



Language, culture, connection: The medium of instruction and intercultural communicative competence

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ABSTRACT

English medium instruction (EMI) is becoming widespread day by day, especially among non-native English speakers. Moreover, Partial English Medium Instruction (PEMI) is gaining popularity due to some factors. Thus, investigating the intercultural structures of these programs is crucial. In this respect, this study, which is a quantitative one, seeks answers to uncover the relationship between tertiary-level students' intercultural communication skills and the type of medium of instruction they get. In addition, the relationship between learners' self-perceived language proficiency levels and their Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is examined. Moreover, this study investigates the relationship between students' language learning mindsets and intercultural communication skills. The findings of the study reveal that there are significant relationships between ICCs and type of instruction. Students in EMI programs develop higher levels of attitudes, intercultural communication, and cognitive skills. In addition, Turkish Medium Instruction (TMI) students obtain higher levels of entity mindsets, which might influence their enrollment preferences.

Keywords

Intercultural communication skills,
Language learning mindsets,
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Partial-English medium instruction,
Turkish medium of instruction.

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Introduction

In the dynamic realm of education, the role of the EMI has become a focal point in academic discourse. EMI entails employing the English language as the medium of instruction for academic subjects in areas where the primary language spoken by the majority is not English, as outlined by Dearden (2014). The adoption of EMI was initially introduced to deliver high-quality university education in non-native English contexts (Botha, 2013; Hu & Lei, 2014), and the rationale behind implementing it was to enhance the quality of university teaching and boost the competitiveness of universities in these regions by attracting a more significant number of applicants. In a similar vein, Richards and Pun (2023) underpin a range of factors for the selection of EMI, such as ensuring English language proficiency, creating a consistent instructional language in linguistically diverse countries, promoting economic competitiveness by developing an English-proficient workforce, providing graduates with global literacy skills,

attracting international students to institutions, raising university rankings, enhancing institutional prestige, boosting university competitiveness, facilitating regional and international communication, and fostering students' intercultural communication abilities.

Many prestigious universities in Türkiye have long been implementing EMI courses. This trend is not unique to the country as numerous international universities worldwide also adopt EMI as part of their academic offerings. This approach reflects the global demand for English as a medium for academic instruction and the recognition of its importance in preparing students for an increasingly interconnected and English-dominated academic and professional landscape. The expanding population of international students in tertiary education has been a further phenomenon in terms of the internationalization of higher education institutions and addressing linguistic diversity in this context. Recent advancements in international education underscore the significance of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in learners. This prioritization is justified by recognizing that learners must understand linguistic structures and the crucial aspects of knowing "when and how to say what to whom" (Larsen-Freeman, 2000, p. 121). In essence, the emphasis on ICC reflects a broader awareness of the importance of cultural understanding and effective communication in diverse and global contexts.

The designated venue for the study is a state university (Muğla Sıtkı Koçman) located in the southwest coastal city. The deliberate choice of this university is grounded in purposive strategies, aiming to ensure its suitability for investigating the research phenomenon at hand. This academic institution features a significant capacity of international students (1,148 individuals) representing diverse backgrounds from more than 56 countries. Notably, it stands out as one of the institutions actively promoting EMI programs in various faculties and departments, namely Tourism, Engineering, Medicine Faculties, and so on. Moreover, it emphasizes cultivating ICC among students by attracting more students from diverse backgrounds. The university's unique characteristics and commitment to EMI and ICC make it an ideal setting for studying the dynamics of these educational approaches. In this regard, the study sought to investigate the potential correlation between EMI and ICC.

Review of Literature

EMI has been described as potentially enhancing students' ICC in various empirical studies and surveys. For instance, research indicates that students can improve their ICC in EMI contexts by learning to communicate in a foreign language, which often involves understanding cultural norms and habits (Byram, 2014; Byram et al., 2002; Saarinen & Nikula, 2012). Aguilar-Pérez (2021) has also proposed that incorporating ICC pedagogy into EMI classes could boost students' ICC more effectively.

The prevailing belief is that teachers' and students' awareness and sensitivity play a crucial role in students' development of ICC. Scholars argue that in the EMI context, where English serves as an international lingua franca for knowledge delivery, it is essential not to associate English solely with its culture (Aguilar- Pérez, 2021). The challenge lies in the limited awareness among teachers and students, making it difficult to enhance their ICC within the EMI setting.

