

Intercultural Competence Acquisition: A Formative Perspective

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Abstract—Intercultural competence must be developed in a transversal direction so that future graduates can coexist and achieve excellent labor performance. This research aims to describe the acquisition progression of intercultural competence in prospective translators and interpreters currently studying at a private university and its influence on an effective communication process. A quantitative approach was applied, and the study was a non-experimental cross-sectional design, given that the variables were not intentionally manipulated. Quantitative data from undergraduate students of the translation and interpreting school (n=51) was collected through a questionnaire validated by expert judgment regarding the construct, and Cronbach's alpha was applied to verify reliability, giving a result $\alpha=0.97$. The results established through the analysis of the data collected by the intercultural competence questionnaire show that the participants have developed intercultural awareness at an intermediate level and cultural skills and sensitivity at a high level, evidencing that strategies should be implemented to accomplish a homogeneous development of intercultural competence. Findings undoubtedly demonstrate that students have overall acquired their intercultural competence at a high level so that they can manage all the cultural aspects from the source and target languages, possessing suitable intercultural awareness, skills, and sensitivity, which will effectively influence when they perform a translation process professionally, and guarantee effective communication.

Index Terms—communicative competence, intercultural communication, translation, higher education, professional training.

I. INTRODUCTION

Intercultural competence needs to be developed transversally to guarantee that future professionals can coexist and achieve optimal performance in their working environments. Currently, knowing the multiculturalism of different societies does not imply traveling outside the country to live experiences with people from other cultures since interculturalism is present in numerous actions that occur every day (De Santos, 2018). Therefore, it is crucial to incorporate the development of competence that leads individuals to interact positively, creating open environments and developing interaction that generates short-term socialization processes despite cultural differences (Rodríguez et al., 2023). Thus, interculturality seeks to regulate a change in the relations between the communities on the planet and promote a reciprocal acceptance of their diverse cultural manifestations (Basail, 2022).

This competence involves a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills, as well as appropriate characteristics that effectively support adequate interaction in the varied cultural contexts that may arise not only in professional practice but also in daily life due to technological progress and globalization trends. It is worth mentioning that globalization is understood as a phenomenon that requires the formation of glocal citizens, individuals who understand their role in their community as in the world, and interrelate with others to build a more equitable, bearable, and peaceful world (Prado, 2021).

Thus, the need to implement intercultural and inclusive training comes to light and has ceased to be a mere objective for some nations and training systems to become an important purpose in pending activities worldwide (Podestá et al., 2022). Consequently, higher education is no stranger to this aim and has established itself as a challenge for universities that are looking forward to achieving it. These institutions must guarantee the promotion of a formative interaction system that certifies the identification and acceptance of cultural inequalities and similarities throughout the development of a set of capabilities, skills, and attitudes that lead to the achievement of this objective, that is, the acquisition of intercultural

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competence.

Internationally, higher education institutions claim to provide their students with a global citizen's vision since the acquisition of intercultural competence stands as a key achievement that future professionals should attain during their formative years. Nevertheless, the results do not reflect this assertion. Universities have established internationalization procedures and programs based on studying abroad, basically assuming that through these experiences, students will acquire the desired intercultural competence. There are some disagreements about this approach, especially about what and how to evaluate, whether this competence has been achieved, and if it has been obtained adequately (Sierra-Huedo & Nevado-Llopis, 2022). The need to evaluate the level of effectiveness of this practice arises, as well as the necessity to plan and carry out some other actions that lead to the efficient achievement of intercultural competence.

A similar reality is observed in Latin America. Academic and teaching mobility is included as a strategy for the formation of skills associated with the acquisition of intercultural competence; nonetheless, it does not foresee the "culture shock" that all human beings face when they visit for the first time a space that is geographically and culturally different from their own. What is more, training educational experiences to ensure successful intercultural interaction are excluded. On the other hand, remote education has caused the application of various learning strategies including the COIL methodology (Collaborative International Learning in a virtual environment) which involves the teacher of a higher education establishment coordinating with a peer from a foreign institution to deliver learning sessions within a given subject that are related in their curricula. The COIL learning experience is considered an academic, communicative, and intercultural enrichment activity for learners and teachers that takes place in a completely virtual environment through which both groups of students work as a team to accomplish common learning achievements (Universidad de Lima, 2021).

