attention to critical issues that played a part in rearranging and readjusting knowledge into new perspectives to facilitate learners' target language learning and ICC development. Such considerations proved to have effectively served the general purpose of facilitating consistent and transparent teaching that combined language and intercultural objectives. This vision also permeated the language

educators' role in adapting and redefining their perspectives, teaching praxis and styles, theoretical stands, skills, and knowledge. The role of language learners shifted to autonomous learning, willing to embark on a conscious and incidental lifelong learning process of the target language and ICC.

The active involvement of experimental participants in the various learning tasks and activities helped achieving the intended objectives. Activities included oral discussion, written responses, online presentations, virtual performance role-plays, group work, pair work, journal entries, critical incidents matching and fill-in tasks, brief interviews, retelling, summaries, and categorization from varied kinds of authentic multimedia sources such as videos, songs, films, documentaries, audios, websites, history capsules, projects, visual aids, short stories, articles, advertisements, editorials, proverbs, and comics. The instructional design of the intervention used various assessment techniques to evaluate student learning in order to capture an almost complete picture of students' ICC learning and progression. Thus, an online learning community was proposed through the app "CLASSROOM" where participants were encouraged to practice, reflect, and share journal entries within contextualized authentic tasks during asynchronous learning time.

Despite participants' limited experience with remote learning, the CLIL learning principles and systematic use of projects were positively perceived. A significant number of participants expressed their level of agreement and satisfaction with the learning experience. They approved the need to integrate and try new ways to learn English by using crucial content, intercultural perspectives, language tasks, material, and authentic resources provided during the experimental periods. The strategies were useful since they were appointed to introduce and develop culture-specific and culture-general insights, understanding, and awareness to reflect about cultural differences and similarities among English-speaking cultures and Costa Rican culture(s) under tasks oriented by CLIL- PBL principles. Most of the resources used offered comprehensive ways to address and acquire intercultural insights.

Authentic learning tasks provided learners with chances during the lessons to work and support through asynchronous and synchronous ways and in pairs and groups to construct a route towards their ICC progression, meaning, understanding and awareness. The lesson plans followed a sequence of steps aimed at a pedagogical intervention rich in learning opportunities and varied input (language, content, and intercultural knowledge) explicitly designed for helping learners to develop language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing), scaffolding, meaning construction and ICC (knowledge, attitude, criticality, and skills). Experimental group participants experienced a sense of improvement or advancement from a low language and ICC level to a higher level in terms of language and intercultural competency and mindfulness.

Since there is an explicit call for a theoretically, methodologically appropriate and practical way to approach the complexities of foreign language and ICC in the context of tertiary education, teachers need to adopt new roles in order to prepare learners for their professional and citizenship roles in the context of the 21st century challenges in the short- or long-term future. Findings from this study suggest that adopting a hybrid approach of CLIL and PBL teaching principles is helpful to educate learners to become intercultural speakers while achieving sustained learning and boosting motivation, which has a fundamental role in language learning, acquisition, and ICC enhancement. In other words, embracing CLIL and PBL hybrid principles can sustain a pedagogical path towards acquiring foreign or second language competency, ICC advancement, and cognitive growth.

## **10.2 Research instruments: concluding remarks**

The ICC self-assessment results provide useful data on the development of intercultural competence, particularly in the context of foreign language learning. The pedagogical interventions

have been found to be helpful to develop students' ICC in the EFL classroom context (Byram, 1997; Sercu, 2006; Larzén- Östermark, 2008; Tran, and Duong, 2018). Findings from the ICC self-assessment after the pedagogical interventions during the two semesters correlate with other studies' results reporting progression in intercultural components in the context of foreign language learning (Tran and Duong, 2018; Qin, 2015). Tran and Duong's (2018) study used a specific model to integrate intercultural content into an English course to explore and develop EFL learners' attitudes and ICC in the Vietnamese context. They found positive outcomes and concluded that "in the long term the model can equip learners with ICC in order to become intercultural speakers who can be fluent in a foreign language" (p. 15). Their study reported that "the most significantly improved IC component was intercultural knowledge whilst the least significantly improved was intercultural awareness" (p. 14 ). The study carried out by Qin (2015) investigated an intercultural approach to Chinese college students in an English Course. Findings showed that learners' intercultural communicative competence developed intercultural general and specific cultural knowledge and knowledge of intercultural communication.

These outcomes seem to correlate to particular findings in this research. The outcomes in the ICC self-assessment scale revealed a significant difference between the mean scores of the control and intervention groups in the four categories: knowledge, critical awareness, attitude, and skills for both intervention periods in the posttest score. The highest mean scores obtained in the ICC components in the experimental group were observed in knowledge ( $n = 124$ ,  $m = 3.85$ ) and critical culture awareness ( $n = 124$ ,  $m = 3.68$ ), while attitude had a lower score ( $n = 124$ ,  $m = 3.56$ ) during intervention I. The Mann Whitney test results found a significant effect of  $p$ -values  $< 0.001$  between both groups. It is observed that the systematic exposure to intercultural content, tasks, and projects in the English classrooms affects learners' intercultural dimension of knowledge, which significantly improved and significantly progressed ( $U = 2199.500$ ,  $p < .001$ ), ( $Z = -8.029$ ,



$p < .001$ ). Similarly, the second dimension that significantly progressed was skills ( $U = 2833.000$ ,  $p < .001$ ), ( $Z = -6.656$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

These results are aligned with what the field has identified as signs of early evidence for ICC progression, indicating that progress is usually reflected first on the knowledge dimension (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006). The intercultural knowledge dimension, for which the mean score was higher and Man Whitney test results show signs of significant progression, support the view of ICC development as a cyclical-interdependent pedagogical process in educational settings, where knowledge and content can provide the building blocks towards understanding and awareness of the self and others' cultures. It is an initial path to empathetic behaviors and communication that can eventually transform perceptions and cultural views.

Concerning semester II, intervention II, examination of the results revealed that the control group did not significantly change while the experimental group scores changed significantly. After intervention proposal II, the highest score for the experimental group was on the ICC component of attitude ( $n = 124$ ,  $m = 4.21$ ), whereas the lowest mean score was noted on knowledge ( $n = 124$ ,  $m = 4.12$ ). Participants self-assessed their perspectives, favoring a shift toward attitude and critical awareness, indicating that the prolonged exposure to intercultural matters (e.g., tasks, content, resources) influenced their self-assessment on other components of ICC.

Results reveal that after comparing the control and experimental groups in terms of knowledge, critical awareness, attitude, and skills, the Mann-Whitney U test results reflect with  $p$ -values  $< 0.001$  indicating significant differences between both groups. MW U test results support the idea that, after the systematic exposure to intercultural content, tasks, and projects in the English classrooms, learners' intercultural dimension of skills was noted to have significantly improved and progressed the most during the second intervention ( $U = 1057.000$ ,  $p < .001$ ), ( $Z = -10.574$ ,  $p$

< .001), and the second most affected dimension was attitude ( $U = 1223.000$ ,  $p < .001$ ), ( $Z = -10.200$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

After intervention II, the ICC component that progressed the most was attitude, while the knowledge dimension improved the least. According to Byram (1997), attitude is fundamental in achieving or fostering intercultural communicative competence. Deardorff (2004) supports the idea that intercultural competence depends on attitude as a stimulus to involvement and awareness in developing ICC components and the ability to communicate appropriately and effectively. These particular results parallels Deardorff's (2006) interpretation that attitude is crucial in reshaping personal frames of reference, which later are believed to influence behaviors.

Comparing the change in ratings between interventions I and II within the intervention group, significant effects of progression were observed in knowledge, skills, and attitude. However, the first intervention shows higher impact on knowledge ( $U=2848.000$ ,  $p<.001$ ), ( $Z=-8.627$ ,  $p<.001$ ), and the second on skills ( $U=3761.000$ ,  $p<.001$ ), ( $Z=-7.119$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Both interventions effectively changed and shifted students' self-perceptions of their intercultural competence in all the scale components. It can be interpreted that perspectives about ICC can be sustained and progress in time. Positive results of ICC progression can be ascribed to the systematic mediation in lessons of intercultural topics, tasks, and projects enhanced significantly over the two intervention periods conducted throughout the academic semesters I and II, 2020.