However, more than relying on EMI may be required for ICC development, additional support might be needed. For example, inadequate training of teachers in EMI, as Aguilar and Rodríguez (2012) pointed out, could present challenges when lecturing in a multicultural and multilingual classroom in English. Therefore, other measures, such as adapting

internationalization teaching styles and developing specific skills for the international classroom (Leask, 2015; Sawir, 2011), are considered essential to assist teachers in fostering students' ICC development in the EMI context.

Additional factors, including personality and psychological aspects, are recognized as pivotal in developing ICC (Spitzberg & Chagnon, 2009). Notably, individuals who exhibit extroverted traits and a willingness to take risks in intercultural communication are more likely to succeed in cross-cultural interactions (Hu & Lei, 2014). Furthermore, past international experiences, such as studying abroad and having foreign friends, contribute positively to ICC development (Arno-Macià & Aguilar-Pérez, 2019). This implies that improving ICC may ultimately depend on each student's characteristics and experiences.

ICC has conventionally been perceived as an inherent result of study-abroad experiences (Byram & Dervin, 2008; Cots et al., 2016; Kinginger, 2013; Messelink et al., 2015). Nevertheless, merely assembling students from diverse cultural backgrounds does not organically enhance their ICC (Knight, 2008; Papatsiba, 2006). Various factors may influence the development of students' ICC.

Fantini and Tirmizi (2006) assert that ICC involves performing according to social norms and value orientations of diverse cultural backgrounds, effectively achieving communicative objectives. Similarly, Aguilar-Pérez (2018) emphasizes the complexity of ICC, encompassing dimensions like communication skills, knowledge of the target context, and individual personalities. The three main components of ICC, as identified by scholars such as Arasaratnam and Doerfel (2005), Fantini and Tirmizi (2006), and Deardorff (2009), include attitudes, skills (behaviour), and knowledge.

Attitudes involve motivation to communicate and recognition of group equality, complementing knowledge competencies in understanding cultural identities, oppression, and the impact of cultural differences on communication. This awareness aligns with skills like self-reflection and cross-cultural communication. ICC is closely tied to foreign language proficiency, emphasizing the connection between languages and cultures (Macaro et al., 2018). While often studied in language teaching, there is a gap in exploring ICC in the EMI context.

Despite ICC's significance in the globalized academic world, it is typically treated as a secondary outcome of language in EMI (Macaro et al., 2018; Pulcini & Campagna, 2015). Bradford (2016) argues that EMI class failures may be more attributed to a lack of ICC than language fluency. Numerous studies highlight ICC's pivotal role in EMI, with Aguilar-Pérez (2021) advocating for a culturally aware teaching approach in EMI to navigate cultural nuances. The level of teachers' and students' ICC is deemed crucial for EMI success or failure, as Bradford (2016) noted, who suggests that insufficient ICC may lead to cultural misunderstandings impacting teaching and learning outcomes.

In the context of the socio-cultural approach to language learning within contemporary foreign language training methods, intercultural communication is characterized as a specific set of processes involving individuals from diverse cultures and linguistic backgrounds. This communication takes place between interaction partners who consciously acknowledge their cultural differences and recognize each other's distinct cultural identity. The awareness of being "other" and the acknowledgment of the "otherness" of the communication partner are integral aspects of intercultural communication in this framework.

The evolving concept within communicative language teaching suggests that effective communication may fall short even when adapted for context and linguistic nuances without integrating multidimensional cultural awareness. This awareness is envisioned to foster a

relationship of mutual acceptance, wherein individuals from different cultural backgrounds collaborate to negotiate a cultural platform that satisfies all involved parties (Guilherme, 2000). This perspective has given rise to the idea of ICC, denoting the possession of knowledge, motivation, and skills necessary for interacting proficiently and appropriately with individuals from diverse cultures (Wiseman, 2002, p. 208).

Recent developments in international education highlight the growing importance of ICC among learners. This emphasis is justified by the understanding that learners should grasp linguistic structures and the essential skill of knowing ‘when and how to say what to whom’ (Larsen-Freeman, 2000, p. 121). This prioritization of ICC signifies a broader awareness of the crucial role cultural understanding and effective communication play in diverse and global contexts.

Methodology

This research examines the relationship between students’ ICC and language learning mindsets in different instructional contexts from a quantitative perspective.

