

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

The Impact of Targeted Educational Activities on the Intercultural
Communicative Competence of Study Abroad Students in Higher
Education

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the University of Hull

by

Laura Tarabusi, Laurea in Lingue e Letterature Straniere
Moderne (Firenze, Italy)

May, 2020

*A tutte le donne:
nel fiore degli anni e nella pienezza della maturità, alle donne madri, figlie, mogli,
sorelle, amanti, alle donne sole e alle donne innamorate, perché non smettano mai di
inseguire i propri sogni.*

Alla mia adorata mamma, che ha lottato fino a quando ha potuto.

*To all women:
in the prime of life and in the fullness of maturity, to mothers, daughters, wives, sisters,
lovers, single women and women in love; may they never stop chasing their dreams.
To my beloved mother, who fought as long as she could.*

Acknowledgements

Writing this thesis has been a long journey and I have been helped by a number of people. First and foremost, I would like to thank my research supervisor, Prof. Marina Mozzon-McPherson, who trusted me since my research project was merely a draft, and who has continuously supported me along the way. Special thanks are due to Simona Sperandio, who made the research site available for this project, and my colleagues Maria Paola Canozzi and Dr. Elisabetta Jafrancesco, who made me feel welcomed in their language classes and showed real interest in the project. I am most grateful to the students who joined the project and did all the activities with enthusiasm.

My warm thanks are due to Dr. Giulia Scarpa, my dear friend and most esteemed colleague, who has in turn served as peer reviewer, academic English advisor, and good listener. Francesco Ramalli and Valentino Bruni were kind enough as to help me venture in the field of quantitative analysis: their guide and support were invaluable. Thanks to Dr. Cristina Bellini for her precious support with electronic resources.

My family give meaning to my life. I would like to thank my husband, my life companion, and my beloved daughters, who fill my life with joy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	iv
Index of Figures	viii
Index of Tables	xiii
List of abbreviations	xvii
Websites	xviii
Abstract	xix
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1. Background to this research study	1
1.2. Aims and scope of this research	6
1.3. Research design	10
1.4. Thesis structure	13
Chapter 2: Literature Review	16
2.1. Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)	16
2.1.1. Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)	17
2.1.2. The Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence	20
2.1.3. The Pyramid Model and the Process Model of Intercultural Competence24
2.1.4. The Performance-oriented Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence	29
2.1.5. Other Models of Intercultural Competence	33

2.1.6. Summary on Intercultural Communicative Competence	34
2.2 Cross-cultural Analysis	35
2.2.1. The Dimensions of National Cultures	39
2.2.2. Power Distance (from small to large).	42
2.2.3. Collectivism vs Individualism	43
2.2.4. Femininity vs Masculinity	43
2.2.5. Uncertainty Avoidance (from weak to strong).	44
2.2.6. Long-Term vs Short-Term Orientation.	45
2.2.7. Indulgence vs Restraint.	46
2.2.8. What is culture?	46
2.2.9. Summary on Cross-Cultural Analysis.	48
2.3. Study Abroad as a form of Experiential Learning?	51
2.3.1 Experiential Learning	54
2.4. Conclusion	55
Chapter 3: Research Methodology.....	57
3.1. The Research Sample	61
3.2. The Assessment Tool	64
3.2.1. Language of the Assessment Tool	68
3.2.2. Anonymity of the Assessment Tool	68
3.3. Rigour and Validity of the Research	70
Chapter 4: The Learning Activities for the Experimental Group.....	84
4.1 “Symbols, heroes, rituals and cultural values”	86
4.2. “Intercultural Awareness. The Cultural Dimensions”	92
4.3. “Relation to Authority: Power Distance in the Family and at School”	100
4.4. “The Social Role of the Individual: Individualism vs Collectivism”	104

4.5. Session n. 5: Round Table: Comparing Cultures, Observing Cultures	107
Chapter 5: Data Analysis	110
5.1. The Uniqueness of the Sample	112
5.2. The Homogeneity of the Sample as per the Biographical Information	130
5.3. The Homogeneity of the Sample as per Intercultural Contacts and Experiences.....	149
5.4. Intercultural Scenarios: Analysing the Open-ended responses	167
5.4.1. Intercultural Scenarios in the Pre- Test	168
5.4.2. Intercultural Scenarios in the Post- Test.....	175
5.5. The Assessment of Intercultural Communicative Competence	182
5.5.1. Partial Correlation between Intercultural Communicative Competence indexes	185
5.5.2. Language used to answer the questionnaire and Intercultural Communicative Competence.....	185
5.5.3. Partial Correlation between “well-spoken languages” and Intercultural Communicative Competence.....	187
5.5.4. Partial Correlation between how many times abroad and Intercultural Communicative Competence.....	187
5.6. Intercultural Profile in the post- test	187
Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations.....	193
6.1. Summary of the study	193
6.2. The research journey	197
6.3. The research outcomes	200
6.3.1. Unexpected outcomes	201
6.4. Contributions to knowledge and distinctive features	202
6.5. Limitations	204
6.5.1. Time-related challenges	204

6.5.2. Technology-related constraints	205
6.5.3. Material design reviews	206
6.6. Future research	207
6.6.1. Evaluations tools for intercultural communication skills	207
6.6.2. Language proficiency and intercultural communications skills	207
6.6.3. Integrated Quantitative and Qualitative methodology	208
6.7. Recommendations for potential future developments	208
6.7.1. In-service training for language instructors	208
6.7.2. Creation of learning materials.....	209
6.7.3. Guidelines to develop practice patterns in ICC research	209
6.8. Disseminations plans	210
Bibliography.....	211
Appendices	223
Appendix 1 Parameters for study abroad classification	224
Appendix 2 Consent Form	226
Appendix 3 Test pre-	229
Appendix 4 Test post-	240
Appendix 5 Adapted INCA Framework for the Assessor	249
Appendix 6 <i>Il concetto di cultura</i>.....	251
Appendix 7 <i>Distanza di potere: tabella e differenze in famiglia e a scuola</i>	256
Appendix 8 <i>Individualismo: tabella e differenze</i>	261

Index of Figures

Figure 2.1: The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (https://www.idrinstitute.org/dmis/ , 25 April 2020)	18
Figure 2.2: SWOT analysis of DMIS	20
Figure 2.3: Factors in intercultural communication (Byram, 1997: 34)	21
Figure 2.4: Comprehensive Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (Byram, 1997)	22
Figure 2.5: SWOT analysis of Byram’s model of Intercultural Communicative Competence	24
Figure 2.6: Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2004)	26
Figure 2.7: Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2004)	27
Figure 2.8: SWOT analysis of Deardorff’s models of Intercultural Competence ...	29
Figure 2.9: Intercultural Communicative Competence diagram (Balboni & Caon, 2014)	30
Figure 2.10: Communicative Competence Model (Balboni & Caon, 2014)	31
Figure 2.11: The model of the critical points of Intercultural Communication (designed by Balboni in 1999, and since then used in his works on intercultural communication) (Balboni & Caon, 2014: 5)	31
Figure 2.12: SWOT analysis of Balboni & Caon’s performance-oriented model of ICC	33
Figure 2.13: Schematic representation of Hofstede’s National Cultures Dimension model.....	42
Figure 2.14: Hofstede et al., 2010: 8	46
Figure 2.15: Hofstede et al., 2010: 6	47
Figure 2.16: Hofstede et al., 2010: 72	48
Figure 2.17: The experiential learning cycle (original figure in Kolb & Fry 1975, taken from Sweitzer & King, 2009: 11)	54

Figure 3.1. Experimental design with two equivalent groups. Input measures and output measures.	61
Figure 3.2. Example of a QR Code applied to the pre- test.	68
Figure 3.3: Linear correlation k1-K in the pre- test.	75
Figure 3.4: Linear linear correlation k4-K in the pre- test.	75
Figure 3.5: Linear correlation o2-O in the pre- test.	76
Figure 3.6: Linear correlation o3-O in the pre- test.	76
Figure 3.7: Linear correlation a1-A in the pre- test.	77
Figure 3.8: Linear correlation a2-A in the pre- test.	77
Figure 3.9: Linear correlation a3-A in the pre- test.	78
Figure 3.10: Linear correlation a4-A in the pre- test.	78
Figure 3.11: Linear correlation k1-K in the post- test.	79
Figure 3.12: Linear correlation k4-K in the post- test.	79
Figure 3.13: Linear correlation o2-O in the post- test.	80
Figure 3.14: Linear correlation o3-O in the post- test.	80
Figure 3.15: Linear correlation a2-A in the post- test.	81
Figure 3.16: Linear correlation a3-A in the post- test.	81
Figure 3.17: Linear correlation a4-A in the post- test.	82
Figure 4.1: Worksheet for Session no. 1 of the treatment.	88
Figure 4.2: List of values/ words emerged during the activity on cultural heroes. .	91
Figure 4.3: List of values/ words emerged during the activity on cultural heroes. .	91
Figure 4.4: Worksheet for Session no. 2 of the treatment.	93
Figure 4.5: Example of an image to be used to build awareness of the values (taken from Hofstede, Pedersen & Hofstede, 2002:10)	94

Figure 4.6: PPT slides with students' response to the 1 st image (Figure 4.5) and debriefing	94
Figure 4.7: Example of an image to be used to build awareness of the values (as amended from www.tuttomercatoweb.com/?action=read&id=361384 , 5 November 2012)	95
Figure 4.8: Example of an image to be used to develop intercultural awareness (http://forum.santabanta.com/showthread.htm?112847-Politicians-Sleeping-In-Public-Places , 5 November 2012)	95
Figure 4.9: PPT slides used to support the explanation of Cultural Awareness; the Dimensions of Culture, Hofstede's Model of Cultural Dimensions	97
Figure 4.10: PPT slide used to support the presentation of the Cross-Cultural Journal	98
Figure 4.11: Worksheet for Session no. 3 of the treatment.	101
Figure 4.12: PowerPoint slides about the Power Distance dimension.	102
Figure 4.13: PowerPoint slides about the Individualism vs Collectivism dimension.....	103
Figure 4.14: Worksheet for Session no. 4 of the treatment.	104
Figure 4.15. Cross-cultural journal entry.....	106
Figure 4.16: PowerPoint slides of the fifth session.	108
Figure 5.1. Distribution in per cent by age of Alpha and Beta.	113
Figure 5.2. Distribution in per cent by nationality of Alpha and Beta.	114
Figure 5.3. Academic Standing of Alpha and Beta.	115
Figure 5.4. Italian language course currently enrolled in of Alpha and Beta.	116
Figure 5.5. Length of stay in Florence before the test pre- of Alpha and Beta.	118
Figure 5.6. Forecast of length of stay the host university of Alpha and Beta.	119
Figure 5.7. Distribution by forecast of the length of stay of Alpha and Beta.	120
Figure 5.8. How many friends from abroad of Alpha and Beta.	121
Figure 5.9. Distribution by number of languages spoken well of Alpha and Beta.	122

Figure 5.10. How often they have dealt with people from other countries of Alpha and Beta.	124
Figure 5.11. How often they have studied or worked in a work group with people from other countries of Alpha and Beta.	125
Figure 5.12. How often they read books in foreign languages of Alpha and Beta.	126
Figure 5.13. How often abroad of Alpha and Beta.	127
Figure 5.14. How often they have been abroad while studying or working of Alpha and Beta.	128
Figure 5.15. How long the longest stay abroad lasted of Alpha and Beta.	129
Figure 5.16. How many different countries they have already visited of Alpha and Beta.	130
Figure 5.17: Age distribution in control and experimental groups.	132
Figure 5.18. Distribution by nationality of control and experimental groups.	133
Figure 5.19. Academic Standing of control and experimental groups.	134
Figure 5.20. Italian language course currently enrolled in of control and experimental groups.	135
Figure 5.21. Length of stay in Florence before the test pre- of control and experimental groups.	136
Figure 5.22. Length of scholarship for the host university of control and experimental groups.	137
Figure 5.23. How many friends from abroad of control and experimental groups.	139
Figure 5.24: Distribution of languages spoken well in control and experimental groups.	140
Figure 5.25. How often they have dealt with people from other countries in their academic or professional life of control and experimental groups.	142
Figure 5.26. How often they have studied or worked in a work group with people from other countries of control and experimental groups.	143

Figure 5.27. How often they read books in foreign languages of control and experimental groups.	144
Figure 5.28. How often abroad of control and experimental groups.	145
Figure 5.29. How often they have been abroad while studying or working of control and experimental groups.	146
Figure 5.30. Length of the longest stay abroad of control and experimental groups.	147
Figure 5.31. How many different countries already visited of control and experimental groups.	148
Figure 5.32. Percentage distribution of responses to items 18-38 of the control group	165
Figure 5.33. Percentage distribution of responses to items 18-38 of the experimental group	165
Figure 5.34. Level lines of the i18-i38 response frequency distributions of the control and experimental groups.	166
Figure 5.35: ICC increase in Control and Experimental groups.	183
Figure 5.36: Average differences in pre- and post- tests for i18-i38	188
Figure 5.37: Average differences of responses to items 20, 24, and 25	189
Figure 5.38: Average of responses to items 36 and 37	190
Figure 5.39: Average of items 27, 29, and 34	191

Index of Tables

Table 3.1. The research sample.	63
Table 3.2. ICC components assessed in the scenarios.	67
Table 3.3: Items assessing ICC macro-components in pre-test.	72
Table 3.4: Items assessing ICC macro-components in post test.	72
Table 3.5: Correlation to Knowledge in pre-test.	73
Table 3.6: Correlation to Openness in pre-test.	73
Table 3.7: Correlation to Adaptability in pre-test.	73
Table 3.8: Correlation to Knowledge in post-test.	74
Table 3.9: Correlation to Openness in post- test.	74
Table 3.10: Correlation to Adaptability in post- test.	74
Table 4.1: Schematic overview of the learning activities in the treatment.	86
Table 5.1. The complete data.	110
Table 5.2. The research sample.	111
Table 5.3: Mean and p -value for Age distribution.	114
Table 5.4: Mean and p -value for Languages spoken well.	123
Table 5.5. The research sample (synthesis).	131
Table 5.6: Mean and p -value of the Age variable.	132
Table 5.7: Mean and p -value of the variable Languages spoken well.	140
Table 5.8. Distribution of the response frequencies for item 18.	150
Table 5.9. Distribution of response frequencies for item 19.	150
Table 5.10. Distribution of the response frequencies for item 20.	151
Table 5.11. Distribution of the response frequencies for item 21.	152
Table 5.12. Distribution of the response frequencies for item 22.	152

Table 5.13. Distribution of the response frequencies for the item 23.	153
Table 5.14. Distribution of the response frequencies for the item 24.	154
Table 5.15. Distribution of the response frequencies for item 25.	154
Table 5.16. Distribution of the response frequencies for the item 26.	155
Table 5.17. Distribution of the response frequencies for item 27.	156
Table 5.18. Distribution of the response frequencies for the item 28.	157
Table 5.19. Distribution of the response frequencies for the item 29.	157
Table 5.20. Distribution of the response frequencies for the item 30.	158
Table 5.21. Distribution of the response frequencies for item 31.	159
Table 5.22. Distribution of the response frequencies for the item 32.	159
Table 5.23. Distribution of the response frequencies for item 33.	160
Table 5.24. Distribution of the response frequencies for the item 34.	161
Table 5.25. Distribution of the response frequencies for the item 35.	162
Table 5.26. Distribution of the response frequencies for the item 36.	162
Table 5.27. Distribution of the response frequencies for the item 37.	163
Table 5.28. Distribution of the response frequencies for item 8.	164
Table 5.29: ICC components covered by scenarios.	167
Table 5.30: Descriptive analysis of Knowledge in the pre-test.	169
Table 5.31: Answers to Scenario 1 pre-test: examples of basic competence in K and A.	170
Table 5.32: Answers to Scenario 1 pre-test: examples of lower int./ intermediate competence in K and A.	171
Table 5.33: Answer to Scenario 4 pre-test: examples of basic competence in K and A.	171
Table 5.34: Descriptive analysis of Openness in the pre-test.	172

Table 5.35: Answers to Scenario 2 pre-test: examples of basic competence in A and O.	172
Table 5.36: Answers to Scenario 2 pre-test: examples of intermediate competence in A and O.	173
Table 5.37: Answer to Scenario 3 pre-test: examples of basic competence in A and O.	173
Table 5.38: Descriptive analysis of Adaptability in the pre-test.	174
Table 5.39: Answers to Scenario 3 pre- test: example of lower intermediate competence in A.	174
Table 5.40: Descriptive analysis of K, O, and A in the pre- test.	175
Table 5.41: Descriptive analysis of Knowledge in the post- test.	176
Table 5.42: Answers to Scenario 1 post- test: examples of basic and of upper intermediate competence in K.	177
Table 5.43: Descriptive analysis of Openness in the post- test.	179
Table 5.44: Answers to Scenario 2 post-test: examples of upper intermediate and of full competence in A and O.	179
Table 5.45: Answers to Scenario 3 post-test: example of basic competence in A and O.	180
Table 5.46: Descriptive analysis of Adaptability in the post-test.	180
Table 5.47: Answer to Scenario 3 post-test: example of basic competence in A and O.	181
Table 5.48: Answers to Scenario 3 post-test: example of treatment effects.	181
Table 5.49: Descriptive analysis of K, O, and A in the post-test.	182
Table 5.50. Average values of ICC components.	183
Table 5.51: T-test on Control and Experimental groups.	184
Table 5.52: T-test on pre- and post-tests.	184
Table 5.53. Partial correlation indices between the ICC components	185

Table 5.54. Percentage scores for ICC indexes based on the language of questionnaire response.	186
Table 5.55. Indices of partial correlation between two context variables and ICC components	187
Table 5.56: Average of responses to i20, i24, and i25.	189
Table 5.57: Average of responses to items i36 and i37.	190
Table 5.58: Average of responses to i27, i29, and i34.	191

List of Abbreviations

CEFR: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

CV: Coefficient of Variation

IC: Intercultural Competence

ICC: Intercultural Communicative Competence

IT: Information Technology

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Websites

European Language Competence <http://elc-consult.com>

Intercultural Research Development Institute, <https://www.idrinstitute.org/dmis/>

Online Surveys, www.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/

QR Code Monkey, <http://www.qrcode-monkey.com/#text>

Random String Generator, <https://www.random.org/strings/>

The R Project for Statistical Computing <https://www.r-project.org>

Abstract

This study explored the impact of targeted educational activities on the development of the Intercultural Communicative Competence of study abroad students at tertiary level. Specifically, the learning activities were integrated into Italian L2 courses for Erasmus students at the host institution, level B1/B2 of the CEFR.

This work took as its basis Byram's model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (1997) along with its Intercultural Competence Assessment tool (INCA Project, 2004) suitably adapted. The learning activities used the model of dimensions of national cultures (Hofstede et al., 2010) as an objective tool to compare cultures during the study abroad experience, which became a fundamental part of the learning process.

Data was collected through a quasi-experimental investigation with a convenience sample of 58 participants, divided into control and experimental groups, who took both pre- and post- tests.

Data analysis showed a significant increase in the ICC of the experimental group, and confirmed the need to take specific initiatives to foster ICC.

The results of this study endorse the need to integrate targeted educational activities aimed at the development of ICC into foreign /second language courses and to foster the use of the model of dimensions of national cultures as an objective tool to compare cultures.

In particular, the learning activities based on the sequence awareness (of cultural and individual values) – knowledge (of cultures) – skills (based on awareness and knowledge plus practice) proved to be effective.

This study includes recommendations for teacher training and also suggestions for further research on intercultural competence assessment tools.

Keywords: intercultural communicative competence, intercultural competence, study abroad, Italian L2, language teaching, Hofstede's dimensions of national cultures, intercultural competence assessment, quantitative analysis

Chapter 1: Introduction

*We are raising questions, not answering them.
(Council of Europe, 2018: 26)*

This chapter provides a general introduction of the background and origin of the idea leading to the aims and scope of the research project. It also outlines the applied methodology and research design, as well as a brief description of the thesis structure. It is divided into four sections.

1.2 *Background to this research study*

Intercultural competence has become central in contemporary societies, and the ability to communicate with people from different cultures is increasingly necessary and required for work and social purposes. Furthermore, globalization and internationalisation have given new meaning to foreign language teaching, partly because the competences required for participating in ‘intercultural dialogue’ are not acquired automatically by individuals (Barrett, 2012: 1). Being able to use a language for daily communication and social interaction has become more important than understanding the high culture of great civilizations, which was once the main aim of learning a foreign language (Byram, 2008:7). Additionally, in higher education the number of students involved in study abroad programmes is constantly growing (OECD, 2011, 2018), mostly because the academic experience abroad is seen as an important component of education for the so-called ‘globally competent citizens’ (Hunter et al, 2006:272) as defined in the American academic context or for ‘intercultural citizenship’ as described from the European perspective (Byram, 2008). Languages and language teaching play an integral part in this process and the relationship between language teaching and intercultural competence is complex and much debated (Barrett *et al.*, 2014; Candelier *et al.*, 2012; Council of Europe, 2010, 2016, 2018; Lázár, 2007; Lenz & Berthele, 2012; Neuner, 2003). An increasingly discussed topic is how to incorporate intercultural communication training into teaching more systematically (Council of Europe, 2018).

This researcher has been involved in study abroad programmes in higher education for over two decades: her work at an Italian university involved syllabus design of Italian language courses and organization of self-study opportunities for Erasmus students, as well as teaching Italian on advanced level courses. Despite extensive research on

intercultural competence and its importance for the peaceful co-existence of diverse societies, both theoretically (e.g. Council of Europe, 2016, 2018; Barrett, 2014; Lázár, 2007; Neuner, 2003) and practically through the development of ICC-focused learning materials (especially Byram et al., 2009), this researcher felt there still was a gap in teaching materials and strategies to be integrated into foreign language courses to foster students' intercultural competence.

Consequently, her professional experience played an important role in prompting this research study. For over a decade this researcher has been in charge of community service opportunities for undergraduates at the study abroad site of a US college in Italy, and taught the related academic course, she also taught 'traditional' Italian language courses (by 'traditional' it is meant a language course primarily focused on training students in the main four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing).

By comparison, the Community Service programme aimed at promoting interaction between study abroad students and the local community. Volunteer and internship opportunities were offered both for-credit and as extra-curricular, non-credit bearing courses. The academic course had an in-service component at local schools or non-profit organizations: as a requirement, students had to complete a specified period of time in a volunteer activity or internship and they also had to attend a seminar class once a week. The core of the programme was the study of Italian language and culture through the in-service experience.

This researcher's work experience and track record, along with her interest for the most up-to-date research on foreign language teaching, were so stimulating that they inspired this doctoral research study. Because of the dual teaching experience in 'traditional' Italian language courses and in the community service related seminars, this researcher could identify several emerging differences between the two types of courses. Amongst such differences, it was noticeable that students involved in the community service academic courses improved not only their Italian language skills but furthermore developed their ability to interact in Italian, to them a foreign language, with Italians, people of a language and culture different from their own. Essentially, those students developed their Intercultural Communicative Competence, which is to say the ability to interact with people from another country and culture in a foreign language, as defined by Byram (1997). They learned how to successfully communicate in Italian with locals, as the informal feedback of site supervisors confirmed every semester.

The aim of foreign language teaching has changed over the last decades, moving from linguistic competence and native-like mastery (Balboni, 2012) to Intercultural Communicative Competence, meant as the ability to '*get by*' in a multicultural society (Coperias Aguilar, 2009; Council of Europe, 2018). The aim of foreign language teaching is now "to train mediators in a complex society" (Coperias Aguilar, 2009: 253), keeping in mind that becoming an intercultural speaker is a life-long process because there will always be new situations and new contexts to adapt to (Byram, 1997; Coperias Aguilar, 2009; Balboni, 2012). The format of the community service academic course was deemed to be appropriate to achieve this new and up-to-date goal of foreign language teaching as it created an opportunity and a framework to integrate language skills with intercultural understanding in context.

The researcher worked systematically to develop a course design coherent and supportive of Intercultural Communicative Competence, which was published in an academic issue on innovative aspects of the community service academic course (Tarabusi, 2012). This article highlighted the advantages of this new type of Italian language course, where Italian language learning was integrated with volunteering or interning at local non-profit organizations. Specific learning strategies, such as the cross-cultural journaling, and IC-targeted teaching materials, such as in-class activities on cultural values, were identified and their use was explained.