In Peru, homogeneous strategies are being implemented to motivate professors and students' exchange programs, considering only the agreements previously established with other national and international institutions of higher education. This limits the options for the participants to access a diversity of universities. Another disadvantage is the participants' lack of foreign language skills, since this leads to a greater demand for cooperation with Spanish-speaking universities, leaving aside universities with great academic prestige in which it is mandatory to have communicative competence in foreign languages such as English, French, Portuguese, etc.

Therefore, the objective of this research was to describe the acquisition progression of intercultural competence and its influence on an effective communication process in future translators and interpreters who are currently studying at a private university, who do not feel motivated to opt for this type of activity, even though they can communicate in other languages. In consequence, they lack the chance to reinforce and strengthen the development of the intercultural competence required to communicate effectively in the target language through the processes of translation and interpretation.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Internationally, it has been proved that a group of young university students, whose mother tongue is Chinese and who visited a foreign country, had a better acceptance of multiculturalism and did not try to cling to their conceptions, achieving positive effects by interacting with people from other societies. On the contrary, it was also found that there is no relevant correspondence between the continuity of international trips and the intercultural sensitivity of these students. In other words, a person can develop the same level of intercultural sensitivity by having only a single experience of traveling to another country as those who were in the same foreign nation several times (Chen, 2019). This analysis provided an important contribution to the present project because it established the positive repercussions of academic mobility as a strategy to promote learning experiences that lead to the development of intercultural competence in university students without the need to make numerous visits to a foreign country. In addition, the results indicated that direct contact with other cultures through these experiences improved the sensitivity of young students concerning the culture of the place visited.

A study conducted in Mexico and Colombia under the COIL methodology concluded that an intercultural academic process has great learning value for participants, teachers, and students, as it makes possible the development of attitudes related to the ability to adapt, resilience building as well as managing emotions proactively, being receptive, developing leadership skills and becoming attentive and kind listeners. This was possible because of the frequent and fluid communication allowed by sharing virtual spaces and using appropriate and pertinent technological and pedagogical tools and resources. However, it was emphasized that the teacher's orientation and guidance during the application of the corresponding learning strategies were much more related to the achievement of the expected learning outcomes in the subjects involved (Casas Cortez et al., 2021). In this way, it is understood how it is possible to execute pedagogical activities carried out in a purely virtual environment to make the teaching-learning process valuable through meaningful experiences for students who come from different geographical areas and have diverse cultural practices.

The COIL methodology shows significant results in the development of intercultural competence of students and teachers since it promotes academic coexistence for the achievement of expected learning outcomes. Given that remote and hybrid educational modalities will be mandatory from now on in the formative process worldwide, it is necessary to consider this method of international online collaborative learning as a strategy to encourage the development of intercultural competence in higher education students.

Huaquimil Hermosilla (2020) designed and evaluated a program for developing intercultural competence in Chilean students from Mapuche schools. This study showed effectiveness in addressing intercultural sensitivity in an integrated manner with cognitive and behavioral components. For this reason, a program that promotes integral education based on the progressive and consistent introduction of affectivity was proposed, but, above all, behavioral elements hand in hand with intercultural knowledge. It is relevant to consider that the behavioral contents and objectives require further training for their development.

According to information gathered in a study by Ramírez and Contreras-Salinas (2022), the most influential variables in developing intercultural sensitivity are curiosity, social skills, and willingness to attempt several interactions with individuals from other nations and cultures. These authors contributed to the present work by establishing a new approach of elements to consider for developing this sub-competence and establishing how an adequate combination of them strengthens and contributes to its acquisition directly, favoring the development of intercultural competence in young university students. It is necessary to indicate that the researchers collected the data through a self-report, which is frequently used in this type of study; nevertheless, it could visibly lead to biases in the answers.