Participants

In the scope of this study, students from three different instructional contexts, namely EMI, PEMI, and TMI contexts in the Tourism Faculty at a state university in Türkiye, were invited to participate by responding to questionnaires. Students who consented to participate voluntarily were informed about the study's data collection process regarding their rights. The Tourism Faculty offers various programs in three different mediums of instruction. The medium of instruction in the Tourism Management Department, from which ten students participated, is entirely English. On the other hand, in the Department of Tourism Guidance, where seven students participated, the instruction is PEMI. In this program, students receive 30% of their instruction in English, whereas, in the Department of Food and Beverage Management, where 24 students volunteered, the instruction is entirely in Turkish. In these departments' first two, students must complete a compulsory English language preparation course at the B2 CEFR level.

In TMI, students have the chance to attend a voluntary English language preparation program at the B1 level. However, in the program, students take intensive English language courses. Based on these, it would not be wrong to assume that students have English language proficiency at a similar level. Besides, some of the students indicated that they are proficient in other languages at varying levels, but this data is not used in the scope of this study.

Data Collection and Tools

To seek out answers to the research questions, the data were collected by adapting and using the Intercultural Communicative Competence Scale (ICCS) by Portalla and Chen (2010) and the Language Mindsets Scale (LMS) developed by Lou and Noels (2017). The ICCS evaluates respondents’ intercultural communicative competence with 28 5-Likert items in six dimensions: *knowledge of self*, *knowledge of others*, *attitudes*, *intercultural communicative skills (IComS)*, *intercultural cognitive skills (ICogS)*, and *awareness*. On the other hand, the

LMS consists of 18 6-Likert items and aims to provide data regarding respondents' first and second-language learning beliefs and their age-related language learning beliefs. Using this scale, obtaining data related to respondents' dominant mindsets, either incremental or discrete, would be possible. Participants were also asked to indicate their perceived language proficiency levels since their perceived language proficiencies might differ from actual language proficiency levels. That is, although students had completed compulsory or voluntary language preparatory classes or were attending intensive language courses at the time of data collection, they might not feel ready to use the target language. The researchers translated the data collection tools into Turkish, and two experts from the field were invited to scrutinize the validity and consistency of the translation. The scales were applied in the paper-based format.

Findings

First, the suitability of the data for parametric tests was investigated by conducting a preliminary analysis. Both Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests, which are used to evaluate the normal distribution of the data, provided values below the .05 significant level, which showed the violation of the normality assumption. Considering this finding and the small sample size, it was decided to apply nonparametric tests for further analysis.

The first research question aims to investigate whether there is a difference in the ICCS subscales in three different medium-of-instruction (Group 1, $n = 10$: Full EMI; Group 2, $n = 7$: PEMI; Group 3, $n = 24$: TMI) groups. For this purpose, the Kruskal-Wallis test was first conducted to determine the differences between groups. Table 1 provides a summary of the hypothesis test.

Table 1. Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The Knowledge of Self Score distribution is the same across Medium of Instruction categories.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.124	Retain the null hypothesis.
2	The Knowledge of Others Score distribution is the same across Medium of Instruction categories.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.025	Reject the null hypothesis.
3	The distribution of Attitudes Score is the same across categories of Medium of Instruction.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.026	Reject the null hypothesis.
4	The distribution of Intercultural Communicative Skills Score is the same across categories of Medium of Instruction.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.003	Reject the null hypothesis.
5	The Intercultural Cognitive Skills Score distribution is the same across Medium of Instruction categories.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.008	Reject the null hypothesis.
6	The distribution of Awareness Score is the same across categories of Medium of Instruction.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.016	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

The test revealed that there was a significant difference across the three groups in their Knowledge of Other, $\chi^2(2, n = 41) = 7.371, p = .025$ with mean ranks EMI: 19.25, PEMI 2: 32.14, and TMI: 18.48; Attitudes $\chi^2(2, n = 41) = 7.306, p = .026$ with mean ranks EMI: 20.85, PEMI: 31.00, and TMI: 18.15; Intercultural communicative skills $\chi^2(2, n = 41) = 11.607, p = .003$ with mean ranks EMI: 22.90, PEMI: 33.71, and TMI: 16.50; Intercultural Cognitive Skills $\chi^2(2, n = 41) = 9.600, p = .008$ with mean ranks EMI: 18.10, PEMI: 33.57, and TMI: 18.54;

and Awareness scores, $\chi^2(2, n = 41) = 8.262, p = .016$ with mean ranks EMI: 24.40, PEMI: 30.43, and TMI: 16.83; whereas no significant difference is detected in Knowledge of Self scores $\chi^2(2, n = 41) = 4.182, p = .124$ with mean ranks EMI: 18.95, PEMI: 29.29, and TMI: 19.44.