It is important to note that one of the cornerstones of the seminar class in the community service course was the study of the dimensions of national cultures as a tool to observe and compare cultures (Hofstede 1980, 1991, 2001; Hofstede et al., 2010). In this researcher's experience, the model of dimensions of national cultures developed by Hofstede (Hofstede et al., 2010) and its use as a pedagogical tool (Hofstede et al., 2012) proved to be effective in helping understand and interpret 'weird' behaviour study abroad students observed and experienced in their daily routine. Notably, the use of this model and the related concept of 'software of the mind' in foreign language teaching to develop Intercultural Communicative Competence had already been endorsed by Balboni in 1999. According to Hofstede, a 'dimension' is "an aspect of a culture that can be measured relative to other cultures" (Hofstede et al., 2010: 31), each dimension faces one of the six basic problems of human societies as identified by social anthropologists. In this researcher's article, it is claimed that Hofstede's model of

dimensions of national cultures is a valid framework of reference to decode everyday life behaviours that can reveal cultural features.

In the innovative community service academic course the students were invited to live all their experiences abroad with a critical approach – which cannot be circumscribed to the academic course and volunteer experience – exactly because the aim of the course was to develop the awareness of a whole process in order for them to become Intercultural Speakers, i.e. mediators of both languages and cultures (Coperias Aguilar, 2009). In this context, an objective tool to observe and compare cultures, such as Hofstede's model, was considered very important to develop intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997; Balboni, 1999; Balboni & Caon, 2014).

Another cornerstone of the Community Service academic course was the integration of practice into theory, namely the volunteer or internship experience with the seminar class. In this case, the volunteer or internship experience was seen as a form of experiential education, which is based on the premise that for real learning to happen, students need to be active participants in the learning process since they are the centers of energy (Sweitzer & King, 2009:11). A key component of experiential education is reflection, which connects and integrates the experience to the learning process. Both the seminar class, and later this research study, relied on the experiential learning cycle developed by Kolb in 1984 as theoretical basis. In the Community Service academic course, the in-service component was Kolb's Concrete Experience phase; keeping the journal and the class discussions allowed for the Reflective Observation to take place and Abstract Conceptualization was facilitated through the course material. The course requirements were the formal moments when the Reflection phase was carried out. The study abroad experience as a whole allowed for the Active Experimentation (Kolb, 1984: 68) phase to take place (Tarabusi, 2012).

During a re-organization of the course offerings at the study abroad site of the US college, this researcher was asked to give evidence of the learning outcomes of the Community Service academic course in order for the college administrators to confirm the course. The language tests adopted until then did not include an intercultural competence part, nor was the Intercultural Communicative Competence specifically assessed or monitored. This request of validation and the realization of the need for evidencing the impact of specific IC-focused teaching interventions,

matched with the increased proliferation of different models of intercultural competence across several disciplines informed the need to investigate this more scientifically and guided this doctoral study.

From education to management, health care and social work (Barrett, 2012), it was evident that the concept of Intercultural Communicative Competence was gaining importance in study abroad programmes but it was equally clear that there was no consensus on the terminology around intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006) and that there were even more than fifty assessment tools available (Fantini, 2009) to evaluate Intercultural Communicative Competence. This increased awareness of the kaleidoscopic ICC landscape made the task of proving the pedagogical value of the community service academic course even more relevant to this researcher and her practice. At that specific time (2012), to support the offering of such academic course, only a limited number of studies with a focus on assessment of Intercultural Communicative Competence in study abroad for higher education could be found (Pedersen, 2010; Jackson, 2008 & 2010).

Other elements also had to be considered, such as the need for formal agreements between the educational institutions (in Italy and the USA) and the internship sites. This was introduced as a result of a new Italian law demanding formal agreements for internships. Contemporarily a new US college policy required the alignment of course offerings both at the home campus and in the study abroad sites. Whilst these emerging needs and demands had inspired this researcher to start investigating the field of assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence to support the continuation of the community service course, a subsequent re-organization resulted in its closure, as well as the suspension of other activities explicitly fostering Intercultural Communicative Competence.

This decision was negatively received, because this researcher had been able to see semester after semester the great progress made by the students not only in the Italian language but also in their Intercultural Communicative Competence, and the significant added value to their study abroad experience.

Consequently, this research study was deeply motivated by the researcher's strong belief about the need to objectively identify the value of Intercultural Communicative Competence and its potential for study abroad in higher education, as claimed by

groundbreaking research (Byram, 1997, 2008; Huber, 2012; Huber & Reynolds, 2014). Furthermore, this researcher became even more convinced that teaching material needed to be explicitly designed to foster intercultural communicative competence, and to be purposefully integrated both into foreign language courses and as a core component of study abroad programmes in higher education.

Conversations with college administrators made it clear to this researcher that she would need to support her arguments with objective, preferably quantitative, data. When it comes to discussing cuts in programmes, having quantitative data on the results of specific didactic interventions is essential to support projects and initiatives. Realizing that such data was also missing in the literature on Italian L2 further stimulated the researcher to propose a research project that could measure the outcomes of targeted educational activities on the development of Intercultural Communicative Competence of study abroad students of higher education institutions. Therefore, a research design suitable for quantitative methodology was selected, once it was made clear to the researcher that her research site did not approve a mixed-methods design, which also included interviews with (some) research participants.

Thanks to her extended teaching experience, the researcher was well aware that during study abroad students daily face challenges related to intercultural encounters and struggle to address them as adequately as they can. For this reason, she designed a research study aimed at making the study abroad experience a fundamental feature in the development of this competence. This informed the inclusion of Kolb's experiential learning theory (1984) which recalls the sequence awareness – knowledge- skills postulated by Hofstede *et al.* (2010) as the theoretical basis of the targeted learning activities. The host country became part of the learning setting, and intercultural experiences were critically analysed, in order to achieve a better understanding of interpersonal dynamics experienced or observed.

1.2 Aims and scope of this research

This research aims at measuring the impact of targeted educational activities on the Intercultural Communicative Competence of study abroad students in higher education. Particularly, it explores the potential of the Dimensions of National Cultures model (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede *et al.*, 2010) as a pedagogical tool to observe and compare cultures. In the researcher's experience comparing cultures proved to be one of the most

difficult, least investigated, and controversial issues when it comes to developing Intercultural Communicative Competence. The comparison of cultures emerges in the most important models both of Intercultural Competence and of Intercultural Communicative Competence (Bennett, 1986, 1993; Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2004; Balboni, 1999; Balboni & Caon, 2014), in particular it is part of the Knowledge component, which is at the core both of Intercultural Competence (Barrett, 2012) and of Intercultural Communicative Competence (Byram, 1997; Balboni & Caon, 2014). However, it is hard to find in the literature how to effectively compare cultures without falling into stereotypes or relying only on personal, and therefore subjective, experience of travellers or journalists: in the case of Italian culture examples include work by Parks (1995), Severgnini (1996, 2001, 2006) and Epstein (2001). The comparative work of these writers on Italian culture is commonly used along with textbooks in Italian language courses for adults. Most recent textbooks for Italian as a foreign language included a “Culture” section, usually at the end of each chapter – e.g. Ghezzi et al., (2014); Mezzadri & Balboni (2012), Gruppo Italiaidea (2014); nonetheless fostering intercultural communicative competence is not systematically integrated into teaching.

A review of the literature related to Italian as a foreign language identifies a gap related to measure the outcomes of targeted learning activities fostering intercultural competence. Specifically, most studies (Borghetti, 2013; Pmjat & Guglielmi, 2008) thoroughly describe activities or didactic interventions, but the quantitative evidence of the learning outcomes of these educational interventions are under-researched. In this regard this doctoral study will provide an original contribution as applied to a quantitative methodology.

Two research questions were generated in order to investigate the relationship between Intercultural Communicative Competence and study abroad in higher education, and to measure the impact of targeted educational activities on such competence in particular. Does a study abroad experience in higher education foster Intercultural Communicative Competence? What is the impact of targeted educational activities on the Intercultural Communicative Competence of study abroad students in higher education? It was hypothesized that study abroad might have an impact on the informal development of students’ intercultural communicative competence, and that integrating specific intercultural training into a foreign language course would definitely increase and deepen such competence. The targeted educational activities were mainly informed by

the work of Hofstede (1991, 2001; Hofstede et al. 2002; Hofstede et al., 2010) and Balboni (1999, 2007, 2012), the latter inspired also the structure of each session of the treatment.

The existing cutting-edge research involving the key concepts was thoroughly reviewed and analysed. These concepts are: Intercultural Communicative Competence, Cross-Cultural Analysis, Study Abroad and Experiential Learning. Through the analysis of the literature on these topics, the most appropriate Intercultural Communicative Competence model was selected along with its related assessment tools. Byram claims that, for someone with intercultural communicative competence, “their knowledge of another culture is linked to their language competence through their ability to use the language appropriately and their awareness of specific meanings, values and connotations of the language” (1997:71). Consequently, in line with Byram, given that this research involved study abroad in higher education, it was necessary to select a model that took into account the linguistic aspect, which is fundamental in communicating in a foreign language with people from different cultures. In this context, the integration of specific intercultural activities into a foreign language course became appropriate and logical.

To measure the impact of these activities selected specific assessment tools became significant. In reviewing the assessment tools, several considerations had to be addressed ranging from deciding whether to assess “the relationship of competence to performance and the related question of ‘performance assessment’ as opposed to psychometric” (Byram, 1997:89), or to adopt ‘objective’ testing to the analysis of each competence component (Byram, 1997:89). Due to the complexity of designing and testing such an assessment tool, this researcher surveyed the literature and opted for an existing and validated assessment tool informed by Byram’s model of intercultural communicative competence.

Among the components of the intercultural communicative competence, Knowledge (*savoirs*) emerges as a critical one. Byram, referring to the Knowledge component, includes among its objectives the knowledge of “the national memory of one’s country and how its events are related to and seen from the perspective of other countries”, as well as “the knowledge of the national memory of one’s interlocutor’s country and the perspective on them from one’s own country” (Byram, 1997:59). These objectives seem much too wide to be comprehensively integrated into foreign language courses in higher

education. Balboni & Caon, however, in their performance-oriented model of intercultural communicative competence are more specific and identify cultural values as a fundamental ‘competence group’ including: “intercultural awareness of the critical points in the communicative use of time and space, in the sense of belonging to a group, in the expression of hierarchy, respect, status [...]” (Balboni & Caon, 2014:6).

To address the development of awareness-raising requires a focus on self-reflection or peer discussion (see as an example Kohls & Knight, 1994; Utey, 2004); however little space is usually given to literature in the area. From this perspective studies on cross-cultural analysis are useful because they intend to examine the world’s modern cultures through large-scale quantitative comparisons with the aim to address fundamental questions, such as what culture is, how it can be studied, how cultures can be compared. Within this context, this researcher surveyed the literature in this field and selected a large-scale comparison of cultures to be integrated into activities fostering intercultural communicative competence, the model of Dimensions of National Cultures (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010) was then used as a pedagogical tool to foster such competence.

The originality of this study lies in the design of targeted educational activities based on Hofstede’s model applied for Italian language teaching. The activities included the study of the main features of the model: from the concept of ‘the software of the mind’ to that of ‘dimensions’ of culture. Due to time constraints, only two of the six dimensions of the model: Power Distance and Individualism vs Collectivism were applied. Firstly, the definition of culture and its manifestations was identified, this task was followed by activities involving reflections on values, both individual and cultural. Selected readings from Hofstede’s studies and other scholars in the field were assigned. These readings were in Italian, and relevant reading comprehension exercises were provided. In-class activities consisted of brief lectures on the main theoretical principles also recalling the assigned readings, and class discussions. Students were encouraged to reflect on their experience abroad in order to select ‘weird’ behaviours or cross-cultural misunderstandings or incidents they observed or experienced first-hand. A cross-cultural journal was provided as an effective tool to facilitate this process and support their Italian language learning at the same time. During in-class discussions students tried to interpret such identified behaviours and events from a cross-cultural

perspective, using the dimensions of national cultures where appropriate. The targeted educational activities constituted the treatment for the experimental group.

To properly complete the theoretical foundation of this study, a review of the literature regarding the characteristics of the study abroad students was conducted, with particular attention to study abroad in Italy. Elements such as the length of stay in the host country (in this case Italy), any previous experience abroad and/or in the host country, motivation for choosing the study abroad site, background knowledge of host country language and culture were important factors to consider in the preparation of the educational activities. The literature about the relationship between study abroad and the experiential learning developed by Kolb (1984) was also reviewed, in fact, the study abroad experience is suitable to be used as an experience leading to learning, either on the whole or considering only distinct aspects. This four-pronged (intercultural communicative competence, cross-cultural analysis, study abroad, and experiential learning) approach laid the foundation of this research study.

Procedurally, this researcher had to complete an Ethics process at the University of Hull and once she was granted approval she could proceed with data gathering. The research project was presented by the researcher to the potential research participants; these were students enrolled in Italian language courses for Erasmus at an Italian university, level B1/B2 of the CEFR. Those who accepted to participate in the project signed the Consent Form (appendix 2) and took a pre-test.

1.3 Research design

In order to measure the impact of the educational activities on the Intercultural Communicative Competence of study abroad students of higher education, this research applied a quantitative approach, which is considered as appropriate in case of a positivist standpoint and with specific research questions (Jupp, 2006). Furthermore, since in the area of Italian as a foreign language there is not a quantitative methodological salience, that is usually a criterion to select the appropriate research methodology (Dörnyei, 2007). The adoption of a quantitative approach is one of the original contributions to the field of this research project.

The researcher was aware that a mixed method approach could provide a fuller understanding of the research focus (Croker, 2009), and the importance and utility of qualitative methods is increasingly being recognized in the field of second language

research (Mackey & Gass, 2015; Pedon & Gnisci, 2012) and applied linguistics in general (Duff, 2008). Mixed method research can however prove challenging in a fast-changing research setting and can result in less effective results. For this reason, Dörnyei suggests that the real potential for the implementation of mixed methods research lies in working in teams whose members have different research orientations (Dörnyei, 2007:174). This collaboration was not possible in this research project, specifically because of the restrictions imposed by the research site administrators: the researcher had to negotiate every detail of the data gathering and the designed treatment with the research site, and the qualitative part of the investigation, such as interviews, diaries or verbal reports (Croker, 2009), were not approved.

As common practice in educational settings, where random assignment of students by the researcher is rarely possible (Dörnyei, 2007), a quasi-experimental investigation was conducted with two appropriate samples, one of which was identified as a control group and the other as the experimental group. The latter was subjected to the treatment, which consisted in carrying out learning activities aiming at the development of Intercultural Communicative Competence in the Italian language courses for students with international mobility grants, level B1 or B2 of the CEFR.

The research design consisted of three phases:

- 1) Assessment of the ICC of all the research participants (experimental group and control group) at the beginning of their Italian language course.
- 2) Delivery of the educational activities to improve the ICC by the experimental group.
- 3) Assessment of the ICC of all the research participants (experimental group and control group) at the end of their Italian language course.

Creating an assessment tool is a complex matter, both from a theoretical point of view and as regards the design of the test. Given the complexity and sensitivity of the topic and taking into account the resources available, an existing assessment tool, methodologically sound and well-integrated into the selected model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (Byram, 1997), was identified.

Much effort was given to reach an appropriate, academically accepted, sample size: with correlation research stating at least 30 participants and comparative and

experimental procedures calling for at least 15 participants in each group (Dörnyei, 2007:99).

Data was statistically analysed with the software R, because it is free, multiplatform and open source. However, graphs, histograms and plots were executed with the use of Microsoft Excel software, as it is more manageable than R by non-experts in statistics such as this researcher. Construct validity of the test results was evaluated. Descriptive statistics was used to present the sample and the test results, T-tests were calculated to compare the results of the Intercultural Communicative Competence assessment of control and experimental groups.

The research design provided for the experimental group to attend 5 sessions of 30 minutes each with activities aimed at the development of Intercultural Communicative Competence. The sessions were distributed in the ten weeks of the course duration, usually a session every two weeks. Within the limited contact time available, it was necessary to reduce the number of cultural dimensions to work on. Two cultural dimensions were therefore selected: 'Power Distance' and 'Collectivism vs Individualism' (Hofstede et al. 2010), not only because they are the first two dimensions of the model but also because they present interesting differences between the cultures generally represented in the Italian classes for Erasmus, and because Italian culture is always present in the list of analysed cultures.

Educational activities aimed at developing the first two steps of the sequence for the acquisition of intercultural communication skills as identified by Hofstede (Hofstede et al. 2002), *awareness* and *knowledge*, were created. The fact that intercultural learners resided in an unfamiliar culture (in this case Italy) allowed them to put into practice what was theoretically addressed in class in order to develop their *skills*, which is the third and final element of the sequence proposed by Hofstede. The experience in Italy, i.e. in a different culture where the intercultural learners speak a language other than their L1, in this context constituted the first phase of the experiential learning cycle, the 'concrete experience' postulated by Kolb in 1984. The purpose of the educational activities was therefore to foster the creation of a process rather than obtaining a standard result for all research participants.

The experimental group worked in three main areas: to develop the awareness (of the individual values, of one's culture, of the other culture); to develop the ability to separate observation (of an event, a situation) from its interpretation; and to learn how

to observe cultures objectively. The educational activities were in Italian, as they were integrated into an Italian language class, Level B1 or B2 of the CEFR. The first session was an introduction to the topic and the type of work planned for this project. From the second session onwards, some readings were assigned as homework, and participants were required to keep a 'cross-cultural journal' (Kohls & Knight, 1994). Class time was mainly devoted to discussions and group-work.

1.4 Thesis structure

This thesis is divided into six chapters of which this introduction is the first one.

Chapter Two examines the literature review according to four concepts critical to this research study: Intercultural Communicative Competence, Cross-Cultural Analysis – particularly the model of Dimensions of National Cultures -, Study Abroad and Experiential Learning. The Italian context is also introduced as the study abroad site of the research sample and because Italian is the *lingua franca*, i.e. the language used to communicate among research participants from different cultures. Firstly, through the analysis of the most commonly cited models of Intercultural Communicative Competence, Byram's model is identified as the most appropriate to this research project, because it gives due importance to the language factor. Subsequently, the need for an objective tool to compare cultures is highlighted, as comparing cultures is at the core of one of the six components of the intercultural communicative competence model (the Knowledge component), and it can be effectively addressed in an academic course. Secondly, studies of cross-cultural analysis are examined, and the model of the Dimensions of National Cultures by Hofstede is identified as an efficient objective tool to compare cultures and to be pedagogically used to develop Intercultural Communicative Competence. A critical description of Hofstede's model is also provided along with examples of its potential pedagogical use in this project. Thirdly, the main features of Study Abroad in higher education are outlined, with a main focus on the learning outcomes which such an experience may generate. Finally, its strong relationship with Experiential Learning (Kolb, 1984) is also established, as study abroad programmes represent a balanced form of experiential learning (Hopkins, 1999).

Chapter Three discusses the methodological approach adopted for this research study. The different methodological approaches in second language research were critically reviewed as well as the criteria that led to the selected quantitative research design: a

quasi-experimental investigation with two convenience samples, one of which was identified as the control group and the other as the experimental group. The chapter describes the research sample, along with the challenges the researcher had to face in order to achieve an appropriate sample size. Due to a relevant attrition, i.e. progressive loss of data in research (Jupp, 2006), a second round of data collection had to be made. The chapter also presents the assessment tool, the Intercultural Communicative Competence Assessment (INCA Project, 2004) and explains why it was selected and how it was modified to better meet the needs of this specific research study. The chapter also addresses issues of rigour and research validity. The construct validity was tested through the analysis of the linear correlations between the single items and the average values used as synthesis (Knowledge, Openness and Adaptability). This analysis confirmed the construct validity of the results to the INCA questionnaire used to assess the ICC of the research participants. Challenges and threats to research validity are also examined.

Chapter Four introduces in detail the targeted educational activities carried out by the experimental group, which consisted of five 30-minute sessions. Within this context it discusses how of the sequence ‘Awareness- Knowledge – Skills’ proposed by Hofstede et al. (2002) informed the design of learning material for Italian language courses Level B1/B2 of the CEFR. It presents useful learning tools, such as the cross-cultural journal and how this can be effectively integrated into the language curriculum. For each session the lesson plan is provided together with its worksheet and related PowerPoint presentation as it was used in class; the selected readings with their related reading comprehension exercises assigned as homework are also included.

Chapter Five provides the analysis of the data. Since the data were collected in two chronologically distinct phases, the data analysis must first verify the uniqueness of the sample, i.e. the data are homogenous and comparable. Then the characteristics of the control and experimental groups need to be analysed in order to verify that the sample is homogenous. Only a unique and homogenous research sample would allow for the analysis of the results of the complete data (the respondents who performed the pre- and post- test) to check whether carrying out the targeted educational activities had an impact on the Intercultural Communicative Competence of the experimental group. The test results as per the three macro-components of the Intercultural Communicative Competence (Knowledge, Openness and Adaptability) are described, and a brief

qualitative analysis of the open-ended questions is presented in order to highlight peculiar features and to identify possible effects of the treatment in the post- tests. The averages in each macro-component in both groups in pre- and post- tests are compared, and also a T-test has been used to evaluate the scoring distributions and to identify possible differences between the control and experimental groups. Finally, the post- test results of the Intercultural Profile of both groups are analysed, to check whether at the end of the experimentation the experimental group show a more open attitude to encounters with different cultures than the responses of the control group.

Chapter Six discusses the research findings and considers the limitations of the study as well as its unexpected outcomes. It also outlines the distinctive contribution of the study to existing knowledge and provides recommendations for further research along with pedagogical implications.

Finally, in linguistics there are distinctive characteristics between ‘foreign’, ‘second’, ‘ethnic’ language and *lingua franca*, which have an impact on language learning and teaching. The phrase ‘foreign language’ is used when the target language is studied at school, but it is not spoken by the people of the country where the school is (e.g. English in Italy). The phrase ‘second language’ is used when students can find the target language also out of the school setting (e.g. English language studied in England), as a consequence the second language teacher cannot control the linguistic input as the foreign language teacher does. Balboni (2012) defines as ‘ethnic’ the language of a person’s community, when this is not their mother tongue, for example children of immigrants in Italy, who have become Italophones but can use the ethnic language at home or among members of their own community. *Lingua franca* is the language used for communication between groups of people who speak different languages. In this work the phrase ‘foreign language’ is used as an umbrella term.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

*To avoid becoming a fluent fool, we need to understand more completely the cultural dimension of language.
(Bennett, 1997:16)*

This chapter examines selected studies on the four concepts critical to this research project: Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), Cross-cultural Analysis – in particular the Dimensions of National Cultures – study abroad and internationalization of higher education, and experiential learning. It takes into account the Italian context, as this is the place of the study abroad experience of our sample, and because Italian is the foreign language through which research participants study, experiment, and develop their ICC.

In order to determine the impact of a study abroad experience in higher education on Intercultural Communicative Competence, it is necessary to select an appropriate ICC model, specifically a clear definition of the content, features and boundaries of such competence. Over the last two decades, there have been many attempts to define Intercultural Communicative Competence: Section 2.1 examines the main models and definitions and their methods of assessment focusing in particular on the work of Bennett (1986, 1993, Bennett & Bennett 2004), Byram (1997), Deardorff (2004) and Balboni (1999, 2006, 2007, 2012, Balboni & Caon, 2014). These are all highly recognized internationally and in the Italian academic arena too. Section 2.2. examines the principles of cross-cultural analysis and scrutinizes the Hofstede's model of the Dimensions of National Cultures. Cross-cultural analysis is fundamental to this research project as all Intercultural Communicative Competence models include at some point the comparison of cultures; therefore, it is of paramount importance to have a solid tool and strategies for this comparison. The last section of this literature review investigates the main features of study abroad in higher education and how this can be successfully integrated into experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) to exploit its potential.