### **10.2.1 Intercultural Quiz: concluding remarks**

Conclusions drawn from the results of the intercultural quiz measuring intercultural content findings were promising in the experimental group. As Byram (2020) contends, "learners need to understand how aspects of one society and its dominant culture are perceived from another cultural

perspective and how this link between two cultures is fundamental to interaction and communication” (p. 135). This kind of factual knowledge/content can be assessed at all levels, in the form objective questions. The experimental students’ results in the intercultural quiz outperformed control group’s results. Experimental students’ pretest mean was 54.46, and the posttest mean score was 77.79; while results from the control group showed no significant progression from pretest to posttest, being 53.46 and 54.63, respectively. In the intervention II students’ improvement was statistically significant compared to the control group since the pretest mean score for the experimental group was 77.90, while the control group scored 55.99, which shows that the experimental group did much better. It also provides evidence of sustained knowledge and mastery throughout the two periods explored. The interventions carried out during a 13-week period in each semester exposed learners to various intercultural and reflective tasks both during online class meetings and autonomous students’ work. A remarkable change was observed in learners’ ICC after the integrated English courses organized around units and lessons infused with ICC content tasks and projects. In short, participants in the interventions seem to have progressed in both language and intercultural competence after each course. Therefore, it is concluded that a prolonged inclusion and facilitation of the intercultural component through systematically varied language tasks can foster and develop students’ knowledge, awareness, and expertise in certain intercultural issues and that these abilities can potentially be transferred to real contextual situations.

### **10.2.2 ICC hybrid approach questionnaire: concluding remarks**

Results from the hybrid approach questionnaire support a pedagogical and theoretical path for an intercultural language experience. Intervention I results showed that the experimental group

participants believed the method used had contributed to developing their ICC. The highest mean score was obtained in the satisfaction category ( $M = 4.11$ ). The degree of satisfaction with the tasks, projects, topics, and resources used during the implementation of the combined method was high and they considered that the method broadened or boosted intercultural perspectives when their English learning progressed. As for intervention II, data show that the highest score continues to be in the satisfaction category ( $M = 4.37$ ). The second category about the benefits of the method showed the unity of perspectives with  $M = 4.31$ , while the impact was scored  $M = 4.23$ . This reveals that, after having participated and experienced a series of systematic ICC language tasks, students positively viewed and accepted the activities, projects, and tasks.

Major findings from participants responding to the open questions revealed that the hybrid or combined approach has the potential to benefit learners in plausible divergent ways. For instance, they considered they had improved in aspects of language learning such as communication, acquisition of new vocabulary, basic grammatical structures, and expressions in English. According to participants, it also contributed to creating contextualized content management and community connections, stimulating autonomous roles and self-direction in language learning, themes, and topics applicable to real situations, which increases motivation to work and improve their English learning process while integrating the intercultural perspective. When asked about the method implemented, students drew attention towards the importance of being exposed to language, content, and culture input in order to be prepared for intercultural engagements since it could help broaden their awareness of their own and foreign cultures, recognize the need to acknowledge their own roots and cultural identity towards empathetic communication and behaviors while learning English. In short, student participants in the experimental group expressed constructive perspectives about the method applied during the two-course/semesters in which the interventions were conducted.

### 10.2.3. ICC Assessment tasks: concluding remarks

Scholars involved in the field have advocated for alternative ways which are suitable to assess intercultural competence, especially in educational settings “using a mix of qualitative and quantitative measures” (Deardorff, 2006, p. 250), using a multi-method and multiperspective approach (Deardorff, 2009) to provide feedback about the progress and development during the intercultural language learning experiences. As defined by OECD (2013), formative assessment for learning aims needs to identify aspects of the learning process in order to deepen and shape subsequent learning. Sadler (1998) claims that this kind of assessment is effective at all levels of education and in all educational settings to assess content, knowledge, and skills, while Byram (2020) remarks that “assessment is not limited to testing” (p.126). Some assessment tools to be considered are given by Lussier et al. (2007) who promote the use of “attitudes inventories, surveys, portfolios, journals, self-evaluation reports, collections of written products” (p. 29). These tools fall into the formative and qualitative category allowing to capture, balance, and approach the complexities adjured to ICC. Likewise, these kinds of ICC assessments have been found suitable to measure the components related to ICC (knowledge, attitude, critical awareness, and skills) while assessing language according to acceptable pedagogical standards that can become appropriate indicators of progression.

During the interventions with the experimental group, a variety of assessment tools were used to measure student progress. Data obtained reveal improvement in some ICC dimensions, such as knowledge and attitude, where students achieved the exemplary level after assessing unit tasks performance in the context of a beginner’s level English course. The English language level was found to range from accomplished to exemplary during Intervention I (level course accordance). In general, it was also observed that the language progression was evident earlier and

advanced much faster ranging from the ‘accomplished’ to the ‘exemplary’ categories during both of the interventions.

In general terms, the intercultural unit and projects contributed to high scores at the exemplary level in the intercultural knowledge and attitude dimensions. Moreover, students’ scores in the skills and cultural awareness dimensions fell into the accomplished level. The e-journal, though, was reported to contribute to higher scores in the attitude and critical awareness dimensions. However, it was also noticed that it could be used to assess knowledge and skills as the language progresses and if tasks are scaffolded in terms of level of complexity. The project activity was found supportive in terms of knowledge, attitude, and critical awareness, and helped to boost the skills dimension. Learners ICC progression through these assessed formative tasks suggests that the intercultural unit and projects contributed to high scores in knowledge and cultural awareness at the accomplished level. The e-journal seems to have contributed to higher scores in attitude and critical awareness at the exemplary level. These findings are partly congruent to the ICC self-assessment scale in which knowledge and attitude were observed to have progressed steadily during interventions I and II. It can be concluded that the use of these formative tasks can be used to measure virtually any or all of the ICC components, including language.

### **10.3 Pedagogical Implications: intercultural language praxis**

This research promotes an intercultural approach to foreign language education and advocates a hybrid CLIL and PBL method to facilitate the development of students’ ICC in a significant and meaningful way. Findings support the relevance and significance of integrating the intercultural communicative competence in the English classroom. First, this dissertation contends

that the EFL classroom is a fundamental place for language learners to develop their intercultural communicative competence when units and tasks are purposefully planned and designed and when the language experience is supported and backed up with literature and frameworks that offer insights and guidelines on how to address the intercultural dimension in the language classroom. The pedagogical model, based on principles from CLIL and PBL, has proved effective to mediate an intercultural language learning experience during the two semesters that the students participated in the study. Participants in the experimental group showed statistical mean differences in all the ICC dimensions assessed, i.e., knowledge, skills, attitude, and critical awareness, which are key components to communicate in a foreign language with people from different intercultural backgrounds and become effective intercultural speakers.

The goal of integrating intercultural objectives in the curriculum and offering an extensive range of opportunities for learners to develop their language skills and ICC dimensions should determine and permeate the language educator praxis. Committing to this goal requires active and mindful language educators who are able to implement explicit instruction within an approach that can potentially address the complexities of the ICC dimensions. It has been evident throughout the findings from this study that the careful design and selection of teaching models, instructional techniques, intercultural teaching content, tasks, and project assignments play an important role in fostering students' ICC.

Therefore, implications and insights about the teaching and learning process in terms of curriculum, material design, planning, teaching methods, teacher and learners' roles can be drawn. Due to the fact that English is considered a lingua franca, it is taught and learned in a number of different contexts with a similar purpose, i.e., to meet today's world demands in terms of intercultural communication. The claim on the need to rethink the existing language curriculum and syllabus to explicitly set intercultural objectives is supported by a new generation of learners.

Equipping learners with ICC knowledge, skills, receptive attitudes, and cultural awareness can potentially boost a lifelong learning and training path to successfully communicate during intercultural encounters.

The University language curriculum needs to be reformulated to address the intercultural competence as a fundamental axiom. Thus, it is paramount to provide explicit instructions for its inclusion in the syllabus and lessons with the aim to target the objective of forming culturally aware, sensitive, and interculturally competent learners. The inclusion of intercultural content can start as early as the beginner levels up to advanced levels. There is no need to wait for the student to achieve a certain level of command of the target language. English language courses offered at different levels need to integrate the promotion of an intercultural language experience as early as possible. In this endeavor, the language educator plays a fundamental role in mediating, teaching, and guiding students to process, construct and react to intercultural materials. It is recommended that language educators choose appropriate materials that allow students to progressively establish a cognitive process of identification, connection, reflection, and to then move into comparison, analysis, interpretations, critical thinking, and evaluation of foreign and one's own cultural knowledge, constructs and views, and meanings. A gradual incorporation of intercultural objectives, content and tasks can trigger students' curiosity and interest. This teaching content must be carefully selected to meet students' English level, interest, context, and relevance.