Mann-Whitney U tests were carried out to understand which groups were statistically significantly different from each other. Bonferroni adjustment was applied to avoid Type 1 error, and the p-value was revised at a .01 significance level. In addition, as suggested by Pallant (2010), the median scores for the variables were calculated. Table 2 provides the median scores for the groups across six subscales of the ICCS.

Table 2. Median Scores for the Groups Across Six Subscales of the ICCS

Medium of Instruction		Knowledge of Self Score	Knowledge of Others Score	Attitudes Score	Intercultural communicative skills Score	Intercultural Cognitive Skills Score	Awareness Score
EMI	N	10	10	10	10	10	10
	Median	11.50	26.50	14.50	39.00	11.50	12.00
PEMI	N	7	7	7	7	7	7
	Median	15.00	33.00	15.00	44.00	13.00	14.00
TMI	N	24	24	24	24	24	24
	Median	12.00	25.50	13.50	36.00	11.00	11.00

According to the tests, no significant differences were obtained when EMI and PEMI, and EMI and TMI groups were compared at a revised p-value of .01. On the other hand, when the PEMI and TMI groups were compared, it was seen that asymptotic significant (2-tailed) differences existed in Attitudes scores (PEMI Md = 15.00, $n = 7$; TMI Md = 13.50, $n = 24$) $U = 31.50, z = -2.683, p = .007$ with a large effect size $r = -.48$; ICC Skills scores (PEMI Md = 44.00, $n = 7$; TMI Md = 36.00, $n = 24$), $U = 16.00, z = -3.224, p = .001$ with a large effect size $r = -.57$; and Intercultural Cognitive scores (PEMI Md = 13.00, $n = 7$; TMI Md = 11.00, $n = 24$), $U = 21.00, z = -3.029, p = .002$ with a large effect size $r = -.54$. In this respect, it would not be wrong to argue that instructions given in two languages result in better ICCs among students; whereas, instructions given in one language do not lead such results.

The second research question revealed information about the distribution of perceived English language proficiency levels across three types of instruction. Table 3 shows the distribution.

Table 3. Perceived English Proficiency Level

Medium of Instruction		Low	Medium	High
Medium of Instruction	EMI	1	8	1
	PEMI	0	0	7
	TMI	19	5	0

The findings showed that most participants who enrolled in the EMI Department of Tourism Faculty felt more proficient. In contrast, all participants in the PEMI Department of the same faculty indicated they were highly proficient in English. On the other hand, as can be seen in Table 3, students in the TMI Department of the Tourism Faculty did not feel they were

proficient enough, as can be anticipated because these students do not have any formal language educational background.

The following research question aimed to investigate whether there is a difference in subscales of ICC skills across three perceived English language proficiency groups (Group 1, $n = 20$: Low; Group 2, $n = 13$: Medium; Group 3, $n = 8$: High). Table 4 provides information about the Kruskal-Wallis tests.

Table 4. Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of Knowledge of Self-Score is the same across categories of Perceived English proficiency level.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.072	Retain the null hypothesis.
2	The Knowledge of Others Score distribution is the same across categories of Perceived English proficiency level.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.030	Reject the null hypothesis.
3	The distribution of Attitudes Scores is the same across categories of Perceived English proficiency level.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.125	Retain the null hypothesis.
4	The Intercultural communicative skills Score distribution is the same across categories of Perceived English proficiency level.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.027	Reject the null hypothesis.
5	The Intercultural Cognitive Skills Score distribution is the same across categories of Perceived English proficiency level.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.018	Reject the null hypothesis.
6	The distribution of Awareness Score is the same across categories of Perceived English proficiency level.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.160	Retain the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

The Kruskal-Wallis tests yielded statistically significant results in Knowledge of Others scores $\chi^2(2, n = 41): 7.010, p = .030$ (Mean Ranks: Low = 19.55, Medium = 17.19, and High = 30.81); Intercultural communicative skills scores $\chi^2(2, n = 41): 7.245, p = .027$ (Mean Ranks: Low = 17.32, Medium = 20.65, and High = 30.75); and Intercultural Cognitive Skills scores $\chi^2(2, n = 41): 8.006, p = .018$ (Mean Ranks: Low = 19.25, Medium = 17.27, and High = 31.44) across the three groups of perceived English language proficiency groups. To find out which of the groups are significantly different from one another, Mann-Whitney U tests were conducted as post-hoc tests. Bonferroni adjustment was applied to avoid Type 1 error, and the p-value was set to .017, and medians were calculated. Table 5 shows medians across groups for the subscales with a difference among groups.