2.1. Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

The study of intercultural competence is an extremely fragmented field that lacks uniformity even in its terminology. This researcher's work was characterized by the continuous effort to select the definition that would best fit this research on study abroad programmes; however, it remains well established (Barrett, 2011 & 2014;

Deardorff & Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017) that intercultural competence continues to be a “complex topic fraught with controversy” (Deardorff, 2006: 258). For instance it has been observed that in many studies the phrase ‘Intercultural Competence’ is equivalent to ‘Intercultural Effectiveness’ (Arasaratnam, 2014), and ‘Intercultural Communication Competence’ to ‘Intercultural Communicative Competence’, the latter being mostly used in Europe (Balboni & Caon, 2014). This section thoroughly reviews, and analyzes, models of Intercultural Competence / Intercultural Communicative Competence. Furthermore, the difference between these two phrases is not marginal and will be explained later in this chapter.

2.1.1. Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)

The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) (Bennett 1986, 1993; Bennett & Bennett, 2004) is a constructivist attempt to describe how people become more culturally adaptive. The constructivist matrix characterizes it strongly, making it unique and differentiates it from another important model: Hofstede’s Dimensions of National Cultures (which will be analysed in section 2.2.1). The DMIS is neither an affective nor a cognitive model of intercultural communication (Bennett, 2013: 85). Bennett describes the adaptive processes involved in the encounter between cultures using an Intercultural Sensitivity Scale: it is a dynamic model centered on the prospect of change. The DMIS further assumes that our experience of reality itself is a function of how we organize our perception – that things become more real as we perceive them in more sensitive (i.e. more complex) ways. The model then defines a sequence whereby “cultural difference” becomes more real, which generates a more complex intercultural experience. According to this model, intercultural sensitivity is a necessary precondition for the enactment of intercultural adaptation or intercultural competence in its behavioural sense (Bennett, 2013: 86). The model supposes a development from less complex to more complex perception and from shallow to more sophisticated experience of cultural differences. It distinguishes six distinct kinds of experience spread across a continuum from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism (Figure 2.2.1). In general, the more ethnocentric positions represent ways of *avoiding the experience of cultural difference*, the more ethnorelative positions represent ways of *seeking the experience of cultural difference* (Bennett 2013: 86).

The DMIS is a stage model in that each stage builds from the previous one, and unresolved issues from earlier stages can become problems later in the developmental process; it should not be used in a positivist sense, i.e. as a classification system, with statements such as “he/she is in Defense”. The stages, or positions, occur in a developmental sequence (Hammer, Bennett & Wisemann, 2003; Hammer 2007), nevertheless they coexist to some extent in all of us. Therefore, particular positions on the continuum are referred to as a “predominant experience” (PE). Development occurs not through stepping from stage to stage, but from moving the peak of our PE along the continuum. Bennett claims that the PE position applies to the experience of all cultural differences, and is not related to a particular culture.



Figure 2.2.1: The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (<https://www.idrinstitute.org/dmis/>, 25 April 2020)

The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) is the empirically based instrument developed to measure the stages of the DMIS (Hammer, 2007; Hammer & Bennett, 1998; Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003). The IDI is a 50-item paper and pencil (or online) instrument which measures five of the six major stages of the DMIS and a separate factor identified as Encapsulated Marginality (EM). The IDI takes about 20 minutes to complete and has been a well-established tool for teaching and training purposes, as reported by Pedersen (2010) in her study of intercultural effectiveness outcomes in a year-long study abroad programme.

Language proficiency is not a specific element in DMIS (Hammer et al. 2003).

According to Jackson (2010), thus far only a few studies have explored the question of whether intercultural development and L2 proficiency are necessarily parallel. An important limit of the DMIS model is the fact that it does not take into account the clear

and explicit role that the language proficiency plays in the development of intercultural sensitivity. This omission undermines the possibility whether to use it in this researcher's project which focuses on intercultural competence in study abroad, where interactions occur among people of different cultural groups and languages, so identifying the role of the language component is of paramount importance.

As stated by Byram (1997), Intercultural Competence is different from Intercultural Communicative Competence, the former being the ability of individuals to interact in their own language with people from another country and culture. On the other hand, someone with Intercultural Communicative Competence is able to interact with people from another country and culture in a foreign language (Byram, 1997: 71). Their knowledge of another culture is linked to their language competence, which includes also sociolinguistic and discourse competence. According to Byram, the relationship between Intercultural Competence and Intercultural Communicative Competence holds a degree of complexity and the ability to deal with a wider range of situations of contact is stronger in the latter than in the former (Byram, 1997: 71). Since the foreign language learner needs a particular kind of socio-cultural competence in addition to what they may have already acquired in their own country and language community (Byram, 1997: 41), this again places the role of language at the core of the development of Intercultural Communicative Competence. Considering the objective of this research, it is therefore evident that the appropriate Intercultural Communicative Competence model to measure such an impact must necessarily include, and give due importance to, the language factor.

The analysis of the DMIS carried out according to the characteristics of this research

Figure 2.2: SWOT analysis of DMIS

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * It applies to all cultures * Only six stages * Its own assessment tool (IDI) * IDI easy to administer 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * It is not a classification system * 50- closed-item questionnaire * not suitable to assess a competence
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Tool for teaching and training purposes 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Ignores the importance of language proficiency * open to intercultural misunderstanding in case of unequal language proficiency

project is summarized using a SWOT analysis approach (Figure 2.2), as this is useful for highlighting Strengths and Weaknesses of the model as well as its Opportunities for improvement and potential Threats that can be faced. The fact that IDI, the DMIS assessment tool, consists of a closed-item questionnaire that is not suitable to assess a competence is a major weakness in this research project.

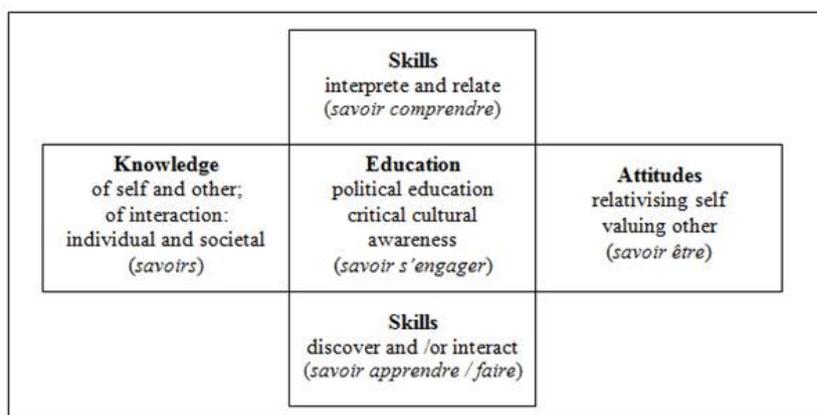
2.1.2 The Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence

Both Deardorff (2004) and Jackson (2010) claimed that the model of Intercultural Communicative Competence proposed by Byram (1997) is one of the most widely accepted models. The popularity of this model arises from the necessity to re-consider the purposes of language learning and the models available in language teaching following social changes in the late 20th century. Changes that characterized the growth of interconnectedness and the emergence of concepts of ‘globalisation’ and ‘internationalization’ (Byram & Zarate, 1996; Byram, 2008). Within this context, the notion of the ‘intercultural speaker’ takes centre stage, someone who crosses frontiers, carrying their local identity with them (Byram & Zarate, 1996: 240). This notion comes to gradually substitute that of the native speaker as a model to aspire to in language learning. As a consequence of this shift, the concept of communicative competence also assumes a new meaning.

According to Byram, the success of the interaction between intercultural speakers can be judged both in terms of the effective exchange of information (an aspect that already characterizes the communicative language teaching approach) and the establishment and maintenance of human relationships (Byram, 1997: 32). As clearly stated by Copeiras Aguilar (2009), the intercultural speaker is a person always in the making, someone who is willing to live in a complex world made up of values and beliefs that can be seen and understood from different points of view. An intercultural speaker is ready to question, explore, compare, analyze and reflect, thus becoming a critical person who is aware that their training may be incomplete and needs to be constantly updated. In this sense the language learner is not just learning a language, he/she is in the process of becoming a proficient a multilingual and an intercultural speaker (Woodin, 2018). Starting from the definition of the factors of Intercultural Communication (see Figure 2.3), Byram further develops its characteristics and expresses them as ‘objectives’ defined as a range of skills, knowledge and attitudes (*savoirs*) which may not

necessarily be the outcome of learning directly related to language learning, and whose formulation does not necessarily need to be as observable and measurable as behaviours or changes in behaviours.

Figure 2.3: Factors in intercultural communication (Byram, 1997: 34)

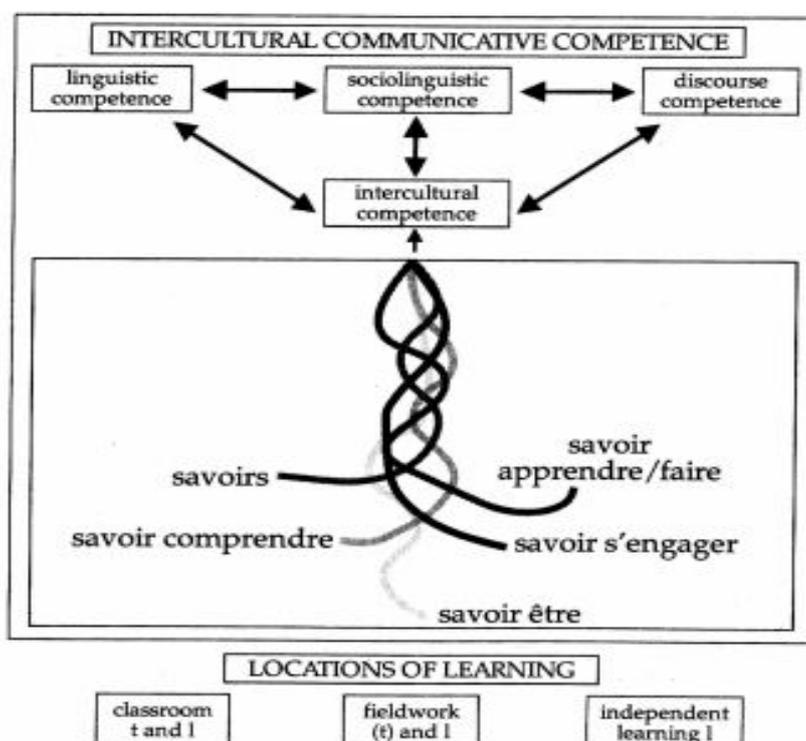


‘Objectives’ are thus a refinement of the definitions introduced earlier and a step towards describing teaching and assessment (Byram, 1997:50) which for this project are fundamental to design the ICC activities and to assess ICC. Therefore, the final model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (Figure 2.4) integrates Intercultural Communication, defined in terms of objectives, with Communicative Competence, redefined in terms of the meanings of ‘discovery’, ‘interpretation’ and ‘establishing a relationship’; this framework integrates Van Ek’s original model (1986)¹ and specifies the locations where ICC is acquired.

Byram argues that there are three categories of location: classroom, fieldwork and independent learning, each of which is differently linked to the objectives of the model (Byram, 1997: 72). The characteristics and inherent philosophical approach of this model make it appropriate for this research study. In particular, the following considerations should be listed in support of this model: its solid theoretical and pedagogical foundation and the accuracy of its description; its emphasis on the educational dimension; its rich definition of communication as interaction (not just as a

¹ Van Ek’s work is fundamental to the development of communicative language teaching. In 1986 he presented a framework for comprehensive foreign language objectives (Coperias Aguilar, 2008) and a model of six dimensions (also called competences) of communicative competence: Linguistic competence, Sociolinguistic competence, Discourse competence, Strategic competence, Sociocultural competence, Social competence.

Figure 2.4: Comprehensive Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (Byram, 1997)²



neutral communication of information across cultural barriers); furthermore, all of its components are identified and defined in terms of ‘objectives’; lastly, its emphasis on critical engagement with otherness and critical reflection on self (Byram, 1997: 71).

For higher education institutions involved in internationalization, such as those with study abroad programmes, it is important to note the difference between the tourist and the sojourner highlighted by Byram (1997:1). The sojourner produces effects on a society which challenges “its unquestioned and unconscious beliefs, behaviours and meanings, and whose own beliefs, behaviours and meanings are in turn challenged and expected to change”. The tourist, on the other hand, hopes for quite the opposite effect (that their destination will not change and that their own way of living will be enriched but not fundamentally modified by the experience). The experience of the sojourner is one of comparisons, with conflicts and contrasts being among the available options. Where the tourist remains essentially unchanged, the sojourner has the opportunity to learn and be educated, acquiring the capacity to critique and improve their own and others’ conditions. It is often questioned (Jafrancesco, 2004; Borgioli & Manuelli,

² t = teacher; l = learner.

2013) whether study abroad students of higher education institutions are tourists or sojourners. In Italy, for example, the phrase “academic tourism”, or the more sophisticated “tourism for academic purposes”, was established to refer to the study abroad programs of US colleges and universities (Liberanome & Liberanome, 2000). The concept of tourists and sojourners will be further explored in section 2.3 in conjunction with research on study abroad.

According to Byram (1997) the qualities of the sojourner are seldom learnt without teaching. Educational institutions have therefore not only a responsibility, but also a need, to demonstrate their ability to fulfill that same responsibility. The qualities required of a sojourner inform what Byram labels ‘intercultural communicative competence’. With such a phrase he maintains a link both with foreign language teaching traditions and with the relevant concept of ‘communicative competence’ developed by Hymes (1972)³ in the 1970s and makes it explicit that he is most concerned with the contribution of foreign language teaching to the development of the qualities required of a sojourner, specifically the development of the Intercultural Communicative Competence. Since 1997 Byram has pointed out how foreign language teaching is concerned with communication in a broader sense: understanding how what one says or writes will be perceived and interpreted in another cultural context is crucial. Consequently, in his view successful ‘communication’ is focused on establishing and maintaining relationships, therefore one’s willingness to relate becomes important: it often involves the indirectness of politeness rather than the direct and ‘efficient’ choice of language full of information. In this analysis, being polite acquires a deeper meaning: it does not consist of learning a series of principles, but it is seen as a visible symptom of a more complex phenomenon which is evidenced by differences in beliefs, behaviours and meanings through which people interact with each other’s culture.

With regards to the assessment of Intercultural Communicative Competence, Byram (1997:110) lists various modes of assessment for each component and refers to the

³ Hymes introduced the concept of communicative competence among native speakers: he argued that, in order to understand first language acquisition, it was necessary to take into account how both grammatical competence and the ability to use language appropriately were acquired (Coperias Aguilar, 2008). Hymes contributed to radically changing the idea of what a language is and what it means to speak a language (Balboni 2012).

principles of ‘educational assessment’, that moves “away from the notion of a score, a single statistic, and looks at other forms of describing achievement including <thick> description of achievement and profiles of performance”. To this purpose, he proposes an assessment tool able to recognize and detect all aspects of Intercultural Communicative Competence, including its complexity, its subtle understanding of culture, the importance of interaction and engagement, even if these are hard to test ‘objectively’.

The analysis of the of Byram’s model of Intercultural Communicative Competence carried out according to the characteristics of this research project are summarized in the SWOT analysis below (Figure 2.5). In this case, a long and complex assessment is regarded as a weakness, due to the time constraints imposed by the research site.

Figure 2.5: SWOT analysis of Byram’s model of Intercultural Communicative Competence

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *solid theoretical and pedagogical background *it considers new directions and purposes of language teaching *ICC components clearly defined and described 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *assessment may be longer and more complex
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *strongly integrated into language teaching *includes educational assessment 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - administrators may not use it due to its complex form of assessment

2.1.3 *The Pyramid Model and the Process Model of Intercultural Competence*

In her first study in 2004, Deardorff seeks to determine a definition and appropriate ways of assessing intercultural competence which could be agreed by a panel of 23, internationally recognized, intercultural scholars. By her own admission this represented a Western, and mostly US-centric, view of intercultural competence and was based on the results of a questionnaire completed by 24 US institutional administrators regarding the internationalization strategies adopted by the institutions to which they belonged. Deardorff’s work (2004, 2006 and 2011) is very interesting because it presents a detailed picture of the major studies on intercultural competence and a general survey of assessment methods in the US and in English-speaking areas generally.

Her work stimulates further reflection arising through the observation of divergent results of administrators and scholars on some key points they were questioned. For

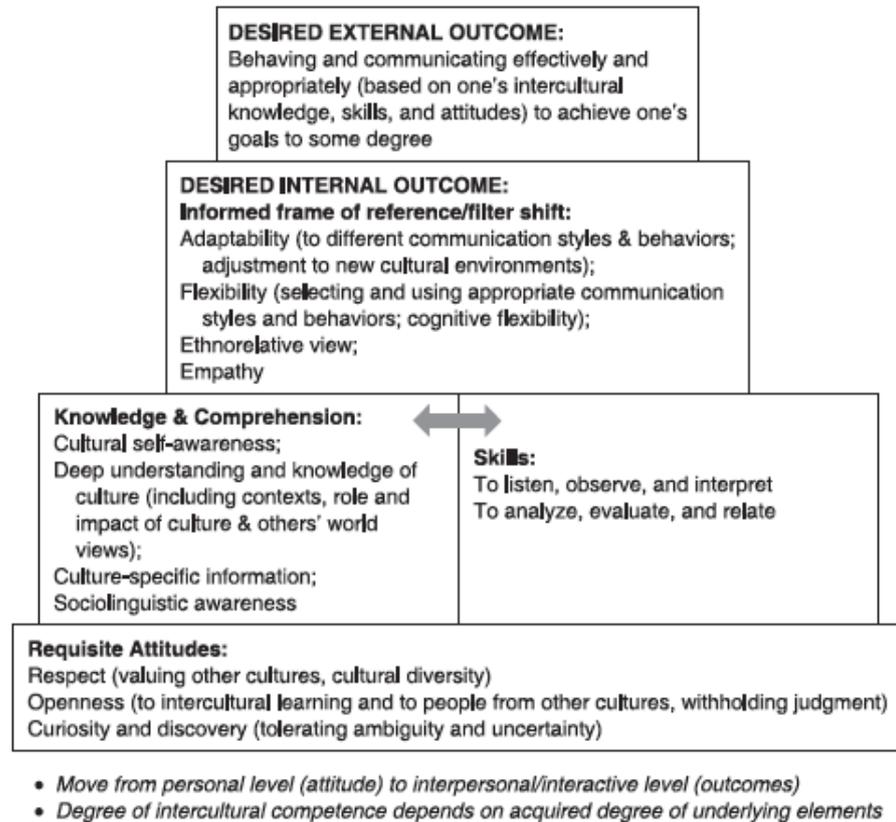
example, there are assessment methods rejected by scholars but accepted by administrators, which include quantitative measurements of Intercultural Competence, pre- and post-tests, other-report measures, and critical incidents and essays (Deardorff, 2006: 251). She claims that the practice of administering pre- and post- tests is well established because it constitutes a simple way to give evidence to support a decision, even if this practice is not supported by research. Through pre- and post- tests, for example, administrators could demonstrate that a study abroad experience is valid in enhancing intercultural competence. Byram (1997) had previously argued that objective testing, in the form of as a type of quantitative assessment, is not sufficient to reflect the full complexity of Intercultural Communicative Competence and that ‘educational assessment’ would be more appropriate. Although this assessment might be longer and more complex in terms of test administration and assessment it would produce more meaningful data. Deardorff’s research shows that there was also disagreement between scholars and administrators on some components of Intercultural Competence, accomplished language and cultural learner, amongst others (Deardorff, 2006: 251). Deardorff calls for further research when she notes that the role and importance of language in IC is controversial as is the use of quantitative methods to assess competence and the use of standardized competency instruments (Deardorff, 2006).

This researcher’s doctoral study might potentially make a positive contribution to this area. It is interesting to note that the intercultural scholars in their studies (Deardorff, 2006; Pedersen, 2010; Bennett, 2013) could not agree on the role of language in intercultural competence development, claiming that language alone does not ensure one’s competency in the culture. Thus, language is a necessary but not sufficient skill for intercultural competence. Language, however, can be a key vehicle through which to understand others’ worldviews, which is crucial to intercultural competence development (Deardorff, 2006).

As a result of her research, Deardorff (2004) proposes two models of Intercultural Competence: the Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence (Figure 2.6) and the Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Figure 2.7). By her own admission (Deardorff, 2004), both models are the visual representations of the findings of Intercultural Competence presented in her PhD research project, and quoted in her following works. In fact, both ‘models’ are in essence a better organization of information on the 22 essential elements about which 80% or more of the international

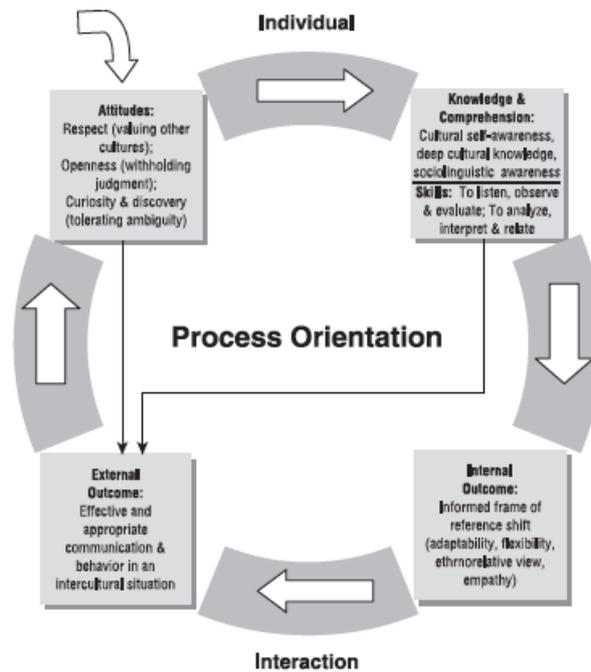
scholars and administrators of her study were able to reach consensus (for a discussion on definition and qualities of a model, see Balboni & Caon, 2014).

Figure 2.6: Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2004).



Within the US academic system, Deardorff (2011) proposed the integration of Intercultural Competence outcomes within courses, in particular in STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). According to Deardorff assessing intercultural competence as a learning outcome is not only possible but necessary (2011:76). After accurately listing the various questions that must be answered by further research, Deardorff argues that the assessment of intercultural competence begins with a clear definition and framework derived from the literature, which translates into concrete, specific goals and measurable student learning outcomes (2011: 77). In order to do that, specific aspects of intercultural competence need to be prioritized through a process, which involves key stakeholders, including students. Such a prioritization is intended as an ongoing process, since priorities may change from program to program and from course to course. Deardorff therefore proposes a ‘mobile’ definition of intercultural competence, which varies as both the context and the objectives vary.

Figure 2.7: Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2004).



Note: Begin with attitudes; move from individual level (attitudes) to interaction level (outcomes). Degree of intercultural competence depends on degree of attitudes, knowledge/comprehension, and skill achieved.

In her first study (her PhD thesis in 2004, subsequently published in a 2006 article), Deardorff claims that one meaningful outcome of the internationalization efforts of higher education institutions in the US is the development of interculturally competent students, even if she is aware that there is still a lack of specificity in defining intercultural competence. Her study seeks to provide administrators with a more thorough definition of intercultural competence that is conducive to measurement. Hence, despite the fact that her work is of great importance in the development of knowledge in intercultural competence, it is not really relevant to the field of action of this research project, since this project aims at proving that specific learning activities integrated in the curriculum may increase Intercultural Communicative Competence.

Furthermore, the models Deardorff proposed do not directly result from scientific pedagogical theories and are difficult to use in the development of learning materials and strategies; hence they cannot be considered suitable for this research project. Even from a 'philosophical' point of view, the researcher does not consider her models appropriate for this research project because Deardorff, like other American scholars, sees as the central responsibility of 21st century higher education institutions the training of students to 'function' more effectively in our integrated world system (2004:8). The

researcher favours a vision whose primary goal of such institutions is that of ‘educating’ (in the sense of the German verb *bilden* or the Italian *formare*) the person and the citizen, who will consequently ‘work’ well in the world. This researcher’s endorsement of the principles of *politische Bildung* or ‘education for citizenship’ are therefore more aligned to Byram’s work (2008). In this perspective, foreign language education has a potential for ‘political’ education aims, and the Intercultural Communicative Competence component of Byram’s model ‘Critical Cultural Awareness / *savoir s’engager*’ can be seen as a link with it (Byram 2008: 162).