The intercultural content selected should be sufficiently transparent, truthful, and informative, easy to understand but at the same time it should represent a certain degree of challenge, pushing students out of their comfort zones to elicit a rediscovery and confrontation of their perspectives and views. It should also provoke an interest that engages them in the process of wanting to know more, contributes to a development of their cognitive abilities to relate similarities, to determine differences among aspects of foreign and native/home cultures and to



reflect and self-assess their intercultural views. Findings of this research indicated that facilitating appropriate content and thought-provoking projects, tasks, and material enable students to deal, process and construct new intercultural perceptions linked to the target language learning, which effectively triggers early evidence of learners' intercultural competence, specially in the knowledge and skills dimensions. Consequently, the what and how questions about the integration of the intercultural component has proven to be a critical factor to learners' ICC progression and improvement. Since the cultural content of textbooks is not sufficient nor contextualized, this is reason enough for recommending the creation, assembling, and design of contextualized intercultural language materials and tasks based on learners' linguistic ability and themes of interest. This highlights the need for careful planning to acquire and develop knowledge and skills that foreign language learners are to develop in today's society. Engaging material and tasks mediated through student-centered instruction can potentially convert the language classroom into a space for rehearsing, practicing, initiating, and effectively fostering ICC in their learning processes.

The pedagogical interventions implemented throughout the two academic semesters suggest the steps that need to be considered to positively assert the quest of helping and guiding learners to reach intercultural language goals. Integrating the intercultural component requires a predesigned teaching plan that outlines and incorporates teaching approaches, techniques, procedures, content, material, tasks, and strategies. The hybrid approach proposed in this dissertation effectively addresses the critical learning and teaching components that explicitly and incidentally expose learners to authentic, meaningful, and contextualized intercultural content, tasks, and projects from the target and native/home cultures. In this process, students should have a voice and active participation in selecting lesson content and negotiate among them the themes and topics of their preference to work on in class tasks, projects, or assignments.

The remote learning framing this study has promoted students' autonomy in managing intercultural content, language progress, and freedom regarding their learning pace. This is supported by the collaborative nature of the hybrid approach implemented through projects. By using collaborative e-tools and meeting platforms, students were able to meet their peers and create their products while having the chance to practice, reinforce and receive input on the target language. The hybrid methodology poses a shift from a passive learning standpoint to an active, meaningful, and differentiated learning that trains students to be mindful, curious, and interested in becoming competent intercultural communicators.

This section outlined some of the major implications of this quasi-experimental study. Overall, the intercultural pedagogical interventions implemented during the two semesters were found to significantly foster beginner language learners' ICC in all of the four dimensions and support learners' gradual improvement. The research data, proposal, reflection, theoretical considerations, and findings offer valuable evidence and insights for language educators to innovate, revitalize and bring meaning and utility into their language praxis by adopting a hybrid approach to foster learners ICC. Optimistically, this dissertation can stimulate language educators to actively integrate, include and promote an ICC language learning process as valuable insights to language mediation which urges more attention and consideration in EFL education and particularly in the Costa Rican context.

### **10.3.1 ICC inclusion in EFL classrom**

In order to reach a comprehensive picture of the relevance and need to foster ICC in the context of foreign language teaching and learning in tertiary education, this study had explored different perspectives for mediating and facilitating an intercultural language experience through CLIL and PBL principles. The proposal addresses one of the most crucial tasks language educators

are faced with during their practice; i. e., the task of reinventing and readapting their teaching practice with hybrid or new models that can respond to the new generations of students, their contextual needs, and in general, the constantly changing world. This dissertation contributes to supporting and advising language educators and practitioners on the need to enrich EFL curriculums and entitle learners with active and innovative learning opportunities to address the significance and utility of ICC in the language classroom within a practical and contextualized approach. The ICC aims to improve communication, skills, attitude, cultural awareness, and behaviors when interacting with culturally diverse people.

These findings suggest that English courses offered at Costa Rican universities and specifically at UNA need to acknowledge students' expectations and needs to prepare them for real challenges and especially train them to face their future with skills and competences to engage in fruitful communicative encounters. Likewise, they undertake a rediscovery of their identity, cultural roots, and willingness to take on a long-life learning path that strengthens healthy intercultural communicative strategies, views, and behaviors. In the specific case of the National University of Costa Rica, its educational philosophy has been defined through a pedagogical model that delimits and determines principles to ensure guidance for an envisioned kind of education the Costa Rican population deserves. It is a pedagogical model that seeks to promote respect for others with the ideal of equal opportunities and the contribution to a more just and equitable society, in which both men and women live by the principles of solidarity, mutual help, and cooperation. To promote such a society, it is necessary to conceptualize learning as a socio-cultural, historical, changing process that can foster participatory intercultural citizenship.

The National University advocates for educating an integral human being with a critical, proactive attitude, innovative capacity, and a high sense of solidarity and respect for diversity in all its manifestations. Its mission is to empower students by enabling them to develop skills,

attitudes, and values that foster their intellectual, social, cultural, and spiritual domains encouraging lifelong learning, and learning to learn (Preamble of the General Regulations on the Teaching and Learning Processes of the National University, 2006). It is only in this light that the university can fulfill its responsibility in providing students with the necessary information, knowledge, and skills (Stier, 2006).

### **10.3.2 Implications related to the UNA pedagogical Model**

In the pedagogical model of the Universidad Nacional, teachers and students are the protagonists of the teaching and learning processes framed under their innovation and permanent updating where both undertake a dialogic relationship that favor the development and construction of knowledge and their integral development as individuals, in accordance with the national and international socio-historical context (Preamble General Regulations on the Teaching and Learning Processes of the National University, 2006). At the National University, the teacher is conceived as co-responsible for generating a transformational process enriched by knowledge, experiences, relationships, and context as factors that enrich the teacher-student and student-student dialogical interactions. The teaching function intended by the UNA pedagogical model targets are to facilitate and encourage the student community to develop skills and capacities for research, creation, discovery, and knowledge construction through a rich learning context that promotes varied learning opportunities, reflection, participation, cooperative work, innovation, respect, self-confidence, and learning styles.

In order to adopt this vision of teaching, students need to be encouraged to acquire enough confidence to develop their own voice, ideas, academic growth and decision-making. This means acknowledging that students have the right to make mistakes, devote time and space to deal with

them as key steps to intellectual construction. Under this premise, the model views students as active participants in constructing their learning process and progress. The teaching vision is expected to remain in motion, redefined or adjusted as needed based on the contributions made from classroom experience, research, and the community which serve to orient the educational curriculum towards relevant practice and intends to influence national social construction.

Consequentially, the emphasis placed throughout this dissertation on the need and relevance that ICC represents in the context of language teaching and learning meets and responds to the vision described in the UNA pedagogical model. This study correlates and sheds some light on achieving integral learning objectives. Approaching intercultural language instruction has significant implications in empowering and strengthening learners' target language, knowledge, skills, competences, attitudes, and global perspectives as instrumental to facing the challenges of the twenty-first century from a position that is not self-restrained, closed or rigid but rather collaborative, comprehensive, transformative, and active that allows successful intercultural interactions in this ever-changing world. Learners participating in the experimental group acknowledged the need to improve transparent communication. Again, students seem to have insights about the crucial tool that communication can be in a global connected world.

### **10.3.3 Implications for language and intercultural learning in EFL contexts**

The literature reviewd for this dissertation suggests that more empirical and pedagogical experiments in the classroom are needed in order to explore the teaching of ICC in foreign language contexts. In the Costa Rican context, there is an undoubtable need for empirical studies to advance towards redefining the language instruction since research in this area is scarce. Scientific data and empirical praxis results provide interested educators tools to deepen and materialize their interest

into offering an intercultural language teaching perspective. In my experience as a teacher-researcher, the lack of such guidance presented a challenge since few scientific results from actual classroom integration were available. The gap between theoretical approximations and actual ICC teaching praxis does not help to motivate language educators willing to embark on such a quest. Therefore, there is a demand for more empirical research that can bridge the gap between ICC theory and practice in EFL particular contexts. For instance, arguments in favor of integrating language and culture should reorient and boost language educators' motivation and responsibility to bring intercultural language objectives into their pedagogy.

The arguments in favor are well discussed and claim that language and culture are inextricably interdependent and understanding the target language culture improves the understanding of the language (Yang & Chen, 2006). The notion discussed by Van Ek and supporters explains that language learning, both form and use, does not fully entitle and enable learners to transparently and successfully communicate through a foreign, second language or English as a lingua franca environments, especially when the context of societies are interconnected, multicultural and global.