Chachaque (2021) proved that there is a correlation between the variables: intercultural competence and cultural identity in students of the undergraduate degree of Law at the Universidad Nacional Jorge Grohmann in Peru, reaching Spearman's Rho coefficient of 0.692, which indicates a direct or positive association between the variables. It means that the higher the Intercultural Competence (IC), the higher the student's cultural identity. The results included IC components such as intercultural awareness, skills, and sensitivity. These findings show the importance of cultural competence acquisition in university students to achieve an optimal cultural identity. Moreover, appropriate instruction on the existence of cultural differences and analogies between people, their cultural identity, and at the same time, the development of an attitude and interest in knowing and understanding other cultural realities, deepens and strengthens constructive intercultural relations. These factors ensure that future professionals reach optimal levels of development of IC.

A. Intercultural Competence

Intercultural competence is defined as possessing the required attitudes and reflective behavioral skills and using them to perform optimally and assertively in intercultural situations. This competence is a set of cognitive, affective, and interactive abilities that support effective and appropriate interaction between people in diverse cultural contexts. UNESCO also states that intercultural competence is adequate knowledge about some specific cultures, as well as the general notion about the aspects that arise when people from different cultural contexts interrelate, preserving receptive behaviors that facilitate the required skills to interact with subjects from diverse cultures. Considering various concepts of intercultural competence, this is explained, in essence, as the set of capacities, abilities, skills, and behaviors that improve human interactions despite differences, even within the same society or outside it. These diversities can be attributed to age, gender, religion, socio-economic status, political affiliation, and race, among other factors (Deardorff, 2020).

IC is a group of values, knowledge, attitudes, and skills that promote efficacious and suitable communication within intercultural contexts. It involves cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions and incorporates values that are seen by some scholars as a supplementary dimension of IC. This competence refers not only to the capability to interrelate with individuals from dissimilar cultural environments but also to the skill to comprehend the dealings between diverse cultures and place oneself between them as a potential mediator. In addition, IC might support cybernetic intercultural meetings taking place through media, for example, when someone reads a text or observes a picture of people from different cultures. Additionally, it avoids intercultural misleading, particularly when cultural stereotypes have been used for elocutionary or apologist purposes (Sarli & Phillimore, 2022).

Olalla-Soler (2017) states that intercultural competence involves the application of knowledge about an individual's culture and foreign culture to achieve a particular purpose, such as the contact between cultures, social integration, negotiations between companies, and so on, using some required skills and acquiring attitudes that favor understanding, cultural awareness, and interaction.

A general definition of intercultural competence has not been established yet, nor is there a validated empirical model. However, there is a wide degree of agreement about the dimensions considered part of intercultural competence. For example, Chen and Starosta propose three dimensions: the affective dimension (intercultural sensitivity), the cognitive dimension (intercultural awareness), and the behavioral dimension (intercultural adroitness), which have been widely accepted (Saso et al., 2017).

Thus, the predisposition to participate in an intercultural learning process that promotes the development of respectful behaviors, the appreciation for the culturally diverse, as well as being tolerant towards diversity, allows the beginning of the achievement of intercultural awareness in a progressive manner. These values and conduct permit the sequential development of one's cultural awareness, as well as the recognition and acceptance of individuals from other cultures along with their social and linguistic skills (Podestá et al., 2022). Intercultural awareness, seen as a skill, could be more than just a set of information about the various cultures that language learners need to acquire; in fact, it can be a personal attitudinal and behavioral factor. Intercultural sensitivity refers to the intrinsic motivation that leads human beings to notice, understand, value, and approve the divergences that exist between cultures to respond positively to them. It is relevant to mention that intercultural sensitivity can effectively influence the communicative process among individuals

who come from varied cultural backgrounds (De Santos, 2018). The last factor, known as intercultural effectiveness, which is related to intercultural skills, is conceived as the group of oral skills that are distinguished in an evident transformation of behavior to favor an efficient, effective, and assertive communicative process to propitiate adequate intercultural interactions (Torrejón, 2020).