Another issue that makes Deardorff’s study not crucial for this research project is the limited acknowledgement of the role of foreign languages that just ‘should be respected and valued’ (Deardorff, 2004: 8). One cannot but notice the difference with the European approach, evident also in the policies of the EU on the issue, which have postulated since the 1992 Maastricht Treaty the need for EU citizens to know at least two Community languages, in addition to their first language (detailed and annotated information on the language policy of the European Union is also in Byram, 2008, and in Balboni, 2012). On the other hand, this researcher agrees with Deardorff when she recalls that the definition of intercultural competence also involves the development of one’s skills and attitudes in successfully interacting with persons of diverse backgrounds, and agrees with Chen and Starosta (1996) who affirm that intercultural competence consists of affective (attitudes), cognitive (knowledge) and behavioral (skills) perspectives.

One can claim that Deardorff’s work, based on reaching consensus among leading intercultural scholars and US college administrators, can be of fundamental importance precisely for those administrators or other professionals involved in the management of higher education institutions. From a strictly academic point of view primarily concerned with devising didactic activities that afford the development of ICC and its assessment, this researcher considered more useful to select approaches and models that stem from, and are the logical development of, pedagogical, sociological, psychological and communication theories.

The analysis of Deardorff’s models of Intercultural Competence carried out according to the characteristics of this research project is summarized using the SWOT analysis

below (Figure 2.8). The fact that in this model the role and importance of language is controversial and not investigated is a major weakness.

Figure 2.8: SWOT analysis of Deardorff's models of Intercultural Competence

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *detailed analysis of major studies on IC in the US and English-speaking areas *a general survey of the IC assessment methods *of great importance for academic administrators 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * a Western and mostly US-centric perspective on IC * role and importance of language in IC is controversial and not investigated * no direct link to scientific pedagogical theories * IC assessment to be designed case by case
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * stimulates further research on IC and its assessment 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * its philosophical approach does not exploit the potential of language learning for 'education for citizenship' * difficult to use to create learning material

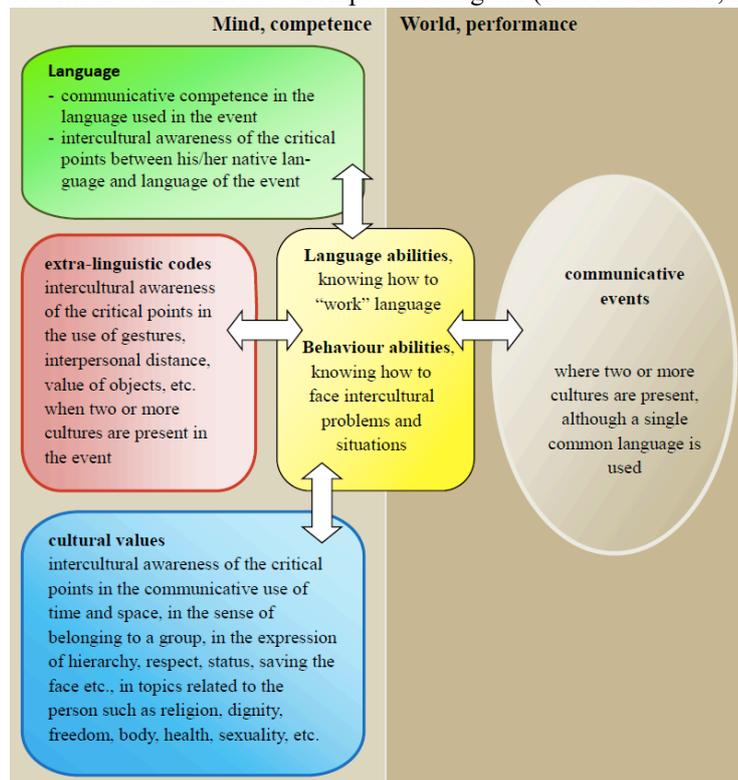
2.1.4 The Performance-oriented Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence

Balboni and Caon (2014) present a performance-oriented model of intercultural communicative competence which has its roots in previous work by Balboni on intercultural communication (1999, 2006, 2007 and 2012) and which takes Hymes' concept of Communicative Competence (1972) as starting point, just as Byram had done (1997). According to Hymes, language competence also includes the socio-cultural scenario in which communication takes place; therefore, the study of linguistics is interconnected with other sciences of human behavior such as anthropology, sociology and psychology (Baldassarri, 2012). Following these studies, the cultural dimension within communication is as important as the language dimension. However, according to Baldassarri, as far as methodology is concerned, we are still at a pioneering stage, since the cultural dimension continues to play a marginal role compared to the language dimension (2012:4). Within a communicative event there are three areas of competence which are gradually broader and more complex. Organized in a hierarchical manner, these are language and communication skills and intercultural competence. The latter occupies the wider area of the communicative event and consists of knowledge that allows an understanding of life and behavioral patterns specific to a community which is different from that one belongs to, and such knowledge facilitate the integration of these new behaviors to ones own. It follows that intercultural competence

must necessarily be related to multiple cultures and multiple codes simultaneously (Baldassarri, 2012:5).

The diagram in Figure 2.9 depicts Balboni & Caon performance-oriented model of intercultural communicative competence (2014).

Figure 2.9: Intercultural Communicative Competence diagram (Balboni & Caon, 2014)



The diagram represents Intercultural Communicative Competence as an integration of the model of Communicative Competence in a language, as illustrated in Figure 2.10, with the model of critical points in Intercultural Communication (Figure 2.11).

Figure 2.10: Communicative Competence Model (Balboni & Caon, 2014)

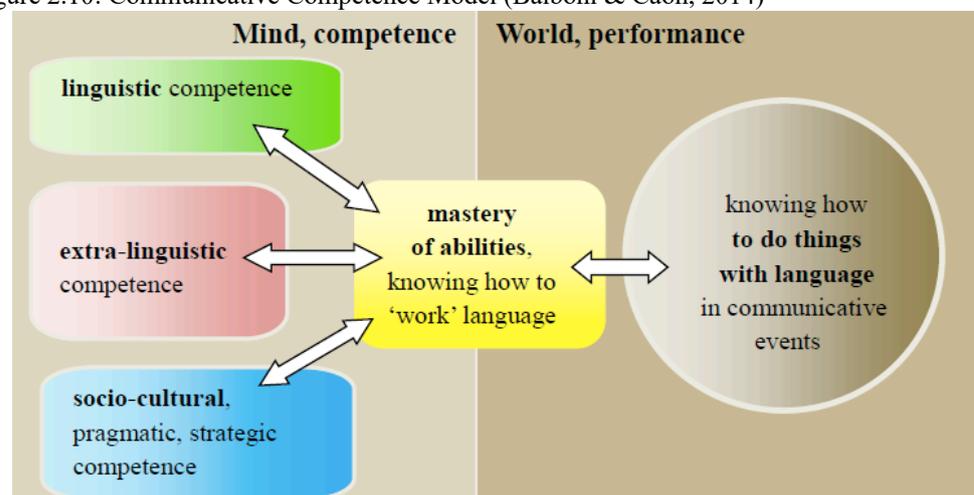
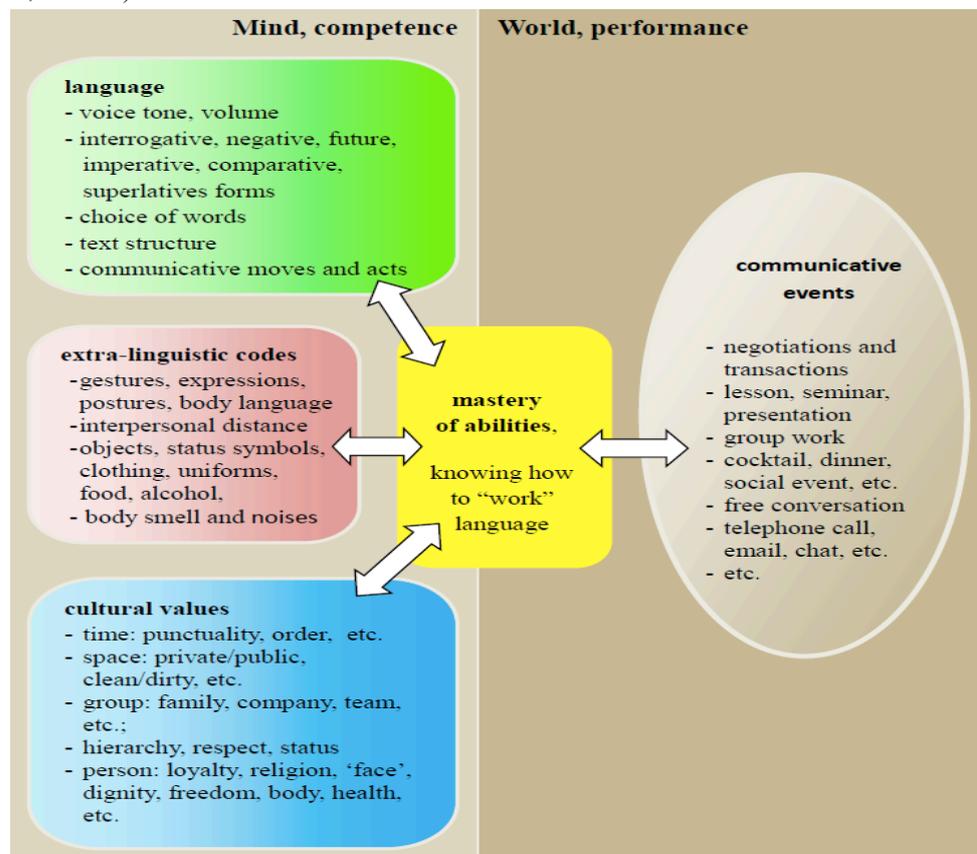


Figure 2.11: The model of the critical points of Intercultural Communication (designed by Balboni in 1999, and since then used in his works on intercultural communication) (Balboni & Caon, 2014: 5)



According to Balboni and Caon the use of diagrams, instead of models, can help clarification, avoid ambiguity and “it is also a way to think differently from the merely linguistic approach” (2014: 2) which has an intrinsic ambiguity. The most relevant element in the Intercultural Communicative Competence diagram of Figure 2.9 is the central box where the traditional language abilities and skills are juxtaposed with the abilities and skills of appropriate behaviours in intercultural communication.

Balboni and Caon (2014) argue that Intercultural Communicative Competence cannot be taught as such, because it changes continuously, but on the other hand a model for *lifelong observation of intercultural communication* can be taught. The model can serve as a scaffolding framework to be filled up and completed through lifelong observation. Since attitudes cannot be taught, teaching intercultural communication means raising students awareness of the nature of intercultural communication itself and of intercultural communicative competence, providing them with an instrument – the observation model – to record what they observe, all life long.

Balboni (2012: 148) claims that in the second half of the 1980s a new perspective in teaching foreign languages emerged, which developed from organization and management studies: the intercultural perspective. The concept of *Software of the mind*, developed by Hofstede in his study on cultural differences, is of paramount importance in this perspective. His theory was informed by rich data analysis collected in multinational companies and constantly revised and updated (Hofstede, 1980, 1991, 2001; Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). Balboni (2006) explains how Hofstede’s work can be useful to understand and manage the intercultural perspective in foreign language learning and teaching. This research study intends to take and the use of Hofstede’s model of Dimensions of National Cultures further and adopt it as a learning tool. The concept of *Software of the mind* and the model will be explained in more detail in section 2.2.1.

Figure 2.12: SWOT analysis of Balboni & Caon’s performance-oriented model of ICC

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *solid theoretical background *language and cultural dimensions equally important *introduces the ‘Software of the mind’ to manage the intercultural perspective 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * assessment tool not yet developed * lack of thorough description of ICC components
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * link foreign language learning to intercultural communicative competence 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * cultural dimension is still marginal in foreign language learning

The main characteristics of Balboni & Caon performance-oriented model of Intercultural Communicative Competence can be summarized in the SWOT analysis below (Figure 2.12).

2.1.5 Other Models of Intercultural Competence

Research in intercultural communication competence has attracted the interest of researchers in various fields and has produced other models and, in some cases, their own ways of assessment. It is interesting to note that Deardorff (2004) quotes more than 20 methods to assess Intercultural Competence, and Fantini (2009) more than 50. For the sake of this project, where Intercultural Communicative Competence is one of its four theoretical principles, the researcher decided to analyse three of the most commonly cited ICC models and the most commonly cited ICC models in Italy (sections 2.1.1-2.1.4) (Arasaratnam, 2014; Garrett-Rucks, 2012). To provide a fuller

and comprehensive review of other existing ICC models, a brief outline of the most well known is discussed in this section. Chen and Starosta (1999: 28) define “intercultural communication competence” as “the ability to effectively and appropriately execute communication behaviors that negotiate each other’s cultural identity or identities in a culturally diverse environment”. They designed an instrument to measure ICC (Chen & Starosta, 2000) consisting of 24 questions on five general areas (interaction management, respect of cultural difference, interaction confidence, interaction enjoyment and interaction attentiveness).

Arasaratnam and Banerjee developed the Integrated Model of Intercultural Communication Competence (IMICC) (Arasaratnam, 2006; Arasaratnam & Banerjee, 2011), which is based on an emic approach to identifying variables that contribute to ICC (Arasaratnam & Doerfel, 2005) and according to which a tool for measuring ICC has been developed. Nonetheless, by admission of the author himself, further testing is necessary before the instrument can be widely implemented (Arasaratnam, 2014: 5). Holmes and O’Neill (2012) created the PEER model (Prepare, Engage, Evaluate, Reflect) as a framework for developing and evaluating ICC.

In the Italian context, besides the aforementioned model by Balboni & Caon (section 2.1.4), Borghetti’s work (2008, 2011) should be mentioned. She proposes the integration of the Methodological Model of Intercultural Competence (MetMIC) (Borghetti, 2008, 2011) with the Teaching Unit Model (TUM), which has been of common use within communicative foreign language teaching in Italy since the 1970s (Freddi, 1975). MetMIC is expressly designed for *foreign* language teaching contexts (Borghetti, 2013: 256) rather than in study abroad contexts, and therefore is not appropriate for use in this research study. The efficacy of its integration with TUM still needs to be tested and evaluated through classroom experimentations. Consequently, the means of assessment have yet to be identified; this creates a further limitation on the adoption of this method in this research.

2.1.6 Summary on Intercultural Communicative Competence

According to the literature review here presented, the Intercultural Communicative Competence model developed by Byram (1997) proved to be the most suitable to this research project for various reasons. Firstly, it is the only one that defines the relationship between intercultural and communicative objectives (Borghetti, 2013: 256).

Moreover, the definition of the model as development and integration of foreign language learning and teaching makes it more appropriate for being used within an Italian language course for study abroad students of higher education, as is the case of this research. The validity of such a model has also been constantly empirically verified by this researcher during years of teaching experience of Italian language and culture to European and American college students on study abroad programmes.

Byram claims that someone with Intercultural *Communicative* Competence is able to interact with people from another country and culture in a foreign language (Byram, 1997: 71) thus postulating that communicative intercultural competence is intrinsically connected to the language aspect, in the case of both foreign language (such as in the case of this project, which deals with learners of Italian L2 at an intermediate level) or in the case of English as lingua franca. Byram (1997) thinks that, in the case of someone with ICC, the knowledge of another culture is linked to their language competence through their ability to use the language appropriately and their awareness of the specific meanings, values and connotations. Consequently, the development of ICC can, and must be, included in the curriculum of the foreign language course, with appropriate modalities, timing and content according to the context.

An additional consideration is that Byram's model is well outlined and thoroughly developed in all aspects, thus affording the possibility to accomplish the entire range of actions that are typical of the academic context in which this research takes place: from creating coherent and consistent learning activities and assessment tasks to integrating them into the course syllabus (see as an example Garrett-Rucks, 2012).

An interesting aspect of Byram's ICC model (1997), which can also be found in the model devised by Balboni and Caon (2014) and in other IC models, is that in order to develop ICC it is necessary, among other things, to compare different cultures. Byram claims that, in the case of the knowledge dimension (*savoirs*), the focus of classroom teaching involving ICC should be on the relationship between cultures, which implies a comparative method (Byram, 1997: 66). Even later in his research, Byram continues to emphasize the importance of being able to "identify and interpret explicit or implicit values in documents and events in one's own and other cultures" as one of the main abilities of critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*) (2008: 162). In order to improve this critical ability, it is necessary to work on cultural values. Furthermore, as

already stated, whilst ICC cannot be taught a model for *lifelong observation of intercultural communication* is fully teachable (Balboni & Caon, 2014: 7). It is therefore evident that the core issue is comparing cultures and analysing cultural values in order to develop ICC and IC. In order to observe and compare cultures without falling into stereotypes, it is necessary to devise a model which remains as objective as possible and allows to observe and compare cultures. This objective model will alert students against making generalizations out of a single experience such as that of the study abroad, or from the information given by the language teacher who might be tempted to take up the undisputed role of cultural informant. In this sense, the research in the field of cross-cultural analysis might be of assistance toward establishing an objective dimension in support of this research study.

2.2 Cross-cultural Analysis

In order to observe and compare cultures, which is a sensitive issue in intercultural competence studies and practice (Baiutti, 2017; Balboni & Caon, 2015; Barrett et al., 2014; Deardorff & Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017; Huber, 2012; Jackson, 2015), this researcher claims that it is fundamental to make use of objective learning tools to support the intercultural learner towards a correct comprehension of the context in which intercultural communication occurs, and of all the cultures involved in it. This researcher considers that, to be ‘objective’, a learning tool must be the result of sound scientific research and provide the learner with a bigger picture, helping them to see a wider context that goes beyond personal experience. To this end, studies of cross-cultural analysis come to our aid. Only in the XIX century social and cultural anthropology⁴ emerges as a new science to study cultures and cultural differences. At that time, it mainly consisted of the study of tribes who inhabited remote places and were considered to be exotic, and work was predominantly carried out by European and American scholars; it suffices here to cite the studies of Taylor (1871) and Morgan (1877). In the first half of the 20th century, social anthropology developed the conviction that all societies face the same basic problems, only the answers differ, fundamental in this research are Ruth Benedict’s (1887-1948) and Margaret Mead’s works (1901-1978) (Hofstede, 1991). From the first half of the 20th Century it became

⁴ ‘social’ and ‘cultural’ anthropology are often used as synonyms (Hofstede, 1980, 1991, 2001), the former being from American origin, the latter from English origin (Balboni & Caon (2014).

clearer that significant cultural differences could also be found in modern societies. Interest in the comparison of modern cultures increased in cultural anthropologists, cross-cultural psychologists and experts in international management. Among other research the contributions to the field by Inkeles & Levinson (1945/69) were invaluable and strongly inspired Hofstede's work (Minkov 2013). This new interest can be traced to the development of globalization and the increased interconnectedness between industrialized countries and citizens from developing countries.

Comparing cultures poses various problems, also because there is no agreement in the academic community either about the meaning of the word "culture" or the definition of the concept itself (for a synthesis of the various definitions and conceptualizations see Minkov 2013). The issue of the validity of the concept of "National Culture" is still open and causes passionate academic discussions (Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Smith, 2004; House & Javidan, 2004; Peterson & Smith, 2008; Minkov & Hofstede, 2012; Beugelsdijk & Welzel, 2018)). In his recent comprehensive handbook for researchers on cross cultural analysis, Minkov (2013) starts by analyzing the various conceptualizations of culture, and the diverse methodologies and techniques employed to study cultures in order to achieve a substantiated critique of the major cross-cultural studies to date. Minkov suggests that one should stay open to diverse conceptualizations of culture, provided they are clearly explained by their proponents and make sense to others (Minkov, 2013: 16).

Minkov's definition prompted our decision that the ideal tool to observe and compare cultures in order to develop ICC is to be found among the 'hologeistic comparisons of national cultural characteristics for the identification of recurrent patterns or structures' (Minkov, 2013: 2). The term 'hologeistic' here refers to large-scale analyses that involve many diverse societies at the same time, possibly from all over the world; 'recurrent patterns or structures' means relationships between variables and distances between cases that can be replicated and confirmed in different studies. It was also decided not to make use of the studies on cultural difference based essentially on the author's subjective perceptions, for academic reliability reasons. Only peer reviewed studies published in leading journals or in monographs by renowned international publishers were to be used. Neither studies focused on specific aspects that characterize single cultures can be used, since they make it impossible to compare different cultures. The choice to use large-scale cross-cultural analysis to compare cultures entails that an

'operationalist' definition of culture (Minkov, 2011) is accepted. According to this purely empirical approach, culture, intelligence and all similar scientific constructs are best defined precisely by the tools that measure them and the various external phenomena that are statistically associated with them (Minkov, 2011). For a more precise definition of 'operationalism' see House & Hanges (2004), and Minkov (2011 and 2013) for its application to the cross-cultural analysis. It is nonetheless necessary to observe that, for the purposes of this research project, it is sufficient to verify that the tools chosen to observe and compare cultures be the result of rigorous scientific research rather than of the impressionistic observations of journalists (see as an example: Severgnini, 1996, 2001, 2006; Parks, 1995; Epstein, 2001), or language teachers. In fact, it has to be noted that language teachers might be induced by textbook activities to misunderstand and misuse pedagogic techniques and strategies devised to stimulate the learners' oral and written production skills, and therefore transform them into tools to compare cultures (see as an example: Gruppo Italiaidea, 2007:80ff; Balì et al., 2018:84). This issue will be explored in depth in section 3.3 in relation to the creation of didactic materials to develop Intercultural Communicative Competence.

A further relevant consequence of the methodological choice for this project is that the observation of cultures is based on the analysis of measurable cultural elements, such as values, norms and beliefs. Such elements can be studied by paper-and-pencil questionnaires, and the consequent statistical analysis of the results leads to the definition of cultural dimensions: "A dimension is an aspect of a culture that can be measured relative to other cultures" (Hofstede et al., 2010: 31). Hofstede et al. (2010:28) claim that as "values [...] are the stable element in culture, comparative research on culture starts from the measurement of values". This researcher is aware that such an approach and methodology present some controversial issues, such as the difficulty to write appropriate questionnaires that are not culture oriented themselves (Chinese Culture Connection, 1987) and the complexity of the statistical analysis of the results of these questionnaires. The latter issue is considered in depth by Minkov (2011) and further developed by Minkov (2013). Other controversial issues are: the validity of the concept of 'national culture' considered by Inglehart & Baker (2000) and Peterson & Smith (2008); the importance of, and the difficulty of choosing the level of analysis (individual level, group level, institutional level) dealt with by Bennett (2013); the difficulty of quantifying the weight of individual compared to cultural differences,

addressed by Hofstede et al. (2010). Hofstede himself was aware of the controversy generated by comparing cultures and he dealt with them systematically and pragmatically in order to achieve coherent solutions that allowed him to consolidate his research, see for example the case of the characteristics and reciprocal relations of concepts such as 'society', 'nation', 'country' and 'culture'. Since his 1991 research, Hofstede has been well aware of the peculiarity of 'society', 'nation' (concept that later evolves into 'country') and 'culture', while claiming that "strictly speaking the concept of a common culture applies to societies, not to nations." (Hofstede et al, 2010: 21). He explains that he makes use of classification by nation only for pragmatic reasons ("it is often the only feasible criterion for classification") and that "using nationality as criterion is a matter of expediency, because it is immensely easier to obtain data for nations than for organic homogeneous societies. Nations as political bodies supply all kinds of statistics about their populations." (Hofstede et al, 2010: 21).

Despite the aspects that are still controversial and unresolved in the analysis of cultural differences, it is nonetheless fundamental that cross-cultural research continues to investigate these issues and to propose operative recommendations. At the same time, this researcher believes that the models of comparison of cultures stemming from such research, in particular Hofstede's National Culture Dimensions, constitute a precious tool to develop ICC in intercultural learners, and that they need to be used with complete awareness of their characteristics and limitations.

Minkov (2013) lists and analyzes 27 major cross-cultural studies that have reported dimensions of national culture, wherein the definition of 'major' is attributed on the basis that they involve at least 20 countries from different continents and that the studies had to be peer reviewed and published in leading journals or in monographs by famous, international publishers. According to many scholars, Hofstede's work has had the greater impact (Kirkman, Lowe and Gibson, 2006), to the point that many authors of similar studies, who to a certain extent are his competitors, do acknowledge its fundamental importance (Trompenars, 1993). Hofstede's work inspired many other studies, he became the world's most quoted cross-cultural analyst and was included in the 2008 Wall Street ranking of the most influential business thinkers of the 20th century (ranked 16th) (Minkov, 2011).