Findings in this study suggest that students in the Costa Rican context are eager to learn how the world unfolds. This is a generation of students born in a different world, a world in which technology has impacted life in many different areas. The influence of technology on life has shrunk the world and it is feasible to feel and experience the world in its multidivergent versions. Students sense and recognize the need to acquire knowledge and skills to engage professionally and interpersonally in the world around them successfully. In the words of Deardorff (2009), "more people than ever before in the history of the world now have both direct and indirect contact with each other, and increasingly, this contact includes people from a variety of diverse language and cultural backgrounds" ( p. 456). In this context, it is vital to promote more efficient and effective

ways of learning the target language which can also serve to mimick the real-world leading learners to feel empowered by the acquisition of not only the target language but also the competencies that would be of practical use in their future careers. In this respect, we need to revisit the teaching and learning of a foreign language goals, cultivating students' intercultural communicative competence in real-life situations. These goals are not achievable if the cultural element is not included as a fundamental objective along with linguistic aims.

This study has proven that by combining teaching principles from CLIL and PBL, the traditional teaching model changes towards an innovative mediation offering students a multidivergent learning chance to intentionally experience the interconnection between language and culture. It was also noticed that students heightened their curiosity and interest in the target language because they linked it to a real communicative purpose. Quantitative and qualitative findings in this study have pointed out that many students found intercultural content useful and relevant to their careers and life when it helped them progress in the target language. It has also been found that having an intercultural language mediation supposes a differentiated and engaging teaching and learning experience maximized by the combination of two language approaches. As explored in this study, such combination facilitated language and intercultural competence advancement. Traditional methods are not adequately effective or active in reaching such aims.

The proposed CLIL and PBL method effectively fostered students' ICC at levels that proved they had incited interesting trajectories through the longitudinal study. Explicitly studying, discussing, reflecting, and assessing knowledge, practices, world views, products, visible and invisible peculiarities of foreign and native/home cultures within a foreign or second language learning environment has proven to be effective in offering an efficient, active, and meaningful way in which to reach nontraditional language goals which not only intend to focus on operational language use but center the individual at the core of the learning experience. This longitudinal

quasi-experiment results reveal that students are ready to start a process that would allow them to experience a differentiated, innovative English class where they are autonomously, constructively, and mindfully implicated in the lessons.

The discussion opened in this dissertation leads to thinking that it is feasible despite the complexities that may be posed across different contexts to target the development of the intercultural communicative competence in the classroom. For most of our students traveling at their stage of life is not possible. Therefore, it is fundamental that educational institutions provide integral language training in the classroom. Under appropriate pedagogical models, the classroom can be transformed into a place where students can be guided to be much more than workforce. The classroom emulates a social community where, through active pedagogical models, students are welcomed to experiment, practice, gain, improvise and fail in a safe, friendly like environment that should mimic the real world. Students must adopt strategies and develop habits to engage in the process of lifelong intercultural language learning where they can continuously and progressively get interested in mediating respectful and effective dialogic communicative acts, appreciating similarities, and respecting differences as a basis to building good relationships. These golden rules should be emphasized in English courses, specially at the tertiary educational level.

Another important pedagogical implication for the Costa Rican context is the need to extrapolate the explicit inclusion of the intercultural component in the integrated English courses offered at the UNA Chorotega Campus to other courses and to other levels of education. Results from this study advocate for curricular adjustments in order to explicitly integrate cultural aspects in the syllabus adopting a hybrid methodology to reach intercultural language objectives. A hybrid approach that stems from an active and constructivist learning and teaching perspective to meaningfully and authentically design the intercultural language experience where students are motivated on a regular basis to have an active, implicated and autonomous role based on reliable



data, content, and facts. As pointed out in this dissertation, the language classroom needs to meet the requirements to become a place or space that mirrors interactions out in the real world. It is advisable and proven effective to implement a methodology that facilitates sufficient opportunities to plant the intercultural seed and raise learners' awareness of their own and foreign cultures' views, values, facts, world vision, practices, and perceptions. To achieve this task, teachers do not necessarily have to become specialists in particular cultures. The role the language educator is advised to adopt is that of a mediator, genuinely interested in enabling learners' development and progression in the language, which also means mediating intercultural aspects, proposing broader perspectives regarding critical issues and cultural components. Reexamining teachers' conceptions and beliefs of the kind of education students need in the 21<sup>st</sup> century can make a difference in their language praxis. To a certain extent, teachers need to rely on their creativity to meet the challenges that shifting from a traditional language teaching methodology may mean. The goal of proposing purposeful teaching requires a combination of methods, principles, objectives, and strategies to facilitate ICC, which must be explicit, intentional, and planned. Teachers should actively target and identify opportunities in their lessons to stimulate, inspire, and engage learners to meet intercultural competence objectives.

#### **10.3.4 Implications of findings in the curriculum (Intervention)**

Integrating intercultural language objectives at beginner levels in English courses, such as the longitudinal quasi-experiment conducted in Integrated English I and II offered at the National University of Costa Rica to different majors, resulted in a rewarding and meaningful experience for both the implicated language educators and the students. The quantitative and qualitative results support this claim. ICC learning objectives unveil a window to explore the teaching praxis from

different lenses and angles, transforming the teaching process, making it attractive, purposeful, and engaging for students to find applicability to real life. Learners' learning outcomes and results back up the proposed model and it can be claimed that the hybrid approach structured under a planned instruction effectively fosters intercultural learning that deals with knowledge, attitude, cultural awareness, and skills. The rationale of the course, which was intended to integrate students' ICC through the lessons, enhanced students' language skills usage for real purposes and activated in students the motivating factor while engaging them in deep intercultural conversations through the foreign language. Even if participants were at beginner level, at the end of the second intervention (second semester) students' oral and written expression improved. They also consolidated their command of intercultural skills associating cultural content with their previous knowledge. Thus, attitude and critical cultural awareness were extrapolated to their reactions, perspectives and comments in synchronous and asynchronous learning and language activities.

The integration of intercultural issues within foreign language teaching reactivates and redirects the curriculum to adapt to challenging transformations taking place outside the classroom. Redefining the curriculum in crucial emphatic narratives is no longer optional. It must become a reality where the instruments, tools, methodology, technology, and content are to be assessed and evaluated institutionally involving all actors in the educational process in terms of innovation, applicability, and needs. Studies have supported that a key element in learning a language is motivation. Based on the results of this study, participants in both the experimental and control groups agreed that culture plays a pivotal role when learning a language and that it is academically and personally beneficial to them. The experimental group also agreed that integrating intercultural content, tasks, and projects in the English lesson increases their motivation to learn languages by providing content novelty and actual applicability to what they learn.

## 10.4 Limitations

As any study conducted by and with humans this research has certain limitations since it has been carried out in the Costa Rican context. Therefore, findings should be addressed with caution when making broad generalizations or conclusions. Studies exploring the nature of culture and language, for that matter, should carefully assert generalizations across all contexts or populations. This does not mean that partial generalizations or findings are not possible in similar contexts or populations. Findings in this thesis are significant to the EFL field and provide insightful data and guidance into how to address ICC in tertiary education in the context of EFL in the Costa Rican context. Conclusions serve and can be generalized to other similar contexts and populations ,where there are similar tendencies for approaching native/home and foreign cultures in the language classroom.

One of the limitations of this research was the transition experienced from on-campus learning to remote learning. The health emergency caused by COVID-19 abruptly interrupted the on-campus face-to-face learning without much time and margin to replan and prepare for remote learning. The transition made interfered with the initial pedagogical proposal to intervene in the experimental group. Despite this, efforts were made to assure an articulated, organized, and efficient transition with the tools available at the time. Another limitation to highlight is that the data was gathered from one particular University campus during two semesters. There is a need to support this study with more generalized scientific investigations that go beyond empirical data to build on foundational evidence from both theory and praxis to deepen a comprehensive approach of pedagogical interventions to foster ICC in the context of EFL. Since there are no sufficient studies that take a longitudinal approach to explore the development of ICC in language teaching, connections among other research findings cannot be fully drawn. However, correlations have been

found to similar studies addressing the teaching of the intercultural competence in foreign/second language learning.

Moreover, the complexity of the issue and the lack of a general agreement on the culture construct has guided researchers to study, measure, and explore ICC in different ways, which has initially raised fundamental questions and challenges on how to approach and deal with the teaching of a broad notion of culture in the field of language teaching and learning. Some other challenges were identified by the researcher in terms of designing and planning the learning experience in four aspects: time-consuming, lack of time devoted during online meetings with students, the balance or weight placed on intercultural issues in the language class, limited contextualized intercultural teaching material availability, and teacher training in intercultural matters. According to Ronzon-Montiel (2019), there is an ineffable need and demand for teacher training on factors and skills that contribute to successful intercultural communication.