B. Intercultural Communicative Competence

Globalization has caused the increasing presence of interculturality in contemporary societies; therefore, individuals in general, and university students, specifically, require training that allows them to perform optimally in a more varied context regarding the cultural manifestations of those who make up a community. It means knowing how to live together and establishing adequate relationships and effective communication with citizens from different cultures, which demands the development of specific competence, highlighting those related to social and intercultural aspects correspondingly (Priegue & Leiva, cited by Martínez-Lirola, 2017). Thus, it is necessary to ensure the formation of global citizens capable of inserting themselves into the national and international labor market. To achieve this objective, it is imperative that teachers adequately develop intercultural competence to guide the acquisition and development of the skills and attitudes required by their trainees through an operative and efficient teaching-learning process.

After that, the definition of intercultural communicative competence arises as an umbrella notion, which encompasses various skills such as cognitive, affective, and behavioral abilities of the participants of an intercultural communication process. The cognitive factor of this competence receives the name as intercultural awareness, the affective element is named intercultural sensitivity, and the aspect involving behavior and attitudes is known as intercultural effectiveness (De Santos, 2018).

Within foreign language learning and teaching, a process that involves translators in training, intercultural competence is related to the ability to communicate; in other words, the expertise to perform appropriately in communicative contexts in which linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic notions are involved in interacting and forming links with other people. Therefore, intercultural competence is based on the ability to communicate and expand the understanding of the message. In addition, this competence stands out for integrating and intertwining the know-what with the other aspects of communicative competence: aptitudes and attitudes to communicate (Rico, 2018). Individuals who speak a foreign language and develop intercultural competence know and accept their cultural identity and, at the same time, can relate their own culture to the cultural manifestations of the target language and explain variances to embrace and value them, appreciating the interaction with people from diverse cultures (Urbina, 2022).

Intercultural communicative competence is the ability to adapt to cultural connotations and assume efficient communicative behaviors that the interlocutors must understand. Communicative acts are determined by considering the sufficiency, but not the excellence, of the ability to transmit a message. The main goal of this competence is to achieve mutual understanding in intercultural contexts and to enable the language learner to access other cultural environments.

C. Intercultural Competence in Translators

According to Kiraly, cited by Klimczak-Pawlak (2018), the elements of the translation process are the information sources, e.g., the source language (L1), the target language (L2), and their cultures, as well as the intuitive workspace. Kiraly's model includes (1) a translator's consciousness of the contextual issues that might be required in a translation task; (2) the translation-suitable proficiency that the decoder owns as linguistic expertise of both languages, cultural insights of the L1 and L2, and specific familiarity of the subject under consideration; (3) the translator's skill to initiate adequate spontaneous and meticulous psycholinguistic procedures to structure the target text (Klimczak-Pawlak, 2018). Since culture is a crucial factor, translators must build their intercultural competence so that they will be able to carry out every translation project they take.

A recognized representative in intercultural topics, Michael Byram, developed a model to flourish and evaluate two areas, communicative and intercultural competence, resulting in a new aptitude: Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC). The archetype includes five components; the first one, attitudes, which means acceptance and interest in diverse cultures and the capacity to appreciate objectively other cultural manifestations; the second one refers to the ability of the translator to fully understand different cultural sights and signs, and how individuals behave by their corresponding culture; the third component is abilities, which denotes the translator's skill to comprehend and elucidate a text from a precise culture and attach it to a new text from their own culture; as the fourth factor, Byram proposes exploration and intercommunication skills so that the translator could completely understand a culture and its practices; the fifth feature refers to the competence of the translator to examine viewpoints, practices, and products connected to the target and source cultures (Alenezi, 2021).