With regards to the Italian academic context, in 1999 Balboni had already claimed that Hofstede's (1991) definition of the 'software of the mind' was fundamental for the development of intercultural communicative competence, and further studies expanded and deepened this approach (Balboni 2006, 2007, 2012; Caon, 2012). This fact has undoubtedly given a direction to, and influenced the choice of, Hofstede's model in this research project. The dimensions of national cultures are used as a tool to develop ICC in study abroad students who experience first-hand intercultural encounters where the language factor is also involved.

2.2.1. The Dimensions of National Cultures

The Dimensions of National Cultures developed by the Dutch scholar Geert Hofstede (1980, 1991, 2001; Hofstede et al., 2002; Hofstede et al., 2010) is an objective model of reference for the observation and comparison of different cultures. He analyzed the work-related values of more than 116,000 surveys of employees working at subsidiaries of the IBM Corporation in some 70 countries in 20 languages between 1967 and 1969 and again between 1971 and 1973. Through the statistical analysis of the results of his questionnaires, Hofstede constructed four cultural dimensions that can be used to explain a huge number of cultural differences. The crucial innovation in Hofstede's analysis was the dimension approach (Minkov, 2013: 205); his data analysis focused on societies rather than on individuals, on national cultures rather than on personalities. The first study, *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values*, dates back to 1980. In 1991 he published a new book, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*, which is not strictly academic and addresses all the people who interact with people of different cultures. In 2001 a new, updated edition of *Culture's Consequences* was published, with a discussion of the many replication studies that had appeared since 1980. In 2005 Hofstede published a new edition of *Cultures and Organizations. Software of the Mind* together with his son Geert Jan. Ever since his first cross-cultural research studies, Geert Hofstede has continued exploring alternative sources of data to validate and supplement his original IBM employee data set. The third, and latest, edition of his research *Cultures and Organizations, Software of the Mind. Intercultural Cooperation and Its Importance for Survival* dates to 2010. It was revised in collaboration both with his son Gert Jan and Michael Minkov who, through his research on cultural values (Minkov, 2007), inspired the introduction of the sixth dimension of national culture.

Well aware of the academic controversy on the definition of culture, Hofstede chooses the socio-anthropological one, according to which *culture* is a catchword for all those patterns of thinking, feeling and potential acting that were learned throughout the person's lifetime. This definition includes not only activities supposed to refine the mind, such as literature and art, but also the ordinary and menial things of life, such as greeting, eating, showing or hiding feelings. In this sense, culture is always a collective phenomenon and consists of the unwritten rules of the social game. By making an analogy with the way computers work, (let us not forget that Hofstede's research begins in the second half of the XX century), Hofstede claims that culture is *the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others* (Hofstede et al., 2010: 6).

This approach to culture as a response to the unwritten rules of the social game undoubtedly offers many advantages for the intercultural learner who is 'sojourning' in a foreign country (for Byram's difference between 'tourist' and 'sojourner' see section 2.1.2) as will be discussed in greater detail later. In their more popular book Hofstede, Pedersen and Hofstede claim that cultures are adaptations of people to the conditions of life (2002: 34) – all cultures meet the same basic problems of social life; these were identified by social scientists in the XIX century. Each culture has developed its own answers to each problem. The common problems identified by Inkeles & Levinson (1954: 447ff) are:

- "Relation to authority
- Conception of self – in particular:
 - o The relationship between individual and society
 - o The individual's concept of masculinity and femininity
- Ways of dealing with uncertainty and ambiguity."

The common problems with solutions differing from country to country revealed by the statistical analysis of the IBM data are (Hofstede et al., 2010: 30):

- "Social inequality, including the relationship with authority
- The relationship between the individual and the group
- Concepts of masculinity and femininity: the social and emotional implications of having been born as a boy or a girl

- Ways of dealing with uncertainty and ambiguity, which turned out to be related to the control of aggression and the expression of emotions”

The four basic problem areas defined by Inkeles & Levinson, and empirically found in Hofstede’s survey, represent *dimensions* of cultures, where *dimension* means “an aspect of a culture that can be measured relative to other cultures” (Hofstede et al., 2010: 31). The four dimensions have been named *Power Distance* (from small to large), *Collectivism vs Individualism*, *Femininity vs Masculinity* and *Uncertainty Avoidance* (from weak to strong) (Figure 2.13). After examining a further survey (Chinese Culture Connection, 1987), Hofstede developed a fifth universal dimension labeled *Long-term vs Short-term Orientation*. In 2007, in collaboration with Minkov, another survey on values was examined (World Values Survey, 2006) and a further national culture dimension was developed: *Indulgence vs Restraint*. This leads to the six national cultural dimensions (Figure 2.13)) that can be used to observe and compare different cultures. These dimensions, as the researcher argued (Tarabusi, 2012), can offer intercultural learners, study abroad college students in this case, a useful and objective model of reference, devoid of any prejudice or generalization.

As established by Kirkman, Lowe & Gibson (2006), who reviewed 180 studies published between 1980 and 2002, researchers have utilized Hofstede’s cultural values framework in a wide variety of empirical studies, since his first publication in 1980. Furthermore, Soares et al. (2007: 283) argue that Hofstede’s framework constitutes a simple, practical, and usable shortcut to the integration of culture into studies and that there is wide support in the literature for the use of this conceptualization and operationalization of culture. In this sense, this researcher’s choice to adopt the Dimensions of National Cultures as a tool to observe and compare cultures can be considered a solid, appropriate basis for this doctoral study.

Figure 2.13: Schematic representation of Hofstede’s National Culture Dimension model.

<i>Basic Problem</i>	<i>Culture Dimension</i>
Hierarchy	Power Distance (from small to large)
Identity	Individualism vs Collectivism
Gender	Masculinity vs Femininity
Truth	Uncertainty Avoidance (from weak to strong)
Virtue	Long-Term vs Short-Term Orientation

In order to understand how such a model could be used to develop the ICC of intercultural speakers, and bearing in mind that this model might not be well known in the field of modern language teaching and learning to which this research project belongs, a synthesis of each single cultural dimension is briefly introduced and explained, as useful filters through which events in our lives can be understood.

2.2.2 Power Distance (from small to large).

Anthropologists claim that there is inequality in any society, even in the simplest hunter-gatherer band. The basic problem involved here is hierarchy, i.e. the degree of inequality between people that is assumed to be a natural state of affairs by the members of that group or, better said, culture. Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov define Power Distance as “the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions (e.g. family, school) and organizations (e.g. the workplace) within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally” (2010: 61). Through the statistic analysis of the data of the IBM questionnaire Hofstede calculated a Power Distance Index (PDI), with values ranging from about 0 for a small power distance country to about 100 for a large power distance country. Because of the way scores were calculated, they represent relative, not absolute, positions of countries and are measures of differences only; this is valid for each of the six dimensions. The data, originally based on the IBM survey and relative to fifty countries and three regions, was later calculated from replications or based on informed estimates hence producing data for seventy-six countries and regions.

Malaysia and Slovakia have the larger power distance, with a PDI score of 104, Austria the lowest (PDI = 11). Italy (PDI = 50) has a larger power distance than the US (PDI = 40). Study abroad students of US colleges involved in service learning or community engagement activities in Italy can see these differences in Power Distance at their volunteer or internship sites and can therefore find an explanation to some behaviours which might otherwise be difficult to explain (Tarabusi, 2012).

2.2.3 Collectivism vs Individualism.

Hofstede found the second basic problem that cultures face was identity, i.e. the relationship between the individual and the group. “Individualism pertains to societies in which the ties between the individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after

him-or herself and his or her immediate family. Collectivism, as its opposite, pertains to societies in which people from birth onward are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange of unquestioned loyalty." (Hofstede et al., 2010: 92). The Individualism index (IDV) scores represent relative positions of countries and are in a range close to 0 for the most collectivist country to close to 100 for the most individualist one. The cultures of the wealthiest countries in the world are relatively individualistic, and those of the poorer countries are relatively collectivistic. Collectivism can be seen as an adaptation to poverty and limited resources, and individualism to wealth and ample resources. The US is the most individualistic culture (IDV = 91), Guatemala (IDV = 6) the most collectivist. Italy is at the eighth position (IDV = 76), the most individualistic country in Southern Europe, and Spain is the second (IDV = 51). Also in this case study abroad students living in Italy for an academic semester have the opportunity to identify an objective explanation devoid of bias or stereotypes for behaviours that may otherwise seem strange or incomprehensible to them while they are personally observing or experiencing them (Tarabusi, 2012).

2.2.4 Femininity vs. Masculinity.

The third basic problem focuses on gender roles and the control of aggression. It has been found (Hofstede et al., 2010) that an unequal role distribution between men and women coincides with a tougher society in which there is more emphasis on achievement and fighting than on caring and compromise. Hofstede et al. (2010: 140) use the following definition: "A society is called masculine when emotional gender roles are clearly distinct: men are supposed to be assertive, tough and focused on material success, whereas women are supposed to be more modest, tender and concerned with the quality of life. A society is called feminine when emotional gender roles overlap, both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender and concerned with the quality of life." In this case the correlations of the IBM country scores with non-IBM data about other characteristics of societies also allow for a full grasp of what the dimension encompasses. The most masculine country is Slovakia (MAS = 110), the most feminine is Sweden (MAS = 5).

2.2.5 Uncertainty Avoidance (from weak to strong).

The fourth basic problem that all cultures face is how people in a culture cope with the unpredictable and the ambiguous. This has to do with fear of the unknown: extreme ambiguity creates unbearable anxiety, and every human society has developed ways to alleviate this anxiety in the fields of technology, law and religion. Anxiety and the search for Truth are closely related; this dimension could have been named *one-truth orientation vs. many-truths orientation*, instead of uncertainty avoidance (term borrowed by Hofstede from American organization sociology). “Uncertainty avoidance can be defined as the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations.” (Hofstede et al. 2010: 191). This feeling can be expressed through nervous stress and a need for written and unwritten rules. The Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI) values for the 76 countries of the research range from about 0 for the country with the weakest uncertainty avoidance (Singapore, UAI = 8) to around 100 for the strongest (Greece, UAI = 112).

The data about the structure of the language show that languages in uncertainty-avoiding cultures more often have different modes to address different persons, such as using the formal ‘lei’ or the informal ‘tu’ in Italian, which is interesting to notice for the purpose of this research. Children learning such languages face more choices according to tight cultural rules. Languages in lower UAI cultures tend to have fewer such rules.

It is also interesting to notice that students from strong uncertainty-avoidance countries (such as Italy) expect their teachers to be the experts who hold all the answers. Teachers who use cryptic academic language are respected. On the contrary, students from weak uncertainty-avoidance countries accept a teacher who says “I don’t know”. Their respect goes to teachers who use plain language and there is a preference for books which explain difficult issues in ordinary terms. And here you can see a potential intercultural misunderstanding between teachers belonging to strong uncertainty-avoidance cultures, who tend to use cryptic academic language, and students belonging to weak uncertainty-avoidance cultures, who appreciate plain language, as is the case of US college students and Italian university professors (UAI of Italy = 75, UAI of the US = 46, i.e. Italy has a stronger uncertainty avoidance than the US), or between German study abroad students in Italy and Italian university professors. (Germany’s UAI = 65 while Italy’s = 75, i.e. Italy has a stronger uncertainty avoidance than Germany).

Cultural differences observable in a school environment are the object of one of Hofstede's first works (1986).

2.2.6. Long-term vs. Short-term orientation

This dimension was added later, reviewing the Chinese Values Survey. The basic problem involved here is the choice between future and present Virtue, as per the Teachings of Confucius (Hofstede et al., 2010: 236). The issue of virtue is particularly important in Asia and explains why non-Asians find it hard to come to grips with this cultural concept. Europeans and Americans are more concerned with truth; Asians are more concerned with virtue. This fifth dimension was added later, when Hofstede integrated the results of the Chinese Culture Connection (1987) into his model. A problem with this new dimension is that originally scores were available for only twenty-three countries (Italy is not included), and 16 were later added in the 2005 edition of the book based on replications and extrapolations. Through a further analysis of the World Values Survey made by Minkov in 2007 the Long-Term Orientation Index (LTO) was calculated for 93 countries including Italy. Here is the definition: "long-term orientation stands for the fostering of virtues oriented toward future rewards – in particular, perseverance and thrift. Its opposite pole, short-term orientation, stands for the fostering of virtues related to the past and present – in particular, respect for tradition, preservation of 'face' and fulfilling social obligations." (Hofstede et al., 2010: 239). Scores range from 100 (South Korea, long-term oriented) to 0 (Puerto Rico, short-term oriented).

2.2.7 Indulgence vs. Restraint.

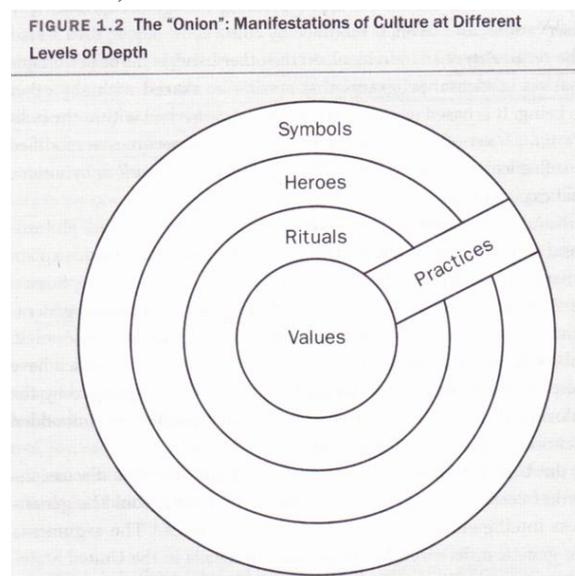
The sixth, and final, national culture dimension was added in 2010 following Hofstede's collaboration with Minkov and his research based on the World Values Survey (2006). This dimension aims at measuring happiness, otherwise defined as the subjective well-being (SWB), of a culture. Research on cross-cultural differences in SWB evidences a high level of stability in the country rankings. The definition Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov propose is as follows: "Indulgence stands for a tendency to allow relatively free gratifications of basic and natural human desires related to enjoying life and having fun. Its opposite pole, restraints, reflects a conviction that such gratification needs to be curbed and regulated by strict social norms." (Hofstede et al., 2010: 281). The

Indulgence vs. Restraint (IVR) index scores range from 100 for the most indulgent, i.e. happiest, culture (Venezuela) to 0 for Pakistan which recorded most restraint, i.e. the least happy culture. The US (IVR = 68) and Spain (IVR = 44) seem to be more indulgent, and happier, than Italy (IVR = 30, at 66th place among 93). According to Hofstede et al. (2010) Indulgence vs. Restraint seems to be the main, significant predictor of birth-rates, explaining more than education level or national wealth. This observation could be an interesting explanation of the very low Italian birth-rate. This is a brand new dimension that has not yet been developed in academic literature; further research is needed.

2.2.8 What is culture?

In order to utilize the model of National Culture Dimensions to develop ICC in intercultural learners, it is also necessary to understand how such a model originated. Cultural differences manifest themselves in several ways and Hofstede decided to analyze those that stem from differences in values, while keeping in mind that these, together with symbols, heroes and rituals cover the total concept of culture rather neatly (Hofstede et al., 2010: 7). This is well represented in the renowned onion diagram (Figure 2.14).

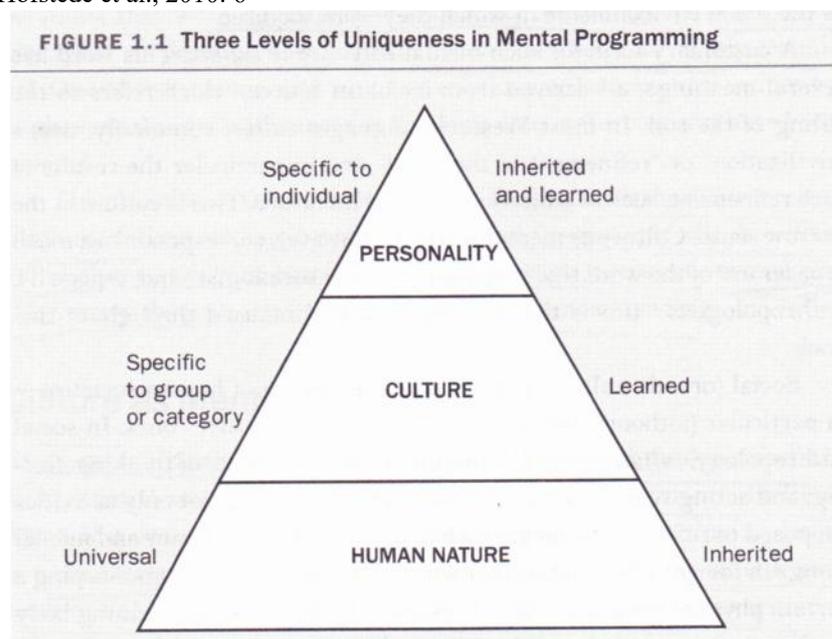
Figure 2.14: Hofstede et al., 2010: 8



Values are acquired early in our lives and for this reason many of them remain unconscious to those who hold them. Therefore, they cannot be discussed, nor can they be directly observed – they can only be inferred from the way people act in various

circumstances. A system that wishes to observe and compare various cultures can therefore start with measuring the values that compose them. A classical method to measure values is administering questionnaires in which people can express their preferences among various alternatives, despite the fact that the interpretation of the answers entails several problems. Though these are not the direct object of this research, the questionnaires do provide useful information in so far as they show differences in answers between groups or categories of respondents. Geert Hofstede, through statistical elaboration of the answers to the aforementioned survey on values, noticed some recurrent answers in people belonging to the same culture, which could not be considered casual. The sample of respondents had some characteristics, which allowed clustering them as a representative sample of the various cultures. This study allowed Hofstede to bring about the definition of ‘software of the mind’, that is to say that body of patterns of thinking, feeling and acting that were acquired throughout a person’s lifetime, most of which were acquired in early childhood (Hofstede et al., 2010). The sources of the software lie within the social environment in which one grew up: the family, the school, the neighbourhood, the youth group, the workplace, all concurring to the forming of the software. According to Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, a person’s behaviour is only partially predetermined by their culture, that is their mental programming, because of the unique personality of every person – therefore ‘the software of the mind’ only indicates what reactions are likely and understandable, given one’s past (2010: 5) (See Figure 2.15).

Figure 2.15: Hofstede et al., 2010: 6



Another insightful aspect of Hofstede's work is his idea that intercultural communication can be studied, observed, and learned apart from learning a foreign language, thereby becoming a discipline in its own right; even though speaking the language affords a better knowledge and understanding of the culture (Byram, 1997). Since 1991 Hofstede claims that "the acquisition of intercultural communication abilities passes through three phases: awareness, knowledge and skills." (Hofstede et al., 2010: 358).

1.2.3. Summary on Cross-Cultural Analysis

In the field of cross-cultural analysis, among the large-scale peer-reviewed analyses (Minkov, 2013) that involve more cultures contemporaneously, there are some features of the Dimensions of National Cultures model that make it suitable for this research. As previously stated (par. 2.1), comparing cultures is a component of many intercultural competence models and it is the feature that can effectively be addressed in an academic setting, as is the case of this research project. In the Dimensions of National Cultures model each of the national culture dimensions is enhanced with examples based on everyday life, which study abroad students can easily relate to as they experience and observe them first hand; this is summarized in the tables illustrating key differences (see Figure 2.16 as an example).

Figure 2.16: Hofstede et al., 2010: 72

TABLE 3.3 Key Differences Between Small- and Large-Power-Distance Societies

I: General Norm, Family, School, and Health Care

SMALL POWER DISTANCE	LARGE POWER DISTANCE
Inequalities among people should be minimized.	Inequalities among people are expected and desired.
Social relationships should be handled with care.	Status should be balanced with restraint.
Less powerful people and more powerful people should be interdependent.	Less powerful people should be dependent.
Less powerful people are emotionally comfortable with interdependence.	Less powerful people are emotionally polarized between dependence and counterdependence.
Parents treat children as equals.	Parents teach children obedience.
Children treat parents and older relatives as equals.	Respect for parents and older relatives is a basic and lifelong virtue.
Children play no role in old-age security of parents.	Children are a source of old-age security to parents.
Students treat teachers as equals.	Students give teachers respect, even outside class.
Teachers expect initiatives from students in class.	Teachers should take all initiatives in class.
Teachers are experts who transfer impersonal truths.	Teachers are gurus who transfer personal wisdom.
Quality of learning depends on two-way communication and excellence of students.	Quality of learning depends on excellence of the teacher.
Less educated persons hold more authoritarian values than more educated persons.	More educated and less educated persons show equally authoritarian values.
Educational policy focuses on secondary schools.	Educational policy focuses on universities.
Patients treat doctors as equals and actively supply information.	Patients treat doctors as superiors; consultations are shorter and controlled by the doctor.

This aspect makes the use of Hofstede’s model highly usable in the context of a foreign language course whose participants frequently come from many different academic backgrounds that may not involve cultural studies nor intercultural awareness; furthermore the fact that cultural differences have been cohesively gathered into only six easily understood and manageable dimensions makes this model user friendly and intelligible also for non-experts in the field of intercultural communication. More complex and sophisticated models (Minkov, 2013) are very hard to use for non-specialists in cross-cultural analysis.

Furthermore, such research is strongly rooted in the theoretical work of eminent sociologists and anthropologists (Hofstede, 1991), and it is based on a rigorous

statistical analysis of representative samples of some 100 cultures in all five continents which is continuously updated and reviewed (Hofstede, 1980, 1991 & 2001; Hofstede et al. 2010). These considerations reinforce the validity of the choice to use this model to develop Intercultural Communicative Competence.

Hofstede et al. (2010) claim that intercultural communication can be taught and, given their background in management of multinational companies, they suggest two types of training courses. The first type of course is the so called ‘expatriate briefings’ (Hofstede et al., 2010: 420), a more traditional format with a focus on specific knowledge of the ‘other’ culture, that is to say the host culture where the employee is to be expatriated, sometimes with their family. This training course informs employees about the new country, its geography, some history as well as some more practical information such as customs, hygiene and what to bring. These courses “do not provide much introspection into the expatriates’ own culture” (Hofstede et al., 2010: 421). The other type of training course focuses on the awareness of, and the general knowledge about, cultural differences; the so-called ‘awareness training’ focuses on one’s own mental software and where it may differ from others. “The knowledge and skills taught apply in any foreign cultural environment” (Hofstede et al., 2010: 421). These courses are mainly focused on “how to get a job done” (ibid), which may seem a liability within a degree in cultural studies or intercultural communication. Quite the contrary: such a pragmatic approach in this researcher’s opinion is actually an asset when the intercultural component is integrated into a foreign language course for students from non-language specialist programmes with international mobility grants, as is the case of this research project.

It is worth noticing that, despite the fact that Hofstede developed and applied his dimensions framework within an international business environment (Hofstede, 1980, 1991 & 2001), Hofstede et al. were aware of the process of learning and acquiring new understanding, knowledge, behaviours, skills, and attitudes and its relation to pedagogical decisions and course design. In fact, they state, “in the design of intercultural competence courses, *process* is as important as *content*.” (Hofstede et al., 2010: 421). Their work claims that “the acquisition of intercultural communication abilities passes through three phases: awareness, knowledge and skills” (Hofstede et al., 2010: 419), two of which are developed in the experimental treatment of this research (see Chapter 4).

Furthermore, Hofstede et al. (2010) acknowledge the importance of learning the local language as a further step towards the development of intercultural competence, while recognizing how time-consuming the process of learning a new language can be for business purposes.

Notably, most of Hofstede's critics focus their attention on his definition of culture and comparing cultures (Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Smith, 2004; House & Javidan, 2004; Peterson & Smith, 2008; Beugelsdijk & Welzel, 2018), rather than on the limits of this model from an education or language teaching perspective.