Intercultural language learning material needs to be suitable to the level, context, and interest of the particular population. This forces teachers to select instructional strategies and design, adapt and collect sources and material which is a challenging and time-demanding task for teachers. Finally, there has not yet been any further research studies addressing ICC through a combined approach of principles from CLIL and PBL. Therefore, this study is a pioneer work to infuse and motivate interest in scrutinizing effects and implications when implementing a combined approach to foster ICC.

## 10.5 Directions for future research

Future research interest generated from this particular study may replicate the pedagogical intervention on campus face-to-face learning, which was not possible due to the emergency caused by COVID-19. Likewise, it is suggested that the study be conducted in a broader English language educational context to further comprehend and verify the hypothesis formulated in this study and explore the pedagogical implications of implementing a hybrid approach of principles to foster ICC. Another aspect to be considered for future research concerns the ICC self-assessment scale which may be used to explore a subdimension of skills: the skills to interpret, relate, and discover proposed by Byram (1997, 2020). Other assessment tools may be used for a more comprehensive evaluation of learners' ICC progression in order to better understand how their the intercultural communicative competence may be developed in combination with the target language competence in the Costa Rican context.

Further research may continue the path initiated by this study by including more qualitative data, interviews, focus groups, and document analysis in order to examine more deeply participants' performance and data regarding the effects of fostering intercultural language teaching and learning through a hybrid CLIL and PBL approach. For example, semi-structured interviews with participants in the experimental group could provide more detailed and specific data on how they viewed and experienced the English lessons mediated with intercultural tasks and projects. This would also provide more information about other aspects that have not been addressed in this research.

Another interesting aspect that may require further consideration and examination is looking at the specific factors that contribute to students' ICC development in terms of attitudes

and critical cultural awareness. This could be investigated by placing more emphasis on students' products and assessment. On the basis that intercultural communicative competence development is a lifelong process that requires instruction, it would also be interesting to observe and study how much of this initial ICC development, after these two semesters' intervention is maintained through time in order to support the generalizability of the findings of this study. Moreover, an issue that is fundamental in effectively teaching and developing students' ICC is training language teachers in the use and mediation of specific strategies to facilitate an intercultural language experience. Exploring the role of the educators in fostering intercultural awareness in the EFL classroom should be a critical focus for future research.

## **10.6 Overall Conclusions**

This dissertation emphasizes the need to foster ICC in Costa Rican tertiary education in the context of English as a foreign language. It proves that it is feasible to integrate the intercultural dimension into the language curriculum to mediate language and culture aims. The study confirms that learners' intercultural communicative competence can be enhanced in the English acquisition process through appropriately integrated teaching content and a hybrid teaching model of principles. It is reasonable to believe that such findings and pedagogy applied are valuable and applicable to the Costa Rican EFL context.

This dissertation contributes to the body of literature supporting language goals oriented towards fostering an intercultural dimension in the Costa Rican tertiary EFL education. It offers a new path to be explicitly considered and intentionally integrated into the language curriculum to foster an intercultural communicative competence learning experience since the study shows that, with appropriately integrated ICC content and a hybrid instructional approach, learners'

intercultural competence can be enhanced significantly across time impacting their EFL educational process positively. These findings are believed to be meaningful, valuable, and, above all, pertinent to the Costa Rican EFL context. The data reveal that during the interventions the levels of ICC increased remarkably, specially during intervention II implemented in the second semester. The hybrid methodology and the tasks and materials contributed to help participants in the experimental group to demonstrate their ability to interpret, compare, distinguish, identify, and critically reflect about a cultural product, values, and practices from native/home and foreign cultures.

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## **APPENDICES**

**Appendix A: ICC Self-Assessment Scale**



**VNiVERSiDAD  
D SALAMANCA**

**Instrument:** ICC Self-assessment

**Objective:** Assessing oneself intercultural communicative competence components.

**Directions:** Respond to the items in each of the four categories (knowledge, attitude, skills, and awareness) below, using the scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

(1) strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neither agree nor disagree (4) agree (5) strongly agree

**1. Intercultural Knowledge**

1 2 3 4 5

1. I know relevant aspects of my own culture (e.g., the Tico identity trajectory).
2. I can articulate the aspects related to my culture's national memory; historical and socio-political moments that have shaped my national identity.
3. I know about the contribution of indigenous peoples and other migratory groups to my native culture.
4. I know about the Costa Rican heritage in different extents, folklore, rhythms, customs, celebrations, and traditions, and of some other cultures.
5. I know legends, proverbs, or stories from other cultures and from my native culture to establish similarities and differences.
6. I can describe and contrast aspects of my own culture with people from other cultures (e.g., economy, living conditions, educational system, behaviors, social interactions, daily routines, family, work, and time orientation).
7. I know the critical social norms and values of the Costa Rican culture (or native culture) and of some other cultures.
8. I identify aspects of verbal and non-verbal communication styles in different cultures.
9. I know about the cultural dimension of individualism and collectivism in my native culture and that of some others.
10. I know about some cultural cues of business etiquette in my culture and of others.
11. I know about blue zones, their lifestyle, the concept of happiness, time, and success in my culture and of some other cultures.
12. I know about the concept and importance of intercultural communicative competence and that of global citizenship.

**2. Critical cultural awareness**

1 2 3 4 5

1. Developing intercultural competence is necessary in a country like Costa Rica.
2. I am aware of the cultural diversity of my country and consider it a valuable opportunity that enriches my English learning process.
3. Learning about my culture and other cultures develops my curiosity and critical cultural awareness.
4. I show interest in learning about other points of view beyond my own cultural reference through the learning of English.

5. I recognize that the values, beliefs, behaviors, and lifestyle of my own culture are not unique or better.
6. I try to adapt my way of communicating in English as needed when interacting with culturally diverse people.
7. I am aware of the importance of highlighting differences and similarities between my own Costa Rican (or native) culture with that of other cultures for positive purposes.
8. I reflect on my own cultural prejudices and stereotypes towards other culturally different people.

---

**3. Attitude**

1 2 3 4 5

1. I am interested in learning English while reinforcing knowledge of my Costa Rican or native culture and of some others.
2. I feel comfortable and interested when interacting in English with other culturally different people.
3. I understand the importance of learning about similarities and differences between cultures of other countries and of my own culture while learning English.
4. I am interested in understanding differences in behaviors, values, attitudes, and lifestyles of culturally different people.
5. I try to adapt my behavior to communicate appropriately with people from different cultures.
6. I maintain an open attitude towards different points of view in favor of tolerance and empathy towards people from other cultures.
7. I am aware of the need to learn, preserve, and share my Costa Rican or native culture.
8. I maintain a positive disposition towards learning English and the development of intercultural communicative competence.

---

**4. Skills**

1 2 3 4 5

1. I demonstrate flexibility when interacting with people from different cultures, as I draw on my intercultural knowledge (verbal, non-verbal communication, proxemics, time orientation).
  2. I exhibit empathy and respect to people who have different world views, values, and behaviors.
  3. I use some strategies to support my English learning process and the intercultural component. (Native and foreign cultures)
  4. I contribute, through example, to the construction of a multicultural society based on respect, empathy, and the promotion of global citizenship.
  5. I relate my intercultural knowledge to new situations in favor of effective communication without making judgments.
  6. I compare different cultural practices, behaviors, and traditions with those of my own culture.
  7. I can use a combination of intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes to interact with culturally different people to promote mutual understanding.
  8. I analyze content and situations from different cultural perspectives in order to learn and grow personally and academically.
  9. I can disseminate aspects of my Costa Rican culture in English
  10. I propose and develop projects that help me understand cultural aspects from my community.
-

## Appendix B. Intercultural Formative Quiz

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Instrument: Intercultural Quiz

Objective: Assessing intercultural concepts and strategies

Instructions: This quiz consists of two parts with multiple choice questions and situations. Read each question and situation and choose the option with the answer you think is correct.

---

### Part I. Multiple choice

**1.A Read each of the questions and circle the option with the answer you think is correct.**

1) Which of the following represents a comprehensive definition of culture?

- a) An academic term that describes the members of a nation.
- b) The music, territories, and architecture of a specific group of people.
- c) The language, values, beliefs, traditions, and customs that people share and learn.