Table 5. Medians Across Groups

Perceived English proficiency level		Knowledge of Others Score	Intercultural communicative skills Score	Intercultural Cognitive Skills Score
Low	N	20	20	20
	Median	25.50	37.00	11.00
Medium	N	13	13	13
	Median	26.00	37.00	11.00
High	N	8	8	8
	Median	32.00	43.00	13.00

First, the Low and Medium groups were compared, and there was no significant difference between these groups. Then, the Low and High groups were compared. Findings revealed asymptotic significant (2-tailed) differences existed in ICC Skill scores (Low Md = 37, n = 20; High Md = 43, n = 8), $U = 29.00$, $z = -2.601$, $p = .009$ with large effect size $r = .49$; and Intercultural Cognitive Skills scores (Low Md = 11, n = 20; High Md = 13, n = 8), $U = 33.50$, $z = -2.397$, $p = .017$ with medium effect size $r = .45$. When Medium and High groups were compared significant differences existed in Knowledge of Self scores (Medium Md = 11, n = 13; High Md = 14, n = 8), $U = 17.50$, $z = -2.553$, $p = .011$ with large effect size $r = .56$; in Knowledge of Others scores, (Medium Md = 26, n = 13; High Md = 32, n = 8), $U = 17.50$, $z = -2.477$, $p = .013$ with large effect size $r = .54$; and in Intercultural Cognitive Skills scores (Medium Md = 11, n = 13; High Md = 14, n = 8), $U = 17.50$, $z = -2.742$, $p = .006$ with large effect size $r = .60$.

The final research question aims to determine the language learning mindsets of students across three types of medium of instruction. Table 6 provides information for this research question regarding the distribution of entity and incremental mindsets across three types of instruction.

Table 6. Distribution of Entity and Incremental Mindsets Across Medium of Instruction

Medium of Instruction		Global Language Intelligence (GLI)			Second Language Aptitude (SLA)			Age Sensitive		
		Entity	Incremental	Total	Entity	Incremental	Total	Entity	Incremental	Total
EMI	Count	0	9	9	1	9	10	2	8	10
	% within Medium of Instruction	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%	10.0%	90.0%	100.0%	20.0%	80.0%	100.0%
PEMI	Count	0	7	7	1	6	7	1	6	7
	% within Medium of Instruction	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%	14.3%	85.7%	100.0%	14.3%	85.7%	100.0%
TMI	Count	6	18	24	6	18	24	7	17	24

% within									
Medium of Instruction	25.0%	75.0%	100.0%	25.0%	75.0%	100.0%	29.2%	70.8%	100.0%

When Table 6 is examined, it is seen that across all groups, students mostly have incremental mindsets regarding their global language intelligence, second language aptitude, and age-related beliefs. All students had incremental mindsets regarding global language intelligence beliefs, while 25% of TMI students had entity mindsets. Regarding second language aptitudes, the number of students with entity mindset outscored the ones in EMI and PEMI groups. Finally, the number of students with an entity mindset was the highest in the TMI group. So, it could be assumed that one factor affecting the selection of a department might be students' mindsets. The ones who do not believe they can learn another language besides their mother tongue might avoid EMI or PEMI departments, which might, in turn, affect their Intercultural communicative skills.

Discussion and Conclusions

Considering the findings, one striking observation is that instructions given in a language other than the native one significantly contribute to developing better intercultural communicative skills. This aligns with Byram et al. (2002) and Byram (2014), who indicate that learners' ICCs could improve in the EMI context. Similarly, Aguilar-Pérez (2021) also provides evidence suggesting the positive effect of EMI on ICCs. The reason for this, as Leask (2015) and Sawir (2011) point out, might be that teachers have the opportunity to promote students' ICCs in these contexts. The current study further contributes to the literature by examining the relationship between ICCs and the medium of instruction from another perspective.