So far, an ICC model suitable for this research has been identified, and an objective tool to observe and compare cultures has been selected. In the next section the characteristics of the study abroad experience (mainly related to Europe or North America) of students of higher education institutions will be examined, and the main features of Experiential Learning will be reviewed in relation to their role in supporting the development of ICC.

1.2. *Study Abroad as a form of Experiential Learning?*

Just as in the case of Intercultural Communicative Competence, there is no shared definition of 'study abroad' in the scientific literature. Coleman (2013), for example, reports that in the US until the 1990s this phrase meant precisely to study 'while abroad', whereas the supposed British equivalent phrase 'residence abroad' includes study, assistantship and work placements. The extreme heterogeneity of the phenomenon, which includes multiple points of observation and classification, as shown in the table in Appendix 1 developed by Coleman (2009), has produced equally diverse research. For the purposes of this research project, Coleman's definition is adopted

[I define] "study abroad" as simply undertaking all or part of university education abroad. It must be borne in mind, however, that the lack of consensus on the precise dimensions of the phenomenon means low comparability across studies, and constitutes an obstacle to generalization.

(Coleman 2013: 22)

It is also essential to note that research on study abroad can be classified according to their focus on language-related outcomes (Kinging, 2009) or focus on intercultural-related outcomes (Deardorff, 2006). The first almost always covers research on foreign language learners, the traditional public of study abroad programmes until some time

ago. But the phenomenon is changing, with the number of mobile students increasing globally by 77% between 2000 and 2009, and growing steadily (OECD, 2011: 327). Study abroad students are not now just students of foreign languages, and the improvement of language proficiency is no longer the primary objective to be achieved with this experience (Coleman, 2013). One consequence of globalization has been the increasing interdependence between countries; now the ability to establish and maintain relationships with people who belong to different cultures is increasingly important (Byram, 1997). That is why college students are also required to master the soft skills, which contribute substantially to the success of the individual in the workplace and in the relational field (ref). Study abroad has consequently assumed an important role because it allows the development of intercultural communication skills (Williams, 2005; Borgioli & Manuelli, 2013).

In addition to the aforementioned reasons for choosing to take up a study abroad experience, there are still other reasons which are no less important and are rooted in European cultural tradition: the human and intellectual curiosity, the pleasure of travelling and discovering new things, the attraction to each other and to someone different from oneself; that certainly calls to mind the Grand Tour of past centuries (Jafrancesco, 2004; Ciacci, 2005; Brilli, 2006; Borgioli & Manuelli, 2013). The metaphor of the journey as a tool for personal growth is a topos that belongs to all cultures and social groups, and has been passed down from the myths of ancient civilizations, a metaphor that explains transformations and transitions of any kind, which helps to define the meaning of death (as a 'passage') and the structure of life (defined precisely as a pilgrimage). With this in mind, the experience of studying abroad can be a valuable tool also to expand the development of an individual (Borgioli & Manuelli, 2013), as well as a tool to gain knowledge directly employable in the labour market.

If one looks at the case of Italy, it is immediately noticeable the lack of comprehensive and updated data of students who decide to take up this study abroad opportunity. The *Italiano 2000* survey (De Mauro, 2002) is still the latest systematic research made on the public (i.e. people who study Italian as a foreign language) and in relation to the question on the reasons for the study of Italian, this survey of study abroad students constitute only a part of such public and the reasons remain limited by the size of the data. Other less systematic, but more focused studies on study abroad, belong to two

main groups: 1. Studies of internationally mobile students to Italian universities, including inter alia Tarabusi, 1996;, Fratter,2004 Jafrancesco,2004, Barni, 2010), and 2.studies on study abroad programs of US colleges and universities, among which the most complete work appears to be the cycle of studies *Educating in paradise*, commissioned in 1992 by AACUPI (Association of American College and University Programs in Italy) for IRPET (Istituto Regionale Programmazione Economica Toscana). This survey is being conducted every five years (Liberanome & Liberanome, 2000; Borgioli & Manuelli, 2013).

Important issues emerge from these studies. A key feature of university students in mobility to Italy is the strong cultural motivation (Jafrancesco, 2004), an index of the ‘strong potential marketability’ of all that is learnt beyond the language through the study abroad experience in Italy (Vedovelli, 2002, 2016). This project addresses just one of those *beyond language-learning skills* that characterize study abroad, the development of the Intercultural Communicative Competence, while trying to make this an explicit and measurable development.

It is well established that the outcomes of the study abroad experience go beyond language learning, as demonstrated by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages of the Council of Europe (Consiglio d’Europa, 2002), according to which the study abroad experience can be seen as a means for the development of European citizenship and of mutual respect between peoples and cultures together. Furthermore Barrett (2012: 4) lists “having extensive contacts with people from other countries”, as is the case of study abroad, among the intercultural experiences that can enhance intercultural competence.

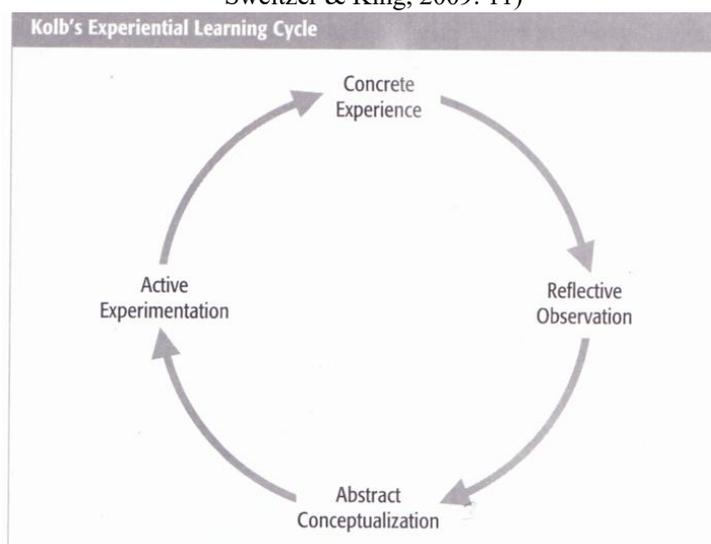
Study abroad can therefore become crucial to developing Intercultural Communicative Competence, as it allows students to experience first-hand the intercultural situation in a learning context. Students are expected to ‘learn’ something, to improve their knowledge and awareness by reflecting on the experience: the reflection on a concrete experience is at the core of experiential learning, since the experience alone does not lead to learning (Kolb, 1984). It is also well established (see among others Byram 1997; Deardorff, 2011; Bennett, 1986 and 2013; Holmes & O’Neill, 2012) that cross-cultural contact alone does not lead to the development of ICC. Therefore, in order for a study abroad experience to have an educational value in terms of the development of ICC, it

must be integrated into specific academic interventions by means of introductory, in progress, and debriefing activities. This research project intends to demonstrate that in-class activities fostering ICC can have a positive impact on research participants' ICC.

2.3.1 Experiential Learning

In theoretical terms, this research project is grounded in the experiential learning cycle developed by Kolb (1984), which defines the process of learning as a cyclical process in which stages of Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization and Active Experimentation come in succession, where learners test the theory they had developed through the reflective observation of a concrete experience in a new situation, and the cycle begins again, since this is another concrete experience, see Figure 2.17 (original Figure 2.17 in Kolb & Fry, 1975, taken from Sweitzer & King , 2009: 11).

Figure 2.17: The experiential learning cycle (original Figure 2.17 in Kolb & Fry 1975, taken from Sweitzer & King, 2009: 11)



In experiential learning the person is involved in its entirety, including also the emotional characteristics, empathy and social skills of the individual, in addition to cognitive aspects. This is why objectives, methods and results of learning are not standardized and the same for all learners, but rather highly personalized and thus closer to the needs of each student. Over the last decade, the interaction between the individual and the context has gained importance in the domain of academic education and studying abroad (Borgioli and Manuelli, 2013). Study abroad programmes in fact adopt a holistic approach, which combines the traditional classroom learning with other forms

of non-formal learning, just as experiential learning and full-immersion language, which in recent years have established themselves as effective methodologies for the transfer of both specific and transversal skills, the soft skills discussed in section 2.3.

According to Hopkins (1999) study abroad programmes represent a balanced form of experiential learning. This research project wants to use the whole experience of study abroad as ‘experience’ to study in relation to the development of the ICC. The potential inherent in the relationship between experiential learning and development of ICC was successfully used in the project CROMO (*Crossborder Module*) financed by the national authorities of Italy, Austria and Slovenia with the general purpose of helping to unite the border communities of these three countries (Mariani, 2009).

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter critically reviewed different models of ICC to identify an appropriate framework to inform this research project. The most commonly cited models of ICC were examined, in order to select the one best suited to this research, and from which to derive the assessment of ICC and the design of teaching activities.

It identified in Byram’s model the most appropriate framework which adequately recognises the importance of language and culture. The model and its related methods of assessment were considered relevant both for the design of educational activities and consequent integration in the curriculum, and for the evaluation of the effectiveness of these activities in the development of ICC.

Several models from cross-cultural studies were also analysed. It was noticed that many of these models, informed by anthropology and sociology, aimed at mapping, comparing and understanding differences in cultures and dealt with large data surveys. Hofstede’s National Culture Dimensions model emerges as an effective, objective and valid tool to utilise for comparing different cultures. Hofstede’s National Culture Dimensions model stood out as a possible appropriate tool to develop and assess ICC and to be included in specific learning activities in the context of a study abroad experience.

Finally, the main features of study abroad programmes, and their relationship with experiential learning were established. A key feature which was considered useful to be

integrated in the design of the teaching activities was the Kolb's experiential learning cycle with the aim to promote the development of ICC through reflection on practice.

In the next chapter the methodology of this research project will be examined.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Parlare oscuramente lo sa fare ognuno, ma chiaro pochissimi.
(Galileo Galilei, 1792: 9)
[Everyone can speak obscurely, but very few can speak clearly]

This chapter will examine the methodology selected for this study and contextualise it within the wide range of approaches available to study ICC. As explained in the previous two chapters, this research study focuses on identifying tools to promote Intercultural Communicative Competence in the international mobility students of higher education institutions and are helpful to measure their impact. In order to achieve such purpose specific ‘research questions’ were established to ‘operationalize’ it (Dörnyei, 2007:73). Therefore, the following questions have been formulated:

- Does a study abroad experience in higher education foster Intercultural Communicative Competence?
- What is the impact of targeted educational activities on the Intercultural Communicative Competence of study abroad students in higher education?

When it comes to choosing the most appropriate research design, it is important to note that research questions are an integral part of quantitative research, while in qualitative research their identification is quite different, e.g. they are often not as narrowly constrained as in quantitative research (Mackey & Gaas, 2015). Furthermore, the well-established practice of first generating one or more research questions and then choosing the research design and method (Dörnyei, 2007) is more appropriate for a quantitative approach. Therefore, the way the research process was conducted in this project – ‘research-question-first’ (Dörnyei, 2007:72) led to a quantitative research design. In order to select the research methodology for this project, a compromise between theoretical and practical considerations was required (Dörnyei, 2007; Mackey & Gass, 2005). First of all, as Dörnyei claims, three main issues were analysed (Dörnyei, 2007), because “there is no perfect research approach: there are strengths and weaknesses to all” (Mackey & Gass, 2005:3).

A – Research question and topic. Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) claim that it is the research question that should determine the research design and therefore the research methods. The research question for this project focuses on the ‘impact’ of targeted

educational activities on the Intercultural Communicative Competence, which guided this researcher's choice towards a quantitative approach.

B – Exploratory purpose: if there is not a specific research question, as is the case when little is known about the target phenomenon, a qualitative approach is usually appropriate (Jupp, 2006:370). In this project the main goal is not exploratory, as all the key principles involved (Intercultural Communicative Competence, Cross-cultural Analysis, Study Abroad, and Experiential Learning) have been amply discussed and accepted by the scholarly community and the rationale for relying on these core concepts have been explained in the Literature Review (Chapter 2). Furthermore, the research question aims specifically to assessing the learning outcome of the treatment, which is possible using a quantitative research method (Dörnyei, 2007).

C – Existing research tradition in the area: it may make sense to follow eventual methodological salience or to break away and try and shed new light on the area by adopting new research methods (Dörnyei, 2007). Some interesting studies about ICC and study abroad (Pederson, 2010; Engle & Engle, 2004; Jackson, 2015; Mapp, 2012; Williams, 2005), though not relative to Italian language, adopted a quantitative approach, so for this project it does make sense to follow such methodological salience and add capacity to this research approach. Furthermore, a sound quantitative approach in the area of Italian as a foreign language seems to be missing, as emerged in the Literature Review (Chapter 2). For this reason, this researcher regards the selection of a quantitative research method in the Italian as a foreign language field part of the originality of the research project.

According to Dörnyei (2007), practical considerations are also particularly relevant to early research when it comes to choosing a research method. This researcher therefore also carefully analysed:

d – Available resources: research methods vary in the amount of time and money they require to be completed, so cost-benefit calculations need to be seriously examined. For this research project, this researcher is fully aware that quantitative methods require a high degree of statistical expertise and that qualitative analysis may be more time consuming (Dörnyei 2007). Furthermore, mixed methods are more complete because

they combine qualitative and quantitative research methods, and “each highlights ‘reality’ in a different, yet complementary, way” (Lazarton, 2005:219).

E – Available sample: the kind of sample available to a researcher greatly influences the research method (Dörnyei 2007). For this research project the researcher had to negotiate with the research site (an Italian university) how many Italian language courses to involve, in order to have an adequate sample size, and how much class-time could be dedicated to the activities of the experimental group. The negotiation was very detailed and also included timing for the presentation of the project, the administration of pre- and post- tests, and arrangements for homework (assigned readings and written assignments). The collection of qualitative data, such as interviews with some research participants or with the class instructors, could not be included in the agreement as the site did not approve this component of the research. Therefore, a mixed methods research design, though appropriate and attractive, could not be selected. The available sample (i.e. students enrolled in Italian language courses) prompted the decision to choose a quasi-experimental design, where participants are not randomly assigned to experimental and control groups (Nunan, 1992). In second language research it is common to use intact classes, for the sake of convenience or by necessity (Mackey & Gass, 2015:195).

F – Supervisor and other available support: for this research project the available support was relevant for the choice of the software to analyse data rather than for the research method itself. This researcher is based off-campus and overseas: this means she could not efficiently rely on the statistical and Information Technology (IT) support provided by the University, nor exchange ideas and experiences with other PhD candidates addressing similar issues. The researcher is based in Italy and after conducting a personal scanning of the research setting and available software tools, the most easy-to-reach statistical and IT support available involved the use of R statistical package (<https://www.r-project.org>), so it made sense to use this software for data analysis.

In the light of these theoretical and practical considerations, the researcher opted for a quantitative research design: a quasi-experimental investigation was conducted with two convenience samples, one of which was identified as a control group and the other as the experimental group. According to Nunan, the quasi-experiment type of research

“has both pre- and post-tests and experimental and control groups, but no random assignments of subjects” (Nunan, 1992:41). “Quasi-experiments are similar to true experiments in every respect except that they do not use random assignment to create the comparisons from which the treatment caused change is inferred” (Cook & Campbell 1979 in Dörnyei 2007: 117), this practice has more recently become an accepted research methodology in second language research (Mackey & Gaas, 2015). Such research design requires for the effects of the initial group-differences to be taken into account (Dörnyei 2007).

In this research project the convenience samples consist of those students enrolled in Italian L2 courses for students with mobility grants of an Italian university who agreed to participate in this research project. This research utilises a popular methodology applied in educational contexts, since true experimental designs with random group assignments are very seldom feasible within the time span of a doctoral study and the changing context of higher education (Dörnyei, 2007:117). The control group serves as a baseline for comparison. The experimental group was the focus of the experimental approach which consisted of carrying out learning activities aiming at the development of ICC during regular class time.

“Research hypotheses can be used to express what the researcher expects the result of an investigation to be” (Mackey & Gass, 2015:23), they are usually welcomed in a research study because they meet the requirements of the ‘scientific method’ (Dörnyei, 2007:73). Two competing hypotheses are usually generated, one involves that a treatment has no effect, or that there is no relationship between two variables, and the other one involves that a treatment has an effect, or that a relationship exists between two variables (Agresti & Finlay, 2009). For this research project, the null hypothesis and the alternative hypothesis were generated as follows:

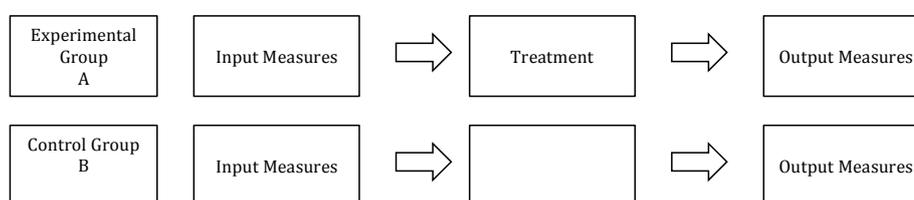
Null Hypothesis, H_0 : the implementation of targeted educational activities significantly increases the intercultural communicative competence of college students with international mobility grants.

Alternate Hypothesis, H_1 : not undertaking targeted educational activities does not significantly increase the intercultural communicative competence of college students with international mobility grants.

The research design consists of three steps (Figure 3.1):

- 1) An assessment of the ICC of all the participants (experimental group and control group) at the beginning of their Italian language course.
- 2) Carrying out all specifically designed activities by the experimental group to improve their Intercultural Communicative Competence, this is usually referenced as the ‘treatment’ (Dörnyei, 2007; Mackey & Gass, 2015; Agresti & Finlay, 2009).
- 3) Assessment of the ICC of all the participants (experimental group and control group) at the end of their Italian language course.

Figure 3.1. Experimental design with two equivalent groups. Input measures and output measures.



Group A (experimental group) carries out educational activities targeted to the development of the Intercultural Communicative Competence. Group B is the control group who follows the standard program of the course of Italian L2.

3.1. The Research Sample

The research began at an Italian university in the second semester of the academic year 2015/16 with two intermediate level Italian L2 courses (B1 and B2 of the CEFR) for the Erasmus programme. One of the courses is for the experimental group and the other is for the control group with a total of 38 potential participating students, i.e. students enrolled in the courses.

On the first day of class the researcher presented the research project to the students and their professors, to encourage wide participation and awareness of this research project. Students willing to participate in the project signed the consent form (Appendix 2) and completed the Intercultural Competence Assessment questionnaire (INCA Project, 2004) in order to assess their initial Intercultural Communicative Competence. To maximize confidentiality and to avoid coercion, student responses to the questionnaires were identified through a pseudonym (Pedon & Gnisci, 2012). The experimental group

would carry out the specifically designed activities based on the National Culture Dimensions model, and the control group wouldn't.

It is noted that all 35 students attending the presentation of the research project agreed to participate. Despite this promising start, the complete data, i.e. the sample which played the pre- and post-test, was composed of only 22 respondents, with an 'attrition' (i.e. progressive loss of data in research, Jupp, 2006) of approximately 42% compared to potential participants and 37% compared to the initial size of the sample, i.e. students present the first day of class (Table 3.1).

Informal contacts with the professors and the administrative staff confirmed that this attrition was due to reasons external to the research project and to unpredictable causes, e.g. students absent due to illness or personal problems, and / or host university organization i.e. colliding academic commitments in the course of Italian L2. Nevertheless, such a marked reduction of the sample did not allow for either the search of correlations – minimum 30 participants required (Dörnyei, 2007) or 50 (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003) – nor the control-experimental procedure – minimum of 15 participants per group, reported by Dörnyei (2007) and Mackey & Gass (2015). Furthermore, the size of the sample ($n = 22$) was rather small according to the literature on quantitative studies (Dörnyei, 2007; Mackey & Gass, 2015; Pedon & Gnisci, 2012). This prompted the decision to carry out a second data collection in the next academic semester, namely the first semester of the 2016/17 academic year.

This second data collection involved four Italian L2 intermediate level courses (B1 and B2 of the CEFR) for Erasmus at an Italian university: two courses involving the experimental group and two the control group with a total of 73 potential research participants, i.e. students enrolled in the courses. It is important to note that, also in this case, all students attending the presentation of the research project ($n = 61$) agreed to participate in the research. Attrition also occurred in this research phase: the completed data, i.e. the sample which filled in the pre- and post-questionnaire, at the end of the academic semester was 36 respondents, with an attrition rate of about 50% compared to potential participants, and 40% compared to the initial size of the sample (Table 3.1). Further informal investigation confirmed that the reduction of participants in the post-test was again due to reasons external to the research project and to unpredictable causes.

Table 3.1. The research sample.

	<i>Potential research participants</i>			<i>Participants in the pre-test</i>			<i>Participants in the post-test also</i>		
	<i>Exp.</i>	<i>Contr</i>	<i>TOT.</i>	<i>Exp.</i>	<i>Contr</i>	<i>TOT.</i>	<i>Exp.</i>	<i>Contr</i>	<i>TOT.</i>
Alpha phase	20	18	38	20	15	35	13	9	22
Beta phase	39	34	73	32	29	61	16	20	36
TOTAL.	59	52	111	52	44	96	29	29	58

The first phase of data collection, carried out in the second semester of the 2015/16 academic year, was 63ruppo63s as the Alpha phase; the second phase of data collection, carried out in the 2016/17 first semester was labelled as the Beta phase. By combining the Alpha and Beta phases, the complete data at the end of the experiment, which is the sample that filled in the pre- and post- questionnaires, resulted in 58 respondents. This is considered a satisfactory size according to the scientific literature concerning the research of correlations, the control-experimental procedure and the so-called reverse approach. The significance level was 0.05 (Dörnyei, 2007).

Since the data collection was carried out in two distinct phases, it became necessary first of all to verify that the two phases could be united. It was decided to include in the sample only students enrolled in intermediate Italian language courses (level B1 or B2 of the CEFR) of the host institution. The use of a convenience sample, where the extent of generalizability is often negligible (Dörnyei, 2007), was intended to control the influence of the level of proficiency in Italian on the research. This approach was considered relevant to increase internal validity. This researcher is fully aware that identifying all the variables that might interfere with the findings, and controlling them in some way in L2 research, may be difficult, and moreover that the language proficiency level is one of the most difficult areas to control when conducting research on second language (Mackey & Gass, 2015). Equally, attribution in language level is problematic and is often a difficult obstacle to overcome. The possible effective choice of opting for self-assessment of the students' language proficiency (Gutiérrez Almarza, Duran Martinez & Beltran Llavador, 2015) was rendered impractical by the decision to use the common measure of a placement in class level (Mackey & Gass, 2015), i.e. all students are assessed according to a recognized linguistic level (basic, intermediate, advanced).

3.2. The Assessment Tool

The “Intercultural Competence Assessment” (INCA) portfolio developed by the Intercultural Competence Assessment Project (INCA Project, 2004) was selected as the assessment tool for Intercultural Communicative Competence. It is strongly related to Byram’s Intercultural Communicative Competence model (Precht & Davidson Lund, 2007), one of theoretical cornerstones of this research, and its portfolio format is one of the most appropriate ways of assessing such competence (Deardorff 2006; Schulz, 2007; Byram, 2008). The INCA Project team defined Intercultural Communicative Competence and developed a framework and diagnostic tool for the assessment of ICC, in terms of 6 elements: tolerance for ambiguity, behavioural flexibility, communicative awareness, knowledge discovery, respect for otherness, and empathy (Antonenko, 2010).

This assessment tool is based on interpersonal dialogue, but it also contains items that test the development of critical cultural awareness and intercultural communicative awareness (Antonenko, 2010). The role of these two skills is also recognized as fundamental by Hofstede in his study on cross-cultural analysis and effective ways to manage cultural differences (Hofstede, Pedersen & Hofstede, 2002). In his study on cross-cultural analysis and effective ways to manage cultural differences (Hofstede, Pedersen & Hofstede, 2002), Hofstede recognizes the role of these two skills as fundamental. Therefore, this assessment tool proves to successfully integrate two theoretical cornerstones of this research project.