2) What does it mean to become an intercultural speaker?

- a) The willingness to learn a foreign language.
- b) The ability to fully integrate in a foreign country.
- c) The ability to communicate with people who speak a different language and live in a different cultural context.

3) What does the metaphor "culture is like an iceberg" refer to?

- a) The idea that being in an unfamiliar culture seems cold or uncomfortable.
- b) The need to break the ice in a new cultural environment.
- c) The idea that, in a culture, certain things are obvious on the surface, but are only the tip of the iceberg.

4) What are two factors in intercultural communicative competence?

- a) Knowledge and skills.
- b) Interpretation and understanding.
- c) Education and discovery.

5) Which of the following concepts refers to members of a culture perceiving their culture is superior to that of others?

- a) Tolerance of ambiguity.
- b) Intercultural competence.
- c) Ethnocentrism.

6) Which of the following is considered an element of prejudice?

- a) Distance to power.
-

- 
- b) Stereotyping.
  - c) Intercultural incompetence.

7) Which of the following corresponds to a value in American culture?

- a) Individualism.
- b) Collectivism.
- c) Willingness to work.

8) Which option represents a value in the Costa Rican culture?

- a) Individualism.
  - b) Collectivism.
  - c) Orientation to the future.
- 

## II Part. Intercultural Situations

**The following are some intercultural situations, try to imagine each situation and choose the response that best answers each question. For each case choose only one option.**

9) Karla Granados participated in a student exchange during a semester in New York, USA. During a subway ride, she is surprised that New Yorkers do not respond to her friendly greeting and smile. Later, she learns that New Yorkers generally do not talk to strangers on the subway as a way of maintaining their privacy in a busy city. How should Karla interpret the situation?

- a) She understands that New Yorkers are "hostile".
- b) She understands New Yorkers in their behavior from her own frame of reference.
- c) She understands that she should formally behave on the subway.

10) A young man, visitor from England is invited to a birthday party in Costa Rica. He was invited at 6:00 p.m. to share a small celebration with other friends. When the young man arrives at 5:50 p.m., the Costa Rican friend is not home. While the boy waits, other friends begin to arrive at the birthday party 15 minutes after the appointed time. At 6:20 p.m., the birthday boy arrives with food and refreshments, smiles, and greets everyone. Which cultural aspect is reflected in the situation described?

- a) It is rush hour, so he arrived late.
- b) The Costa Rican friend probably forgot the celebration.
- c) Some members of Costa Rican culture consider it normal to be flexible with time.

11) Donatello and his family immigrated to the United States from Italy. Donatello was fortunate to have had English classes in Italy, where he learned about verbal and nonverbal styles of communication in the U.S. What kind of knowledge did he learn?

- a) Personal
- b) Cultural
- c) General

12) Julia, an outstanding student from Perez Zeledón, went to the United States to work for a successful company. She has been very excited to study the company's mission and vision in order to contribute to the company's growth. What other recommendation should Julia consider when working under a U.S. supervisor?

- a) Always follow his or her instructions without question.
-

- 
- b) Never indicate that you do not understand an instruction.
  - c) Maintain direct and honest communication about work and progress.

13) During a business fair, a Costa Rican entrepreneur presents his line of artisanal ice cream. During the day, he has interacted with potential customers. His latest interaction is happening with a Chinese investor, it is proving to be a very fruitful conversation, and now it is time to give him his business card. How should he proceed?

- a) Consider that paper cards are obsolete, he should give him data through a text message.
- b) He should present and carefully hand over a business card
- c) He takes out a card and writes down his contact information.

14) Jimena is an employee of a tourism company in Guanacaste, and she is interested in hiring a German consultancy, but her company does not have the budget to pay the full cost of the service. So, she made them an offer during an online meeting. They told her they would think about it. How can Jimena persuade them to accept her offer?

- a) Write an enthusiastic email stating her interest
- b) Write an email asking when they expect to make a decision.
- c) Send a polite thank you note for the meeting and wait.

15) Two students from North America are visiting the National University of Costa Rica. At the end of a class session, a Costa Rican student says to Hannah and Sarah, "You look tired. Although they both understand, Sarah takes it as a comforting message and Hannah thinks she has been criticized. What is the intercultural problem?

- a) Different symbols are associated with the message.
  - b) Cultural shock.
  - c) Different meanings are associated with the message.
-

**Appendix C. ICC Hybrid Approach Perspective Questionnaire**



VNiVERSiDAD  
D SALAMANCA

**Instrument:** ICC Hybrid principles approach learning perspectives

The development of intercultural communicative competence using a hybrid/ combined approach of CLIL and PBL has been the subject of this research.

**Objective:** Exploring students’ learning experience perspectives towards the ICC learning through the hybrid approach in the foreign language classroom.

**Directions:** Rate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following items in each of the three categories (impact, benefits, and satisfaction) below. Use the scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 means strongly disagree, 2 means disagree, 3 means neither agree nor disagree, 4 means agree, and 5 means strongly agree).

The information and data you provide will be kept confidential. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study.

(1) strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neither agree nor disagree (4) agree (5) strongly agree

**I. Impact of the CLIL and PBL combination on English language proficiency**    1   2   3   4   5

1. The combination of CLIL and PBL has helped me to develop my intercultural communicative competence.
2. I feel more confident about speaking English after having studied the intercultural units with the combined approach of CLIL and PBL.
3. The combined approach has helped me to better understand a variety of intercultural content.
4. The combination of CLIL and PBL has significantly improved my English written expression when writing journals.
5. I have learned new vocabulary, basic grammatical structures, and expressions in English from the units studied using the combined methodology.
6. After working on the intercultural units using the combined methodologies, I have learned a variety of content relevant to real situations.
7. I have improved my communicative competence thanks to the combination of these methodologies.

**II. Benefits of the CLIL and PBL hybrid approach to the ICC learning experience**    1   2   3   4   5

8. I have acquired knowledge that helps me to become an intercultural speaker.
9. I have actively participated in the class discussions by contributing to the intercultural analysis, and reflection using the target language.



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10. I have a better understanding of the varied, intercultural content while using English.

11. I have learned to appreciate cultural nuances and their role in the process of learning English.

12. I believed the combined methodologies facilitated meaningful learning and critical cultural awareness.

13. The units mediated by the combined approach changed my attitude toward learning English.

14. The combined methodology guided me to assume an active and autonomous role in increasing my English language skills.

**III. Level of satisfaction with the tasks, projects, topics, and resources used during the implementation of CLIL and PBL hybrid approach.** 1 2 3 4 5

15. The activities, tasks, and journals guided me to reflect on my own and other cultures.

16. The projects and tasks promoted my collaborative and cognitive skills (critical thinking and creativity).

17. I found the topics and units interesting and contextualized to my reality.

18. The resources and materials (stories, videos, readings, movies, texts) engaged me in authentic learning situations.

19. The proposed projects and activities allowed me to broaden my intercultural perspective and my role as a global citizen.

20. The learning tasks and projects motivated me to improve my English learning process.

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## Appendix D. English and ICC Learning Perspectives Questionnaire

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VNiVERSiDAD  
D SALAMANCA

### Questionnaire

Objective: Identifying the perception of Integrated English students from different majors about the intercultural component in the learning of English through the combination of two learning approaches (Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and Project-Based Learning (PBL)).

Dear student: This instrument collects important data from students taking Integrated English I and II at the National University of Costa Rica, Chorotega campus. The collected data will be of vital relevance to verify the appropriateness and effectiveness of the combination of two learning approaches (Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and Project-Based Learning (PBL)) to promote intercultural communicative competence in the English classroom. This questionnaire will gather data on your experience, perception, knowledge, and skills in relation to intercultural communicative competence. In that sense, we truly appreciate your cooperation in answering the questions and statements below. The information you provide is important for the development of this study. The data provided will be treated with professionalism and discretion. Thank you very much.

Instructions: Please answer the following questions honestly.