When examining the findings from EMI or PEMI perspectives, an unanticipated pattern was observed across three groups of learners (EMI, PEMI, and TMI). It was found that students attending courses in the PEMI context have better ICC competencies than EMI and TMI. This indicates that EMI may not be the sole context for improving ICCs. This study provides evidence in this respect. Except for the first dimension, knowledge of self, students in PEMI showed higher competency levels in knowledge of others, attitudes, intercultural communicative and cognitive skills, and awareness. In other words, students who receive classes in two instruction mediums develop better in accepting others.

Additionally, they indicated positive attitudes towards other cultures and demonstrated more potent communication abilities and improved cognition regarding the intercultural aspects of their learning environment. This finding was unexpected because participants in EMI were expected to excel in other contexts as students in this group had more opportunities to experience the target language's culture. In literature, authors such as Aguilar and Rodríguez (2012) argue that there may be problems regarding EMI's efficiency in ICC development, which may be another indication of the intricate relationship between ICC and EMI. Based on the findings of the current study, it could be argued that there is a close relationship between language and culture (Macaro et al., 2018), the PEMI in which students are exposed to more than one language, and in turn, more than one culture has the potential to create more intercultural contexts.

It is known that labeling students as proficient language users based on the results obtained from summative or formative exams is not enough to get them to interact with others

in the target language. For this to happen, students must also believe they are proficient enough to communicate and interact in the target language. The results revealed noteworthy outcomes regarding the findings related to students' perceived levels of English language proficiency. As Richards and Pun (2023) indicate, language proficiency is a factor that contributes to selecting EMI. Similarly, Macaro et al. (2018) focus on the relationship between language proficiency and EMI.

On the other hand, Fleischmann et al. (2020) state that perceived language proficiency is not the same as assessed language proficiency. They further argue that perceived language proficiency is one of the determinants of understanding others and successful interaction. This means that with increased exposure to a target language, students are expected to exhibit higher confidence levels in their perceived language proficiency. In this study, students in the EMI group expressed moderate perceptions, while those in the PEMI group indicated high levels. These findings suggest that simultaneous exposure to two languages assists students in enhancing their beliefs about language proficiency. Bradford (2016) points out that it is essential to analyze ICC in detail to avoid misunderstandings, which might cause problems in such contexts. Therefore, this finding is crucial since it comprehensively examines such settings.

In further analyses, the study investigated the relationships between students' perceived language proficiency levels and their ICC skills. As Arno-Macià and Aguilar-Pérez (2019) indicate, ICC development is closely linked to past experiences and the amount of exposure to the target language. Findings indicated that three out of six dimensions of ICC skills (knowledge of others, intercultural communication skills, and intercultural cognitive skills) had significant relationships with how competent students felt in the target language, which is in line with Arno-Macià and Aguilar-Pérez (2019). Upon investigating the scores for each group, it was observed that as students began to believe in their proficiency in the target language, they also started to accept the existence of others and show respect for cultural differences, as Macaro et al. (2018) suggest for the realization of self and others. Furthermore, it was found that higher levels of self-perceived language proficiency contributed to intercultural communication and cognitive skills. In this respect, it could be claimed that interaction with the target language and the culture at any level is essential to enable people to develop better intercultural skills, especially accepting, communicating, and knowing others.

At the final stage, this current study aimed to reveal the kind of language-learning mindsets the participating students had regarding their own beliefs about language learning. Lu and Noels (2017) assert that a language-learning mindset has a significant role in learning environments. They argue that it is crucial to have an incremental mindset, which means being open to learning and believing people can change. One final assumption of the current study was that the potential effect of language learning mindsets of students had an impact on students' program selection (EMI or PEMI) and their ICCs. In terms of the distribution of language learning mindsets across three different mediums of instruction, it was seen that the ones attending EMI or PEMI programs had incremental language learning mindsets, which meant they believed they could learn any language.

On the other hand, the ones who attended TMI indicated that they had higher levels of entity mindsets, although there were still many students with incremental mindsets. This finding is supported by Branigan (2022), who points out that intercultural development is associated with having a growth (incremental) mindset. Although having an incremental mindset is expected to affect the development of ICC positively, the findings did not yield significant

enough results to prove the existence of meaningful relationships between students' language learning mindsets and their ICCs.

Limitations

The data for this study could be collected from a limited group of participants. In a further study, the sampling scale can be extended to conduct a more robust statistical analysis.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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