Another decisive factor in the choice of this assessment tool, among the many available (Fantini, 2009), is the fact that the INCA Project has also provided a small database of scenarios. These were enough to carry out the pre- test and post- test without repetition of the Intercultural Encounters items, i.e. the items of the portfolio aiming at measuring Intercultural Communicative Competence, thereby allowing different but comparable tests. Avoiding item repetition may also eliminate participant distraction that might arise if learners were tested on the same set of scenarios twice (Mackey & Gass, 2015). It seems necessary to point out that, by its nature, the portfolio is suitable for assessment with pedagogical purposes, since the focus is on diagnosing and planning for further learning (Hu, 2008). In this research project the reflection on the items of the pre- test was the starting point for the learning activities of the experimental group. To use the portfolio in high-stakes examinations, some adaptive measures would have to be taken including a careful selection of topics, the use of more than one examiner and the

production of a profile of marks rather than a single summative assessment – which is maybe why little progress has been made in its use (Byram, 2008: 224).

The INCA portfolio comprises three different types of tests: Questionnaires, Scenarios and Role plays. The questionnaires gather information on the academic, professional and intercultural background of the 65ruppo65s. The scenarios, with multiple choice questions as well as open-ended questions, present situations of intercultural overlap, and 65ruppo65s have to address various questions. In the Role Playing section students have to play a certain role and communicate and interact with role-play partners. Assessors observe the role plays, take notes and evaluate the assessee's behaviour. The assessment focuses on student's performance, which is evaluated against defined criteria for the six intercultural competences based on Byram's work and included in the INCA Project definition of ICC (Prechtel & Davidson Lund, 2007).

Compared to the original portfolio developed by the INCA Project, some changes needed to be made to the biographical items to adapt to the characteristics of the target group, namely university students with European mobility scholarships. For example, the original item "Profession/ Studies" was changed to:

3) Anno di iscrizione alla tua università – *Academic status*

- 1 anno – *year* 2 anno – *year* 3 anno – *year*
 4 anno – *year* altro – *other*

4) Livello del corso di italiano attuale – *Italian language course currently enrolled in*

- B1.1 B1.2 B2.1
 B2.2 C1 altro (specificare) – *other (please specify)* _____

Suffice to notice that the original INCA portfolio did not investigate gender of participants, nor did the revised version used in this research project. Furthermore, it was necessary to reduce the portfolio: it was too long, and the role play part could not be administered nor assessed with the resources and timescale available for this project. Similar changes to the original portfolio had already been made and validated by other

scholars, such as Antonenko (2010). Additionally, at the end of the Alpha stage some marginal problems emerged, such as an extensive need of paper usage due to the layout and the impracticality, and costly practice, of administering color-printed tests.

Therefore, further minor changes to the portfolio had to be made: the layout was revised to take into account that the initial differentiation in colour of the two languages (black for Italian and blue for English) could not be maintained when printing. Moreover, the Italian wording of some items was improved. For example, in Scenario 4 of the pre- test the Italian word “*sbrigati*” was replaced with the phrase “*più veloce*” since “*sbrigati*” had proved difficult to understand during the administration in the Alpha stage.

Two more significant changes were also inserted: the application of QR Code and the introduction of a minimum length of response to the scenarios. To improve the management of anonymity the QR Code replaced the pseudonym indication; this change is further explained in section 3.2.2. To improve the assessment of scenarios, in the instructions a minimum number of words was inserted to the open answer items. This latter change improved also the reliability of the results, because longer responses allow for more reliable assessment (Dörnyei, 2007).

The original INCA instrument distinguishes between three levels of competence for each of the scales (level one, basic competence; level two, intermediate competence; level three, full competence). In agreement with Antonenko (2010) this researcher believes that this rating scale is hardly discriminating and that it would not create enough variance in the student answers. Therefore, following Antonenko’s study (2010), five levels of competence were identified: basic, lower intermediate, intermediate, upper intermediate, and full competence.

In agreement with the teachers of the courses, a rigid time limit was not set for the test. However, all respondents completed the test in 40 minutes in the first round and within 30 minutes in the second round, which is shorter because it does not have the Biographical Information part.

To summarise, the revised versions (Appendix 3 and 4) adapted for this research study consist of: Part 1 Biographical Information (18 items, estimated time of completion 4-5 min.), Part 2 Intercultural Profile (21 items, estimated time of completion 5-6 min.), Part 3 Intercultural Encounters (4 Scenarios, estimated time of completion 18-20 min).

The scenarios were evaluated according to the guidelines of the INCA tool. Each scenario focuses on one or more ICC components (Table 3.2).

	<i>PRE- TEST</i>				<i>POST- TEST</i>			
	<i>Scenario 1</i>	<i>Scenario 2</i>	<i>Scenario 3</i>	<i>Scenario 4</i>	<i>Scenario 1</i>	<i>Scenario 2</i>	<i>Scenario 3</i>	<i>Scenario 4</i>
Knowledge	x		x	x	x	x		x
Openness		x	x			x	x	x
Adaptability	x	x	x	x			x	x

Table 3.2. Intercultural Communicative Competence components assessed in the scenarios.

To maintain consistency in the evaluation, specific notes based on the recurring characteristics of the sample responses were added by this researcher to the INCA framework. The INCA framework, as amended and supplemented, was used to assess the scenarios (Appendix 4). In the pre- test, as suggested by the INCA guidelines, responses to Scenario 2 allowed for assessment of O and A and not of K, while responses to Scenario 4 allowed for assessment of K and A and not of O. These changes, made by this researcher, were necessary because the participants' responses did not allow for the assessment of the component originally set, and were in line with the INCA guidelines which state: "The assessor is also free to award marks for alternative responses which, in his judgement, fit the appropriate category" (INCA Assessor Manual of INCA Project, 2004:22). It is noteworthy to bear in mind that the assessment of competence has grown from 3 levels (basic, intermediate and full) to 5 levels (basic, lower intermediate, intermediate, upper intermediate and full).

The results of the Intercultural Competence Assessment tool were statistically analysed with the software R version 3.3.2 version 3.3.2 (<https://www.r-project.org>) to present the characteristics of the research sample and to identify the impact of the specifically designed activities on the Intercultural Communicative Competence of the experimental group compared to the control group. R software was chosen because, unlike other widely used statistical packages such as SPSS (Dörnyei, 2007; Mizumoto & Plonsky, 2016) or SAS (Agresti & Finlay, 2009), it is free, multiplatform and open source (www.r-project.org). The researcher is based off-campus overseas for this research project and uses an Apple computer and software: managing license-based software for Windows, as initially planned, proved to be very difficult and time consuming. Descriptive statistics were used to present the sample and explain the test results. T-tests were computed to compare the results of the Intercultural Communicative Competence assessment of control and experimental groups. Graphs, histograms and plots were then

produced with Microsoft Excel 14.7.2 software, as it is more manageable than R by non-experts in statistics such as this researcher. Microsoft Excel is a popular spreadsheet application launched in 1985 by the Microsoft Corporation, which soon became the dominant spreadsheet application (Microsoft Excel. Software, 2019).

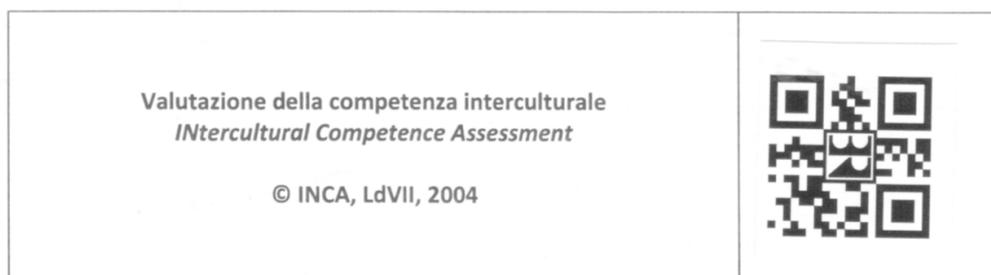
3.2.1. Language of the Assessment Tool

The language used to do the INCA test is important for the evaluation of the Intercultural Communicative Competence, as the evaluation is based on the analysis of open responses to cross-cultural scenarios. At the time of the first administration of the INCA tests, the sample had an A2 or B1 level of proficiency in Italian language, depending on whether it consisted of students enrolled in the B1 or B2 course. This differed from the test directions (INCA Project, 2004; Precthl & Davidson Lund, 2007) and previous studies (Antonenko, 2010) indicating B1 proficiency as the minimum level necessary for the proper conduct of testing. The test was conducted bilingually in Italian and English, in order to prevent the limited knowledge of the Italian language adversely affecting the test results. All items were presented in English and Italian, and the respondents could answer the open questions in the language in which they felt more at ease. English was chosen as the international language widely known among Erasmus students, not because of the L1 of the research participants. A profile of the languages spoken by the research sample will emerge in the Data Analysis (Chapter 5).

3.2.2. Anonymity of the Assessment Tool

One of the changes introduced after the Alpha phase was the use of QR Code (Quick Response Code) to better handle the anonymity of the respondents. In the Alpha phase participants were asked to choose a pseudonym they would use both in the pre- and in the post- test. This proved to be a hard task for some participants, who opted for their real name, affecting the anonymity of the test. QR Code is a two-dimensional bar code composed of black modules arranged in a square pattern (Figure 3.2). It is usually used to store information intended to be read by a mobile phone or a smartphone, it is now also widespread in our daily lives, for example on train or theatre tickets, business cards and other advertising material.

Figure 3.2. Example of a QR Code applied to the pre- test.



1. Informazioni biografiche – *Biographical Information*

1) Et  – *Age* (p.es.: 20 – e.g.: 20) 20

2) Nazionalit  – *Nationality* spagnola

The QR Codes for this research project was generated through the online tool <http://www.qrcode-monkey.com/#text> and contain a text composed of 5 alphanumeric characters. In order to obtain these texts the <https://www.random.org/strings/> free online generator was used. QR Codes can be read with smartphone apps: you can use QRReader and QRDroidCodeScanner for iPhone and Android devices, both free applications. In this case QRReader was used.

An envelope containing three QR Code stickers was delivered randomly to each respondent at the first administration of the INCA tool. A label was made by the respondent on the pre- test, another was to be kept by the respondent until the end of the course when he/she puts it on the post- test; the third label was a spare. The respondent wrote a word or sign that identified him/her on the back of the third label, which was put in an envelope along with the other labels of the class; the envelope was sealed, countersigned by a respondent and retained by this researcher who brought it back intact on the day of the administration of the post- test, in case any respondent had forgotten their own QR Code. The students who did not have their own QR Code on the day of the administration of the post- test were able to open the sealed and countersigned envelope, take their own label identified by the word or sign they had written on the back, and stick it on the post- test. This solution ensured that there were no problems with labels and all tests had the QR Code. Any remaining labels in the envelope were destroyed in the presence of the research participants.

This methodology also guaranteed that the data analysed between the first and the second survey belonged to the same person and that the identity of the respondent was anonymous. The pre- and post- tests were in fact anonymous, and data collected were

analysed at aggregate level, in respect of the Italian law on privacy and the ethical procedures of the University of Hull.

Lastly, the introduction of the QR Code in the Beta phase resulted in the elimination of item no. 1 of the INCA test (“name or pseudonym”), therefore the pre- test of the Beta phase has 38 items and 4 scenarios, instead of 39 items and 4 scenarios. The “Intercultural Profile” part does not change the two phases; in the Alpha pre- test this consists of the items 19-39. In the Beta pre- test it consists of the items 18-38. Similar changes were made to the post- test of both phases.

3.2.3. Rigour and Validity of the Research

As a ‘disciplined’ inquiry, scientific research cannot afford to be lacking rigour (Dörnyei, 2007). Nevertheless, the literature is not unequivocal as regards the specification of quality criteria to be applied (Dörnyei, 2007) and this is also reflected in the lack of a universally accepted terminology to define the quality of the research criteria. Dörnyei (2007) claims that the discussion of quantitative quality standards can be best divided into three parts: reliability, validity measurement and research validity.

Dörnyei defines reliability as

The extent to which our measurement instruments and procedures produce consistent results in a given population in different circumstances. (Dörnyei 2007:50)

Statistical procedures can be used to estimate reliability, Cronbach Alpha being one of the two general approaches (Bachman, 2004). The Cronbach Alpha coefficient is a figure ranging between 0 and +1. If it proves to be very low, either the particular scale is too short, or the items have very little in common. Internal consistency estimates for well-developed scales containing about 10 items ought to approach 0.80. It is, however, commonly accepted (Dörnyei, 2007) that L2 researchers do not use very long scales, so lower Cronbach Alpha coefficients are to be expected. But even with short scales of 3-4 items, reliability coefficients ought to be in excess of 0.70. If the Cronbach Alpha of a scale does not reach 0.60, there is a problem with reliability. There is no agreement in the literature about the use of Cronbach Alpha to check the reliability of criterion-referenced tests (Bachman, 2004).

Kuder Richardson 20 and 21 are two statistical methods that are also used to determine reliability, they are used when one administration of a measure exists (Mackey & Gass, 2015). Both are calculated using the number of items, the mean and the standard deviation. They are best used with large number of items (Mackey & Gass, 2015), which is not the case of this research project. Another method to determine reliability is the split-half procedure. In this case reliability is determined by obtaining a correlation coefficient by comparing the performance of half of a test with performance of the other half. A correlation coefficient is a figure ranging between 0 and +1 that indicates the strength of relationship between two variables. A high correlation coefficient indicates a strong relationship. A statistical adjustment (Spearman – Brown prophecy formula) is generally made to determine the reliability of the test as a whole (Mackey & Gass, 2015). The results of the INCA assessment were validated by the INCA team (Prechtl & Davidson Lund, 2007). Subsequently, Antonenko made some changes to the evaluation scales of the scenarios, and to the length of the test, and established that these changes did not modify the reliability (Antonenko, 2010).

Traditionally, the validity concept was explained quite simply: a test is said to be valid if it measures accurately what it is intended to measure (Hughes, 1989:22). As for validity measurement, the concept of validity was broken down in diverse typologies: Content validity, Criterion-related validity, Construct validity, and Face validity (Hughes, 1989). Content validity concerns the representativeness of the test content, test items should cover all the theoretical facets of the given construct, in this case the intercultural communicative competence. Content validity cannot be quantitatively assessed (Pedon & Gnisci, 2012), but it can be fostered by a rigorous work on test specification at an early stage of the test construction and it can be evaluated by the comparison between test specification and test content done by experts who were not directly involved in the production of the test (Hughes, 1989). This project relies on the work of the INCA team (INCA Project, 2004) and related studies (Prechtl & Davidson Lund, 2007). Criterion-related validity means to see how far test results agree with other valid and independent assessment of the same construct (Pedon & Gnisci, 2012; Hughes, 1989). There are essentially two kinds of criterion-related validity: Concurrent validity and Predictive validity. Face validity is hardly a scientific concept: a test is said to have face validity if it looks as if it measures what it is meant to measure (Hughes, 1989). Even if face validity does not have a sound scientific basis, it is very important,

e.g. in selection tests it can raise candidates' motivation (Pedon & Gnisci, 2012).

Construct validity shows how the test results conform to a theory, or construct (Dörnyei 2007).

More recently, the former definition of validity and its different typologies were replaced by the unitary concept of 'construct validity' (Dörnyei, 2007), which is now seen as an umbrella term describing a process for theory validation that entails specific test validation operations (Smith, 2005), sometimes called 'validation studies'.

Following this new approach, previous validity measurement evidence is now seen as contributing to the overall validity construct, and even reliability is seen as one type of validity evidence.

For this project, it was decided to proceed with the testing of the construct validity intended as a unitary concept. The items of the INCA test related to the evaluation of the ICC, which cover the entire theoretical definition of the construct in question, must be summarized with a representative criterion. In this project, each of the three macro-components of the ICC, namely each construct, is evaluated by the answers to the intercultural scenarios of the pre- (Table 3.3) and post- (Table 3.4) tests.

Macro-component	Scenario 1 i39	Scenario 2 i40	Scenario 3 i41-42	Scenario 4 i43	Mean
Knowledge	k1			k4	K
Openness		o2	o3		O
Adaptability	a1	a2	a3	a4	A

Table 3.3: Items assessing ICC macro-components in pre- test.

Macro-component	Scenario 1 i44-48	Scenario 2 i49	Scenario 3 i50-51	Scenario 4 i52-53	Mean
Knowledge	k1			k4	K
Openness		o2	o3		O
Adaptability		a2	a3	a4	A

Table 3.4: Items assessing ICC macro-components in post- test.

In particular, in the pre-test Knowledge is evaluated by Scenario 1 (k1) and Scenario 4 (k4), Openness by Scenario 2 (o2) and Scenario 3 (o3) and Adaptability by all of four scenarios (a1, a2, a3 and a4). In the post- test Knowledge is evaluated by Scenarios 1 and 4 (k1 and k4), Openness by Scenarios 2 and 3 (o2 and o3), Adaptability by Scenarios 2, 3, and 4 (a2, a3 and a4).

It should be here noted that each scenario is given a single evaluation of the macro-components under examination, regardless of the actual number of items of which the scenario is composed. Therefore, in the validation phase, by ‘item’ it is meant the scenario, regardless of whether it consists of a single test item. The synthesis criterion is the average of the scores attributed to each item, so in the pre- test $K = \text{mean}(k1, k4)$, $O = \text{mean}(o2, o3)$, $A = \text{mean}(a1, a2, a3, a4)$; in the post test $K = \text{mean}(k1, k4)$, $O = \text{mean}(o2, o3)$, $A = \text{mean}(a2, a3, a4)$.

The researcher proceeded to test the validity of this criterion through the analysis of the linear correlations between the single item and the average value used as a synthesis (Peton & Gnisci, 2012), because in this particular case the Cronbach Alpha coefficient could not be used due to the overly short scale. The linear correlation is a value between -1 and +1, a value greater than .60 is desirable (Peton & Gnisci, 2012). To check the validity on the basis of the construct validity, all the statistical units of the two phases Alpha and Beta were used, without the need to match pre- and post- tests. Therefore the number of units increased because of the number of respondents who carried out only one of the two tests. This is an advantage because size increases the potency of the sample (Peton & Gnisci, 2012). Tables 3.5, 3.6 and 3.7 show the coefficients obtained for the pre- test:

Pre-	k1	k4	K
Correlation to K	.79	.83	1

Table 3.5: Correlation to Knowledge in pre- test.

Pre-	o2	o3	O
Correlation to O	.83	.77	1

Table 3.6: Correlation to Openness in pre- test.

Pre-	a1	a2	a3	a4	A
Correlation to O	.62	.61	.63	.73	1

Table 3.7: Correlation to Adaptability in pre- test.

Tables 3.8, 3.9 and 3.10 show the coefficients obtained for the post- test:

Post-	k1	k4	K
Correlation to K	.74	.85	1

Table 3.8: Correlation to Knowledge in post- test.

Post-	o2	o3	O
Correlation to O	.91	.89	1

Table 3.9: Correlation to Openness in post- test.

Post-	a2	a3	a4	A
Correlation to A	.77	.85	.74	1

Table 3.10: Correlation to Adaptability in post- test.

Since all the coefficients are higher than the threshold value .60, the correlation indicates that between the items and the synthesis value (K, O and A) there is a systematic relationship. Therefore, the criterion of using the average of the scores proved to be reliable and representative.

The representation of the data was done through bubble scatter charts (bubble plots) (Figures 3.3-3.17). This is a type of three-dimensional graph, in which the radius of the single bubble is the absolute number of respondents, on the x-axis the values of the items are shown (k1, k4, o2, etc.), the y axis show the average values (K, or O, or A).

Figure 3.3: Linear correlation k1-K in the pre- test.

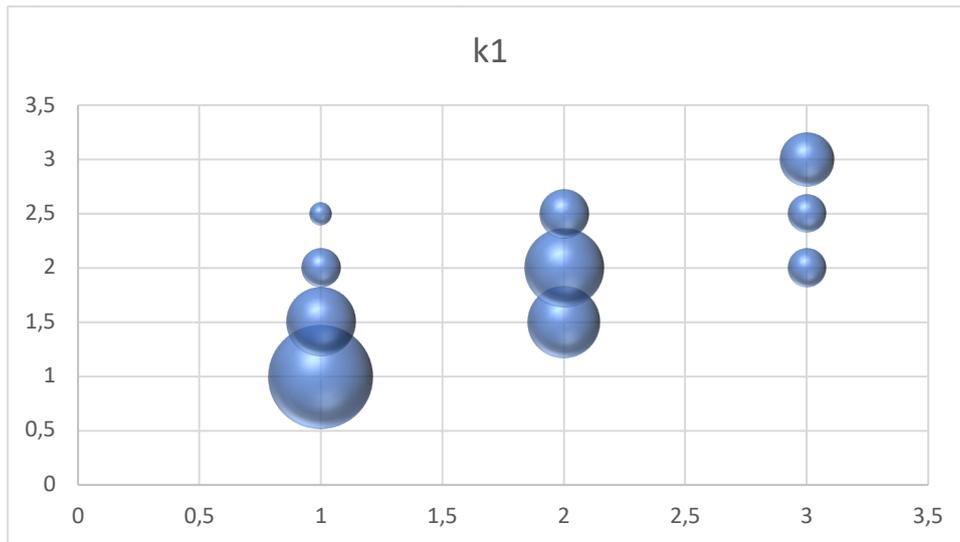


Figure 3.4: Linear correlation k4-K in the pre- test.

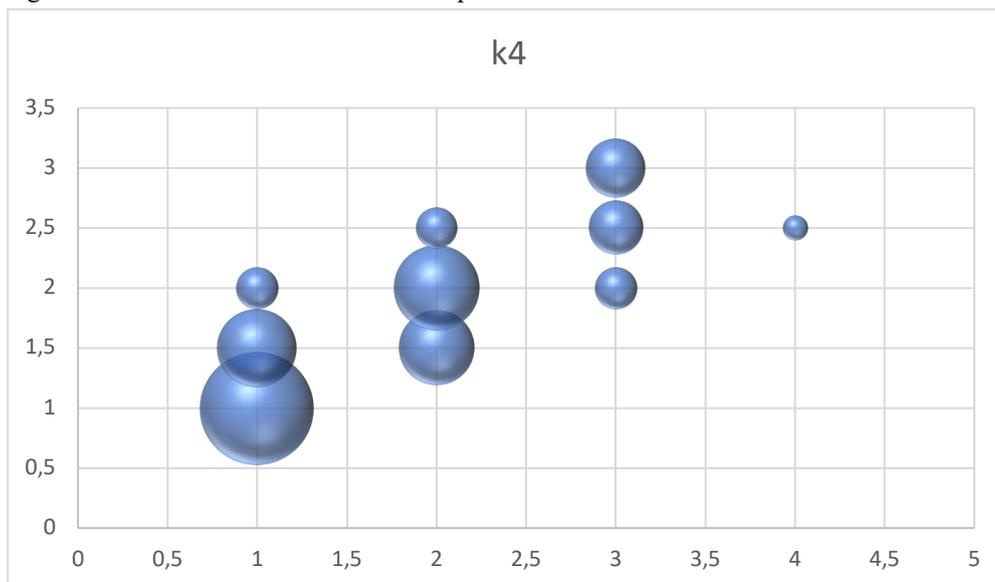


Figure 3.5: Linear correlation o2-O in the pre- test.

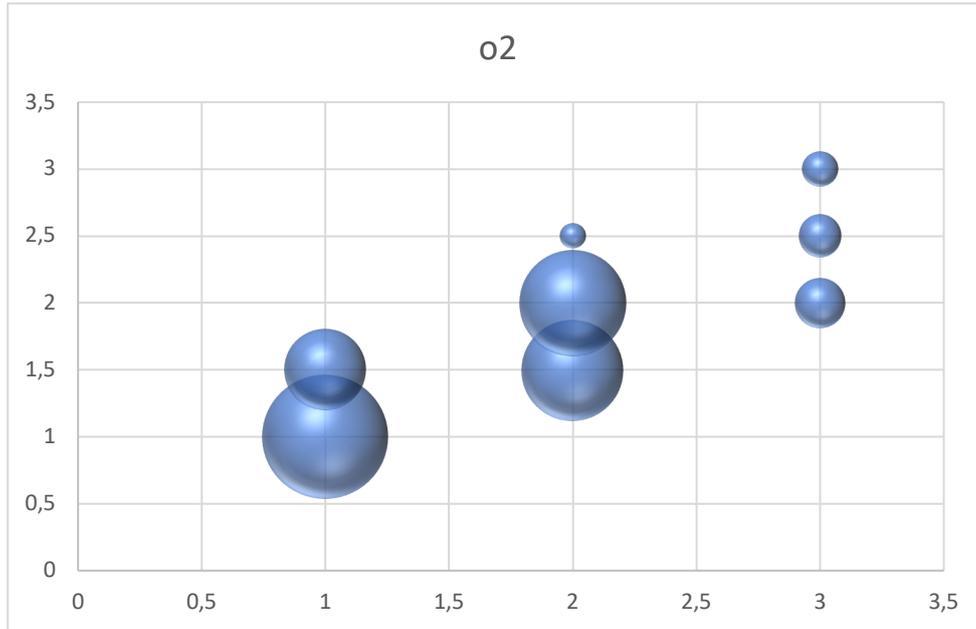


Figure 3.6: Linear correlation o3-O in the pre- test.