#### Section I. Student profile (General Information)

1. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Gender: male ( ) \_\_\_\_ female ( ) \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Nationality: \_\_\_\_\_
  4. State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_
  5. Degree: \_\_\_\_\_
  6. Current year of study at the University of Costa Rica: 1st year \_\_\_\_\_ 2nd year \_\_\_\_\_ 3rd year \_\_\_\_\_ 4th year \_\_\_\_\_
  7. School where you attended: \_\_\_\_\_ private ( ) public ( )
  8. Number of years studying English:  
\_\_\_\_\_ One year. \_\_\_\_\_ 1-2 years. \_\_\_\_\_ 2-3 years. \_\_\_\_\_ 4 years or more
- 

#### Section II. English language learning experience and perspectives

- 1) Why do you study English?
    - a. Because it is a required course.
    - b. Because I like it, it helps me in my personal and professional development.
    - c. Because it allows me to communicate when traveling.
    - d. Because it allows me to learn about other cultures.
-

- 
- 2) How would you rate your performance in English?
- Excellent
  - Good
  - Regular
  - Poor
- 3) What language skill have you focused on in your English classes?
- Grammar and vocabulary
  - Grammar, vocabulary and reading
  - Language skills and intercultural communication
  - Language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing).
- 4) What do you consider to be your strength in the English language?
- Grammar and vocabulary
  - Reading comprehension
  - Oral communication and listening comprehension
  - The four language skills
- 5) Do you think that the teaching methods used by English teachers have been effective in your English learning process?
- Always
  - Almost always
  - Sometimes
  - Never
- 6) Do class assignments and activities benefit your English learning process?
- Always
  - Almost always.
  - Sometimes.
  - Never
- 7) Do you enjoy participating, reflecting, analyzing, questioning, and sharing ideas in your English class?
- Always
  - Almost always.
  - Sometimes.
  - Never
- 8) Is communication, reflection, analysis, and discussion of varied intercultural content encouraged in your English classes?
- Always
  - Almost always
  - Sometimes
  - Never
- 9) What areas of the English language would you like to improve?
- Listening and speaking
-

- 
- b. Reading and writing
  - c. The four language skills
  - d. Language skills and intercultural communication

10) Do you know what intercultural communicative competence means?

- a. Yes
- b. No

11) How would you self-evaluate your intercultural communicative competence?

- a. Excellent
- b. Good
- c. Regular
- d. Deficient

12) Have you learned intercultural content from your own culture and that of other cultures in your English classes?

- a. Yes
- b. No

13) Do you consult references, digital resources, or watch videos, documentaries, and movies in English to learn about other cultures and your own?

- a. Always
- b. Almost always
- c. Sometimes
- d. Never

14) How important is it to learn about cultural aspects of both your own culture and other cultures in your English classes?

- a. Very important
- b. Important
- c. Not so important
- d. Not important at all

15) Do you think learning about cultures benefits you academically and professionally?

- a. Yes
- b. No

16) How important is it to learn about foreign cultures to reinforce your knowledge of your own culture?

- a. Very important
- b. Important
- c. Not so important
- d. Not important at all

17) Are you interested in learning about foreign cultures and Costa Rican (or native) culture while learning English?

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a. Yes

b. No

18) Do you feel that English teaching methods have been effective in developing intercultural communicative competence?

a. Yes

b. No

19) Do you consider that intercultural communicative competence is promoted by the content activities, projects, and homework assigned in your English classes?

a. Always

b. Almost always

c. Sometimes

d. Never

20) How beneficial have been the authentic, digital (audiovisual) resources used in the development of your intercultural communicative competence and in your English performance?

a. Very beneficial

b. Beneficial

c. Somewhat beneficial

d. Not at all beneficial

21) Do you believe that the intercultural content should be included in the English language teaching curriculum?

a. Yes

b. No

22) Have you studied English using the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) method?

a. Yes

b. No

23) How effective are English classes that use the language as a vehicle to learn varied and intercultural content?

a. Very effective

b. Effective

c. Somewhat effective

d. Not at all effective

24) Have you studied English using the Project-Based Learning (PBL) approach?

a. Yes

b. No

25) Do you consider that the use of projects engages students in active, collaborative, and effective English language skills development?

a. Yes

b. No

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26) Is English language learning through a combined approach (CLIL/PBL methods) effective and meaningful to develop intercultural communicative competence?

- a. Yes
- b. No

27) Do you think that the combination of methods (CLIL/PBL) increases your motivation towards learning English by offering varied learning activities?

- a. Yes
- b. No

28) How beneficial is project-based learning and content and language integrated learning in the development of cognition, communication, and critical thinking?

- a. Very beneficial
- b. Beneficial
- c. Somewhat beneficial
- d. Not at all beneficial

29) Do you agree that English language teaching can be more beneficial when two teaching methods are combined to improve linguistic ability and intercultural communicative competence?

- a. Yes
- b. No

30) Do you agree that English classes should integrate the intercultural component by combining CLIL and PBL methodologies?

- a. Yes
  - b. No
-

## Appendix E. ICC Assessment Rubric

Criteria	4 Exemplary	3 Accomplished	2 Developing	1 Beginning	0 below
<b>Intercultural Knowledge</b>	Exhibits a sophisticated understanding of key cultural elements, processes, institutions, social distinctions, differences, and perspectives in one's own culture and that of others.  Uses and applies Intercultural, knowledge, and intercultural citizenship notions.	Exhibits interest and understanding of key cultural elements, differences, and perspectives in one's own culture and that of others. Uses and applies some Intercultural knowledge and intercultural citizenship notions.	Exhibits partial interest and understanding of the key cultural elements, differences, and perspectives in one's own culture and that of others.  Identifies certain Intercultural knowledge and intercultural citizenship notions.	Minimally interested or aware of the key cultural elements, differences, and perspectives in one's own culture and that of others.  Limited portrayed Intercultural knowledge and intercultural citizenship notions.	Is not interested in knowing, identifying, or understanding one's own culture and that of others, regarding key cultural elements, differences, and perspectives—no awareness of global citizenship.
<b>Intercultural Skills</b>	Recognizes the need to outlook intercultural divergence from one's culture and multicultural view while acquiring knowledge of cultural practices and reacting empathetic and supportive in negotiating insights. Ability to interpret a document/event to relate it to documents from one's own.	Recognizes the need to outlook intercultural divergence through more than one cultural view to engage in fruitful communication and shared insights. At times show the ability to interpret a document/event to relate it to documents from one's own.	Distinguish some intercultural divergence in communication, mindful of potential misunderstandings but fails to fully respond or react with a multicultural frame to reach fruitful negotiation and shared insights. Developing the ability to interpret document/event to relate it to documents from one's own.	Displays limited awareness and understanding of multiple cultural perspectives when communicating, portrays constrained willingness to reach fruitful negotiation and shared insights due to takes a single cultural view. Limited ability to interpret documents/events.	Displays no awareness and understanding of other cultural differences when communicating, does not portray willingness to reach fruitful negotiation and shared insights no display of the ability to interpret documents/event.
<b>Intercultural Attitudes</b>	Exhibits interest, openness, and receptiveness to other ideas while asking complex questions about other cultures, seeking to learn more. Thus, suspends judgment towards culturally different people.	Exhibits interest, openness, and receptiveness about other cultures while asking deeper questions about other cultures, seeking to learn more. Thus, begins to suspend judgment towards culturally different people.	Exhibits some degree of interest, openness, and receptiveness  about other cultures while asking basic questions about other cultures. Thus, is aware of own judgment and shows a willingness to change.	Demonstrates minimal interest and receptiveness in learning more about other cultures. Has difficulty suspending judgments about culturally different people.	Exhibits no receptiveness nor interest in learning more about other cultures.  Unable to suspend judgments about culturally different people.
<b>Critical Culture awareness</b>	Student shows a highly developed awareness of one's own and others' culture.  Can express a full understanding of a diverse society.	Student shows proficient awareness of own culture and others' culture.  Can express understanding of a diverse society.	Student shows certain traits leading to awareness of one's own culture and others' culture.  Can express certain understanding of diverse society.	Student shows rudimentary awareness of own culture and others' culture.  Limited recognition and understanding of a diverse society and the value of	Student fails to show awareness of own culture and others' culture  in a meaningful way.  Demonstrates a minimal recognition