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A quantitative approach was applied, considering the objective aspects immersed in the variable to investigate intercultural competence. The technique applied was the survey, and the corresponding tool was a questionnaire (Hernández-Sampieri & Mendoza, 2018). The selected design was non-experimental cross-sectional, given that there was no intentional manipulation of the variables, and an experimental group and a control group were not required (Arias González & Covinos Gallardo, 2021). The type of research, considering the source, is a fieldwork study since the research

was carried out in the same geographical space and in the same timeline in which the investigated facts occurred. The main objective was to analyze a specific reality, situation, or fact that occurs in a single and defined moment in time. (Arias González & Covinos Gallardo, 2021) According to its purpose, it is a descriptive study since the data related to the categories, their definitions, and the variables involved were collected, and the results were disseminated (Hernández-Sampieri & Mendoza, 2018).

A. Procedure

First, the population was determined, and then the sample was chosen through a non-probabilistic intentional sampling. The selection process included the researchers' criteria and did not involve any statistical method since the population was less than 100 people. An informed consent was sent to the subjects to express their agreement to participate in this research (Arias González & Covinos Gallardo, 2021). The data collection instrument was adapted and validated. Immediately, the authors applied a questionnaire to the individuals who constituted the sample to analyze the data collected and prepare tables and figures. When this information was organized, the researchers started the discussion of the results, considering the objectives of the project and its theoretical frame. Finally, the conclusions were written to summarize the main points of the work.

The population comprised 51 students from the fifth to the tenth semester of the professional career of Translation and Interpretation from a private university in Peru. The sample consisted of 100% of the population subjects. The participants of this research were between 18 and 25 years old, mainly female, who belonged to a low socio-economic group and who were studying the last level of English or had already completed the learning of this foreign language.

The applied Intercultural Competence Questionnaire is an adapted version of the instrument created by Jesús Torrejón. The reliability was obtained through Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α) since it includes multiple-choice questions based on a Likert scale. The reliability index achieved was 0.97.

TABLE 1
RELIABILITY INDEX

Cronbach's Alpha	#Elements
.966	23

B. Statistics

The Statistical Procedures for Social Sciences version 23 was used to analyze the collected data, and due to the nature of the research, all the descriptive statistics were applied.

As Table 2 shows, the ratios of skewness and kurtosis demonstrate a normal distribution since the values are inferior to +2 but superior to -2 for all the dimensions. Table 2 also shows the mean for Intercultural Awareness, Intercultural Skills, and Intercultural Sensitivity (M= 31.2, M=29.7, M=34.8) and the standard deviation regarding the three dimensions (SD=6.4, SD=5.3, SD=5.8).

TABLE 2
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

	N	Min	Max.	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
							Std. Error	Std. error		
	Stats	Stats.	Stats.	Stats.	Stats.	Stats.	Stats.	Stats.	Stats.	Stats.
Intercultural Awareness	51	16.00	40.00	31.2157	6.47862	41.973	-.598	.333	-.190	.656
Intercultural Skills	51	13.00	35.00	29.7059	5.38254	28.972	-1.075	.333	.595	.656
Intercultural Sensitivity	51	18.00	40.00	34.8431	5.83566	34.055	-1.291	.333	.932	.656

The applied method was the analytical-synthetic method, whose processes make it feasible to fragment a whole into parts and conduct a detailed examination of each. Subsequently, the segments examined were grouped to explain the features of the variable under study through synthesis, including the information required for this purpose. Both procedures work as a single method (Rodríguez & Pérez, 2017).

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As observed in Table 3, the acquisition of sub-competence intercultural awareness is at an intermediate level with a representation of 45% of the participants. This reflects that trainee translators have achieved 61 to 80% development of the above-mentioned skill according to the established scales.

TABLE 3
INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Accumulated Percentage
Valid	Low	8	15.7	15.7	15.7
	Medium	23	45.1	45.1	60.8
	High	20	39.2	39.2	100.0
	Total	51	100.0	100.0	

These findings are quite different from those established by Chachaque (2022), who determined that 47.7% of Law students at the Universidad Nacional Jorge Grohmann have a high degree of intercultural awareness, as they felt identified with the practices and traditions of their own culture. Likewise, the aspect of understanding other cultures was the most remarkable, whereas in the present study, the most dominant aspect was the understanding of their own distinctive cultural characteristics. However, it is pointed out that both elements are indispensable for the development of intercultural awareness according to the model developed, which defines it as the cognitive component of intercultural competence that involves awareness of cultural differences and encompasses the adequate achievement of self-awareness and cultural awareness (Saso et al., 2017).

It is stated that it is necessary to reinforce the areas involved in this sub-competence such as the identification of one's cultural symbols, the information transmitted from generation to generation, the traditional activities of their community, and the policies on interculturality to generate the full development of intercultural awareness as defined by De Santos (2018), who points out that it is an indispensable factor to guarantee the adequate acquisition of intercultural competence. The aforementioned is supported by the need to guarantee the development of translation competence in this group of trainee professionals. According to Kiraly, the essential knowledge required for an adequate translating process includes linguistic knowledge of the source and target languages, cultural knowledge related to both languages, as well as the specialized knowledge required (Klimczak-Pawlak, 2018).

Therefore, the university should promote a training process that generates a greater development of intercultural awareness and fosters the predisposition of students to assume with conviction attitudes of respect and appreciation for what is culturally different, along with tolerance to diversity, since this will increase the gradual achievement of this sub-competence. Such values and behaviors lead to a sequential development of intercultural awareness together with the acceptance of individuals from other cultures and their social and linguistic features (Podestá et al., 2022).

In Table 4, it is evident that intercultural skills have been achieved at an intermediate level by 64.7 % of the participants. The results show that the surveyed students have developed this component in the range of 81 to 100 % as indicated by the given scales. According to Olalla-Soler (2017), intercultural skills in conjunction with cultural knowledge have a direct impact on the translation process.

TABLE 4
INTERCULTURAL SKILLS

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Accumulated Percentage
Valid	Low	5	9.8	9.8	9.8
	Medium	13	25.5	25.5	35.3
	High	33	64.7	64.7	100.0
	Total	51	100.0	100.0	

The findings further established that the main skills developed by trainee translators are flexibility in behavior and proper interaction. It is stated that most trainees have largely developed their ability to interact considering human values of equality, respect, and cultural pluralism as well as communicating assertively with their peers who come from other regions or from outside the country who have other customs. At the same time, they can maintain an integrated dialogue regardless of the variety of cultural aspects involved. In this way, it has been found that the population has achieved a positive development of the behavioral flexibility component. This achievement has been reinforced by a high degree of interaction management, which means that they can interact with peers from different cultures and practice tolerance towards ideas, beliefs, and customs different from their own. In addition, they promote actions that curb stereotypes, prejudices, and any discriminatory practices, which makes evident a significant achievement of the interaction management component.

Participants have succeeded in developing the behavioral component or skills of intercultural competence, defined as a person's ability to perform tasks and thus achieve communicative purposes in multicultural interaction processes; this involves the management of identities, interactions, communicative skills, flexible behavior, cultivation of relationships, among others (Saso et al., 2017). Therefore, participants have managed to develop the fourth component of Byram's model for developing and assessing intercultural communicative competence in translators consisting of two areas, communicative competence, and intercultural communicative competence, which refers to the ability to fully understand a culture and its cultural practices by demonstrating attitudes and applying knowledge and skills in real-time interaction together with communication (Alenezi, 2021).

The results of Table 5 show that 68.6% of trainee translators have reached a high level in the sub-competence of cultural sensitivity. Consequently, most students have achieved the development of the affective dimension of intercultural

competence, which involves the ability to respond emotionally in a positive way and manage emotions that could negatively affect the intercultural communicative process (Henriquez et al., 2021).