	Can fully articulate, interpret, analyze and evaluate critically intercultural values, behavior, and events using reasoning while demonstrating a comprehensive understanding and recognition of the value of cultural differences.	Can adequately articulate, interpret and evaluate intercultural values and events using reasoning while identifying the value of exploring cultural differences.	Can partly articulate, interpret and evaluate intercultural values and events using reasoning while identifying the value of exploring cultural differences.	differences of exploring differences.	and understanding of a
<b>Language Use</b>	Can communicate ideas related to predictable situations in reasonably correct sentence structure, consisting of simple, learned expressions.	Can communicate basic ideas using simple structures. Not a consistent control of basic grammar. / Good command of basic grammar but may commit errors in certain language elements (pronouns, subject omission, subject-verb agreement, verb tense, word order, vocabulary)—some initial signs of a developing autonomy as a language user.	Can form simple, basic sentences to communicate some ideas but shows some problems with basic grammar (question formation and basic verb tenses, word order, vocabulary). Frequent grammar mistakes (subject omission, agreement, wrong verb tenses) / message is sometimes unclear. Still, the basics for communicative interaction are exhibited.	Shows narrow interpretation of intercultural values and events through reasoning.	diverse society and the value of exploring differences.
	Clear signs of developing autonomy as a language user. Very good control of basic grammar (word order, sentence/question formation, pronouns, basic verb tenses). May require a sympathetic interlocutor at times but can get message across most of the times.	Requires a sympathetic listener at times, but the message gets across.	Often requires a sympathetic listener.	Many grammar mistakes make comprehension difficult / Communication is limited to basic phrases, vague, fragmented ideas, and message.	Not able to use language structures to convey the message.
	Speech is generally fluent and controlled in predictable studied situations. Can sustain basic interaction and understands relevant terms, asks/answers basic questions, keeps the conversation going, uses conversation. Uses strategies to achieve communicative purposes.	Few lapses of fluency pauses, search for words / Can sustain basic interaction with little difficulty and may have occasional problems understanding concepts, may need repetition to keep the conversation going—good use of basic communicative strategies.	Occasional lapses of fluency, some pauses to search for the correct words. / Can sustain basic interaction with some difficulty—generally good use of some communicative strategies.	Communication is needed to try to get the message across. A sympathetic listener has difficulties understanding the interlocutor.	Cannot communicate a basic message due to serious grammar errors, inconsistencies, and sentence structure (no subject, no control of basic verb tenses, poor sentence/question formation, subject-verb agreement) Frequent resort to L1 words, phrases, or structure
					Speech is so fragmented that conversation is not fruitful.
					No use of communicative strategies.

Partly based on AACU LEAP Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Rubric Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) Critical Thinking VALUE Rubric. Retrieved from <https://www.aacu.org/value-rubrics>



## Appendix F. Experts Validation



REPÚBLICA BOLIVARIANA DE VENEZUELA  
UNIVERSIDAD DEL ZULIA  
FACULTAD DE HUMANIDADES Y EDUCACIÓN  
DIVISIÓN DE ESTUDIOS PARA GRADUADOS  
MARACAIBO - VENEZUELA

### Constancia de Validación

Yo, **Dra. Mariela R. Arrieta Soto** C. I. V. : V-9.783.277

Por medio de la presente, hago constar que he validado el instrumento para recolectar los datos de la investigación titulada: **Promoción de la competencia comunicativa intercultural mediante la combinación de "AICLE" y "ABP" en la educación superior**, que se encuentra a cargo de la doctoranda: Karol Cubero Vásquez, perteneciente a la Escuela de Doctorado de la Universidad de Salamanca.

Constancia que se expide a petición de la parte interesada en Montreal, Canadá, a los tres días del mes de marzo del año 2020.

  
Firma de la Experta

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### Constancia de Validación

Yo, **Jhonny Saulo Villafuerte Holguin** documento de identidad de Ecuador 1305799073.

Por medio de la presente, hago constar que he validado los instrumentos para recolectar los datos de la investigación titulada: **Promoción de la competencia comunicativa intercultural mediante la combinación de "AICLE" Y "ABP"** en la educación superior, que se encuentra a cargo de la doctoranda: Karol Cubero Vásquez, perteneciente a la Escuela de Doctorado de la Universidad de Salamanca, España.



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Firma del Experto  
Jhonny.villafuerte@uleam.edu.ec  
ULEAM

## Appendix G. Research Authorization: UNA, Sede Regional Chorotega



Liberia 23 de Enero de 2020  
UNA-LI-D-OFFIC-06-2020

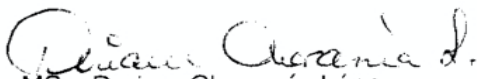
MSc. Karol Cubero Vásquez  
Académica  
Sede Regional Chorotega

Estimada señora:

El Decanato de la Sede Regional Chorotega, brinda el visto bueno para llevar a cabo un estudio sobre la "Promoción de la competencia comunicativa intercultural mediante la combinación de AICLE y ABP en la educación superior"; bajo la supervisión de la tutora María Luisa Rodríguez, de la Escuela de doctorado de la Universidad de Salamanca. Esta investigación se realizará desde febrero.

Se avala que la investigación se realice con estudiantes de primer ingreso que cursan Inglés Integrado I en la Sede Regional Chorotega de la Universidad Nacional, Campus Liberia y Campus Nicoya; durante el año 2020.

Cordialmente,

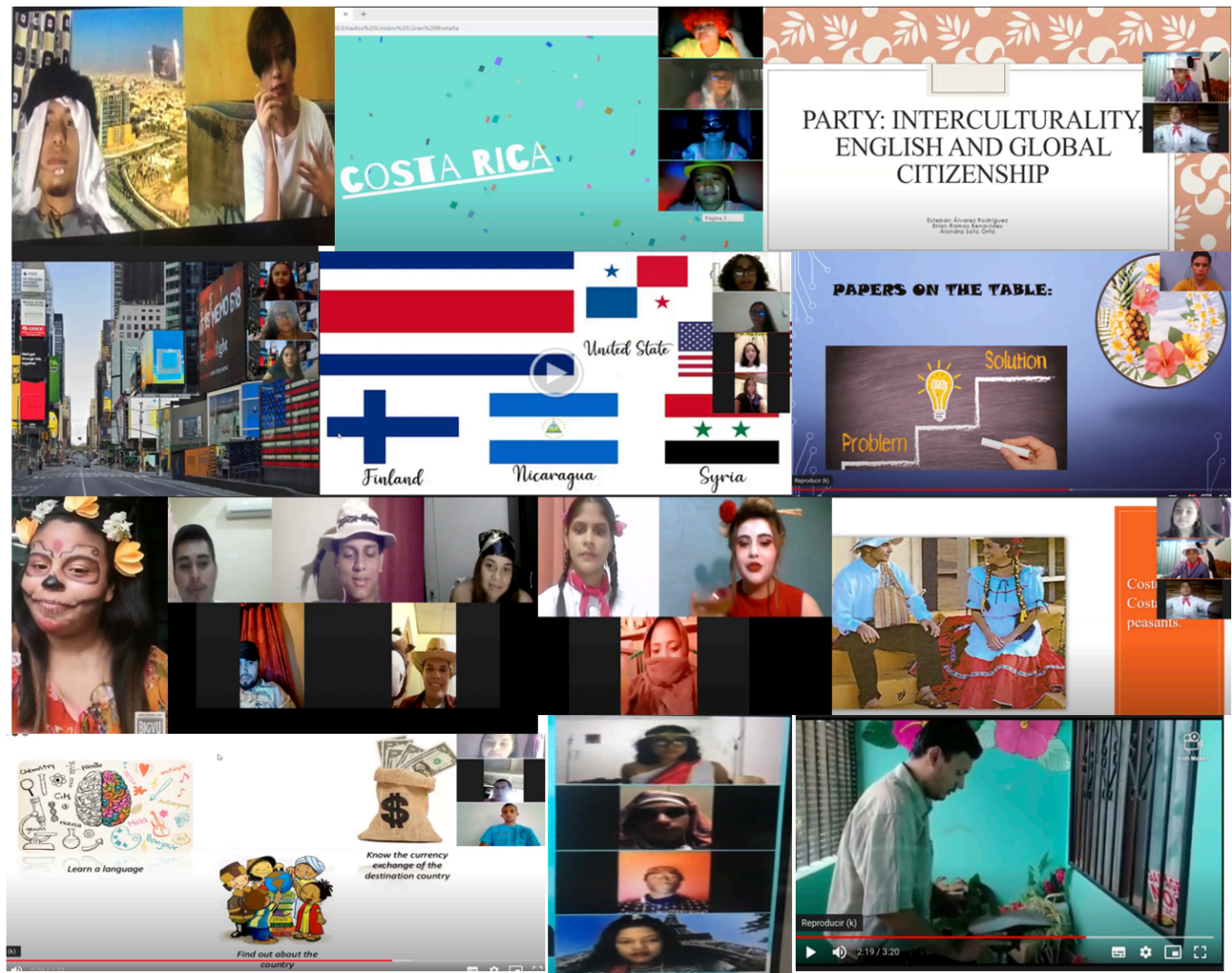
  
MSc. Dorian Chavarría López  
Decana a.i.  
Sede Regional Chorotega



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### Appendix H. Students' Interaction Photos



*Note. Photos showing students' interaction during the intercultural lessons.*