TABLE 5
INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Accumulated Percentage
Valid	Low	5	9.8	9.8	9.8
	Medium	11	21.6	21.6	31.4
	High	35	68.6	68.6	100.0
	Total	51	100.0	100.0	

This means that young people feel comfortable interacting with their peers who have different customs and traditions, as well as feeling protected from possible discrimination. This reflects an adequate development of their self-concept. Additionally, this group of participants has acquired an optimal level of non-judgmental attitudes which implies that they value their migrant peers' way of thinking and reject the use of pejorative adjectives concerning their homeland. On the other hand, the participants are mostly empathetic with people culturally different and tolerant of foreign customs that may cause them discomfort. Regarding self-regulation, the students who reached a high level can modulate and regulate their behavior according to the regional context to achieve intercultural coexistence. The trainee translators have positively developed the emotional or affective component of intercultural competence which is described as the group of abilities that allow human beings to manage their negative emotions in multicultural interactions, giving rise to favorable reactions to them as they reflect an adequate self-concept, an open mind, a non-judgmental attitude, an appropriate social relaxation along with feeling comfortable in intercultural social relations (Saso et al., 2017).

The findings align with those established by Huaquimil (2020), who corroborated a higher level in the dimensions of intercultural sensitivity, knowledge, and behavioral skills of intercultural communication in the group of students who participated in the program for the development of intercultural competence that he implemented. He confirmed his hypothesis regarding the development of intercultural sensitivity by showing that the students in experimental group 1, showed a significantly greater difference in the level of development of cultural sensitivity than those students in experimental group 2.

Additionally, the results correspond with those established by Ramírez and Contreras-Salinas (2022) who in their study on the intercultural sensitivity of the students of the Faculty of Education of the Central University of Chile, verified that the participants showed a favorable attitude concerning intercultural sensitivity since they achieved a score of 1.37 arithmetic means as a result of the application of an instrument adapted and validated by De Santos Velasco in 2004 for a Spanish university population, where the maximum value 2 would show a very favorable attitude, the minimum -2 represents a contrary attitude and 0 would express a neutral or undecided attitude.

Therefore, it is confirmed that the participants have a high development level of the second component of Byram's intercultural communicative competence model for translators, which refers to knowledge "of social communities and their products and practices in one's own country and the country of the interlocutor, and of the general processes of social and individual interaction" (Byram, 1997, cited by Alenezi, 2021). In other words, the translator must have a thorough understanding of cultural views and symbols, and how the elements of the culture in question interrelate. Furthermore, it is vital to understand cultural contrasts and to be aware of "the importance that any differences between the source and target language culture may have for the success or failure of communication" (Yarosh & Muies, 2011, cited by Alenezi, 2021).

V. CONCLUSIONS

It can be seen that this group of students has overall acquired intercultural competence optimally so they can manage all the cultural aspects from both source and target languages. This means that the participants have shown possessing suitable intercultural awareness, skills, and sensitivity which will influence positively when performing a translation process professionally to guarantee effective communication.

On the other hand, the participants require an improvement of their intercultural awareness which only reached an intermediate level of development according to the questionnaire scales. In consequence, they need to better identify their cultural symbols, as the information is transmitted from generation to generation. It is also essential to recognize the traditional activities of their community and policies on interculturality. In addition, universities could propose syllabi that allow the development of this sub-competence, fostering the tendency of undergraduates to accept attitudes of respect and recognition of worth for what is culturally different, as well as being tolerant of diversity.

It should be noted that the sub-competences of intercultural skills and sensitivity reached a high scale of achievement. Therefore, learners who participated in this study are flexible and interact properly with individuals from different cultural backgrounds, considering human values such as equality, respect, and cultural pluralism in addition to communicating assertively. Regarding intercultural sensitivity, they feel comfortable interacting with their peers who have different customs and traditions, together with feeling protected from possible discrimination since they exhibit an adequate self-concept, empathy, tolerance, and non-judgmental attitudes.

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