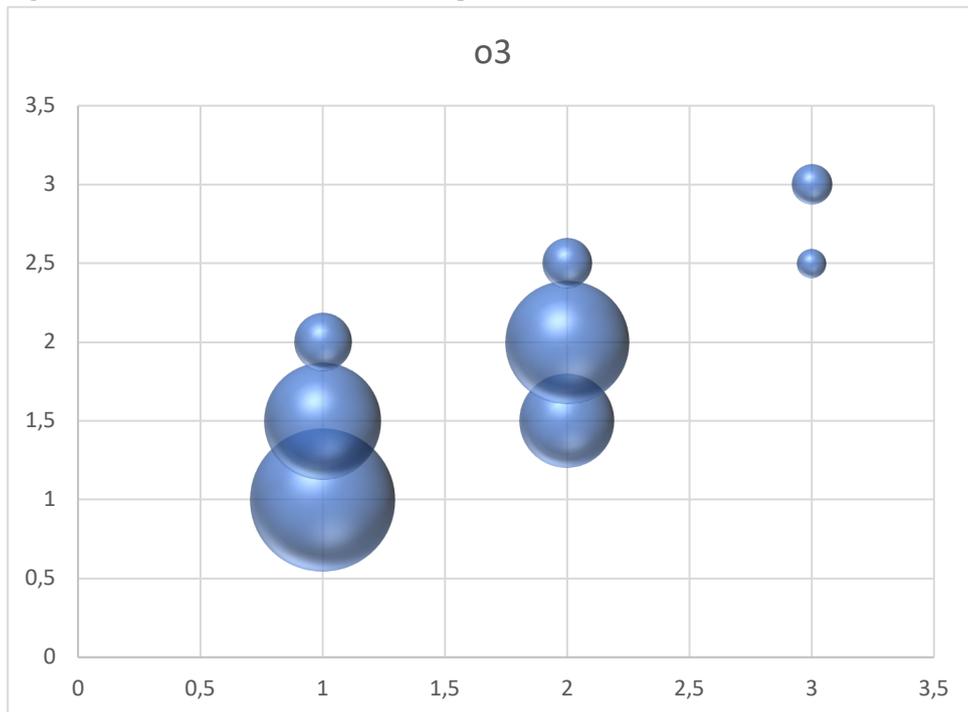


Figure 3.7: Linear correlation a1-A in the pre- test.

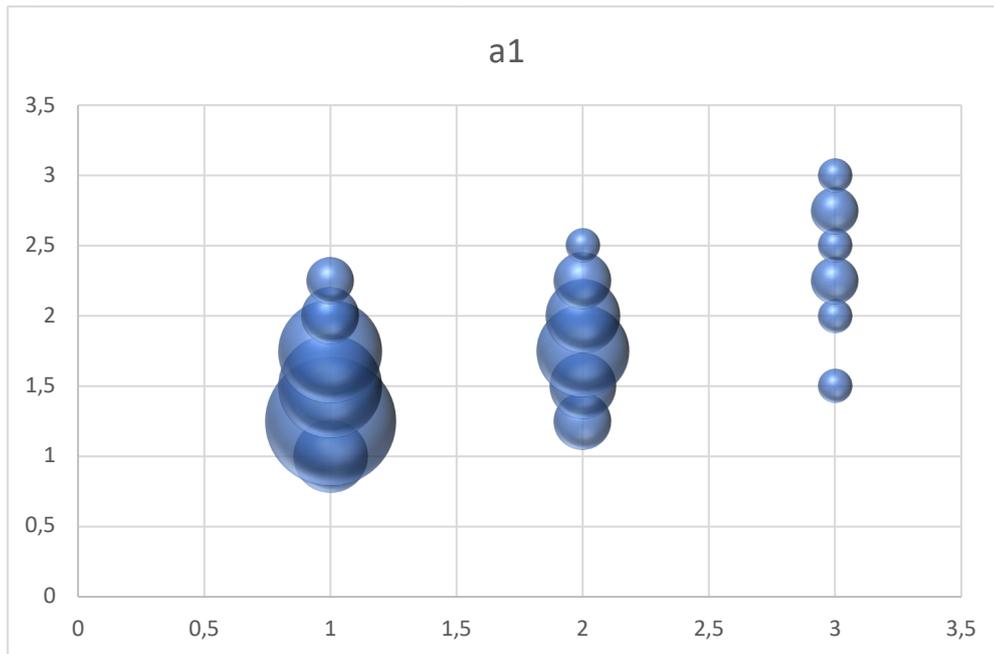


Figure 3.8: Linear correlation a2-A in the pre- test.

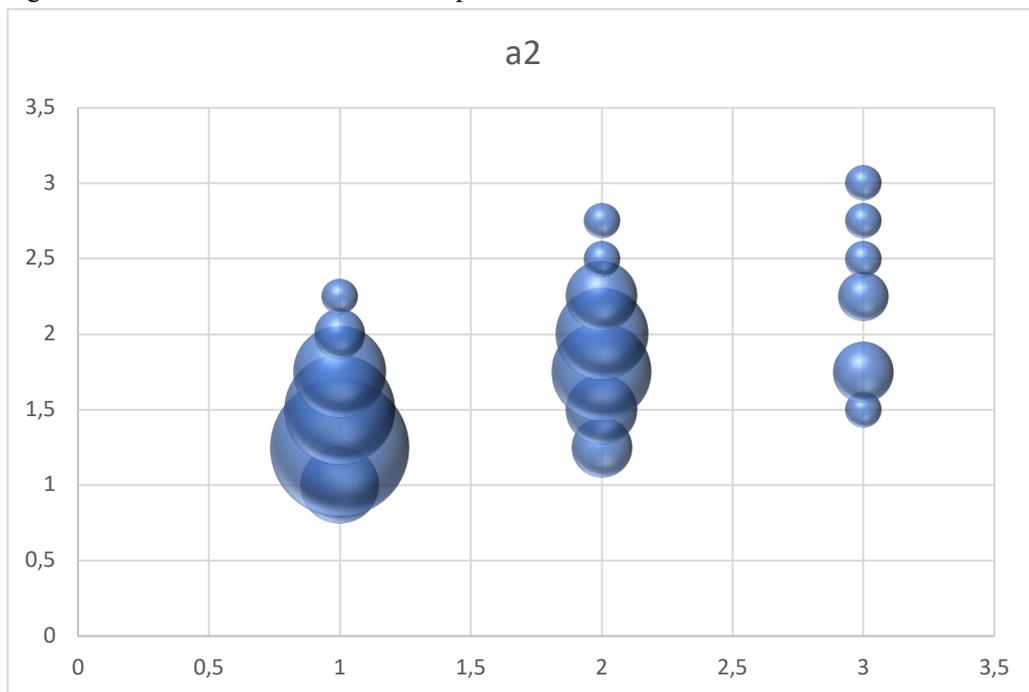


Figure 3.9: Linear correlation a3-A in the pre- test.

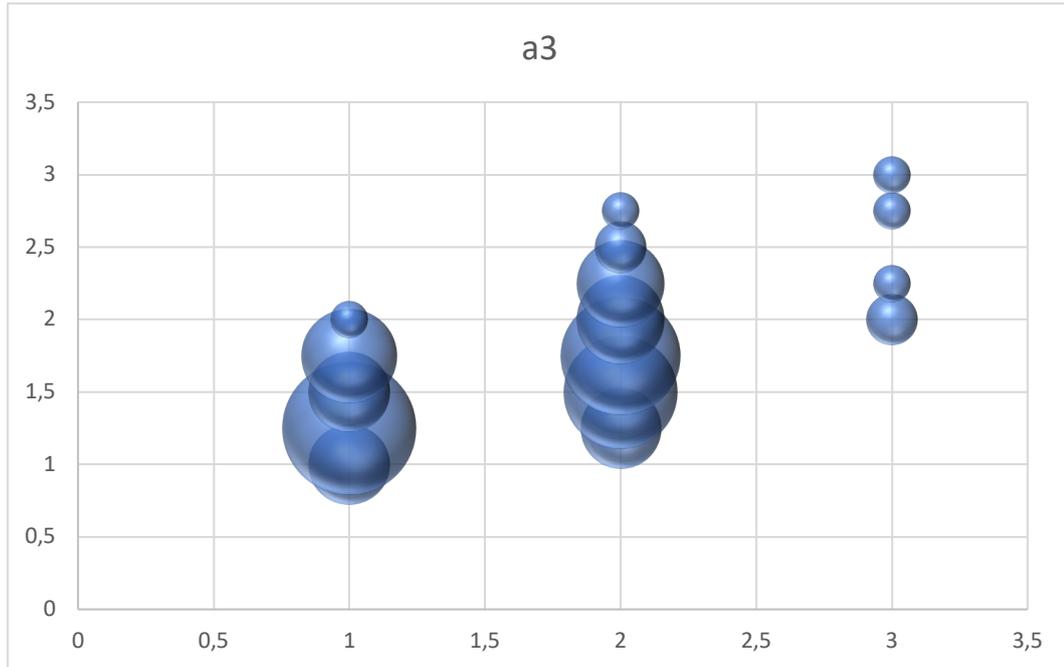


Figure 3.10: Linear correlation a4-A in the pre- test.

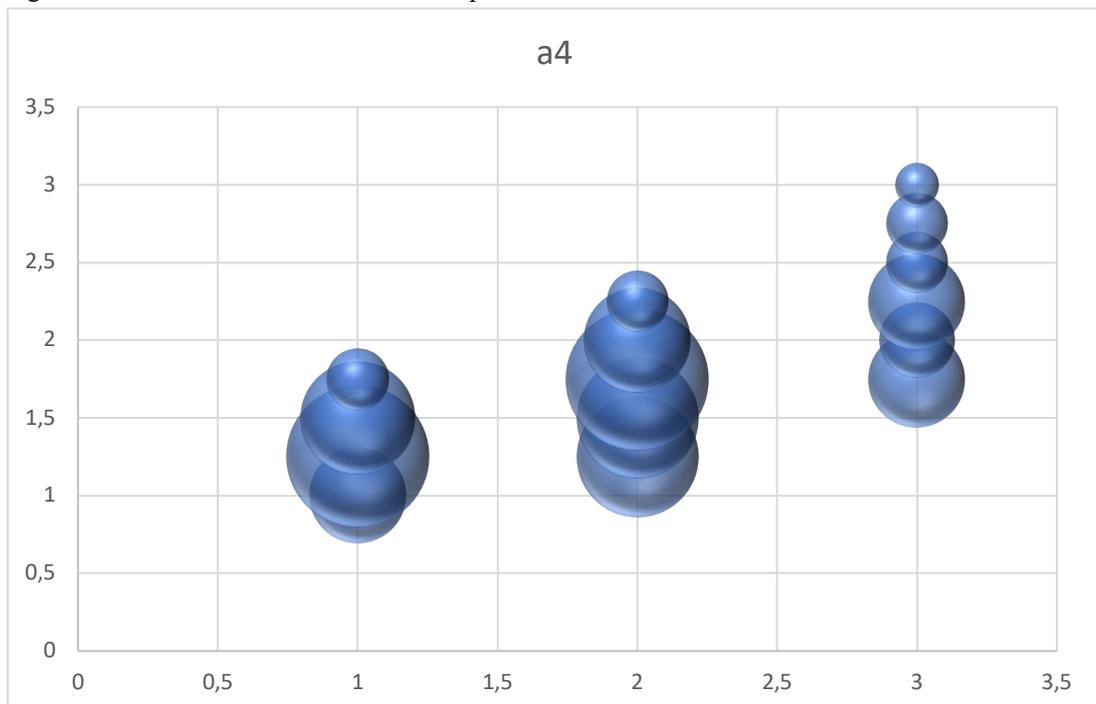


Figure 3.11: Linear correlation k1-K in the post- test.

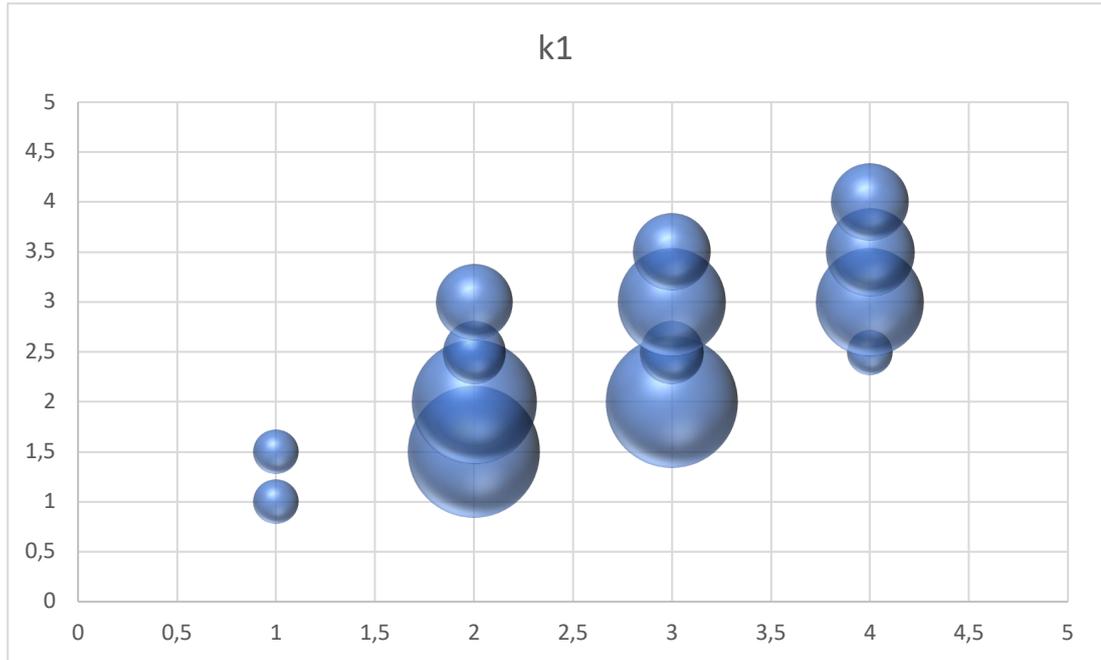


Figure 3.12: Linear correlation k4-K in the post- test.

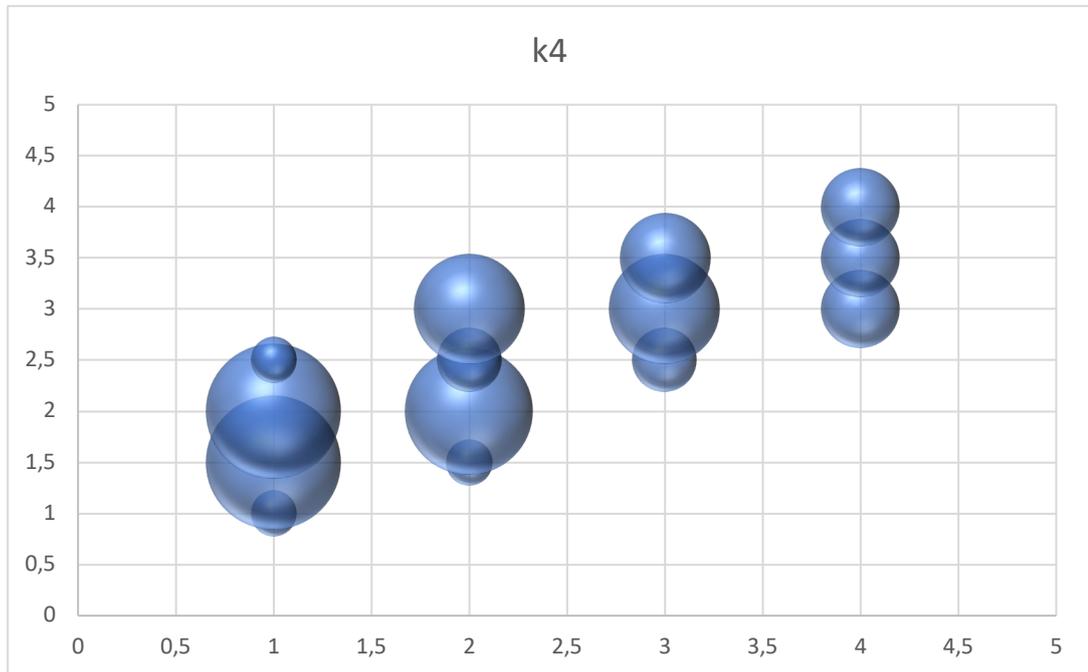


Figure 3.13: Linear correlation o2-O in the post- test.

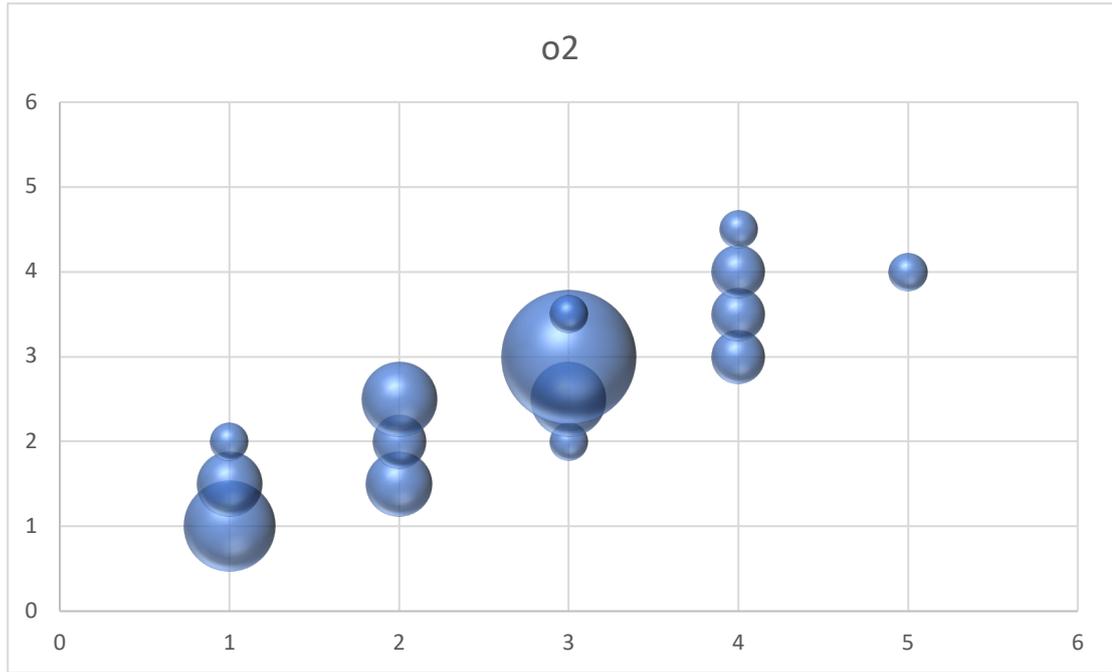


Figure 3.14: Linear correlation o3-O in the post- test.

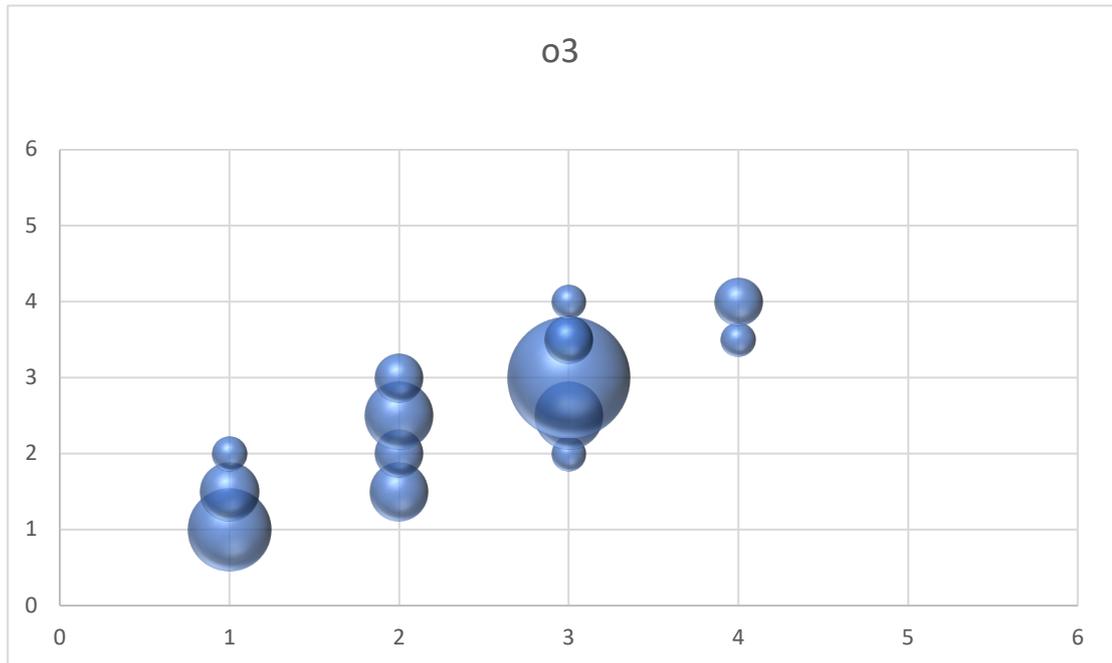


Figure 3.15: Linear correlation a2-A in the post- test.

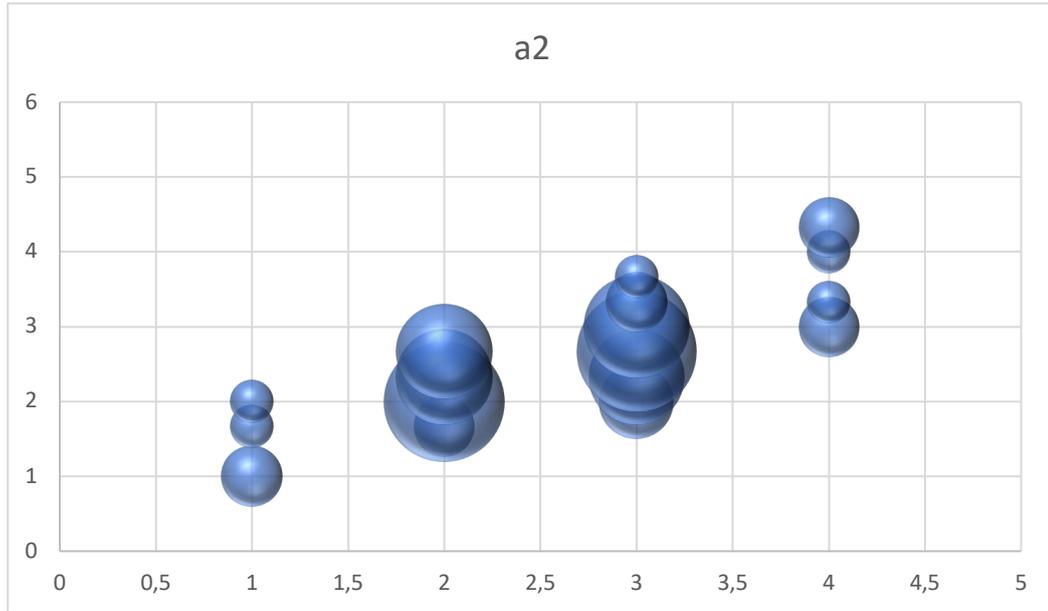


Figure 3.16: Linear correlation a3-A in the post- test.

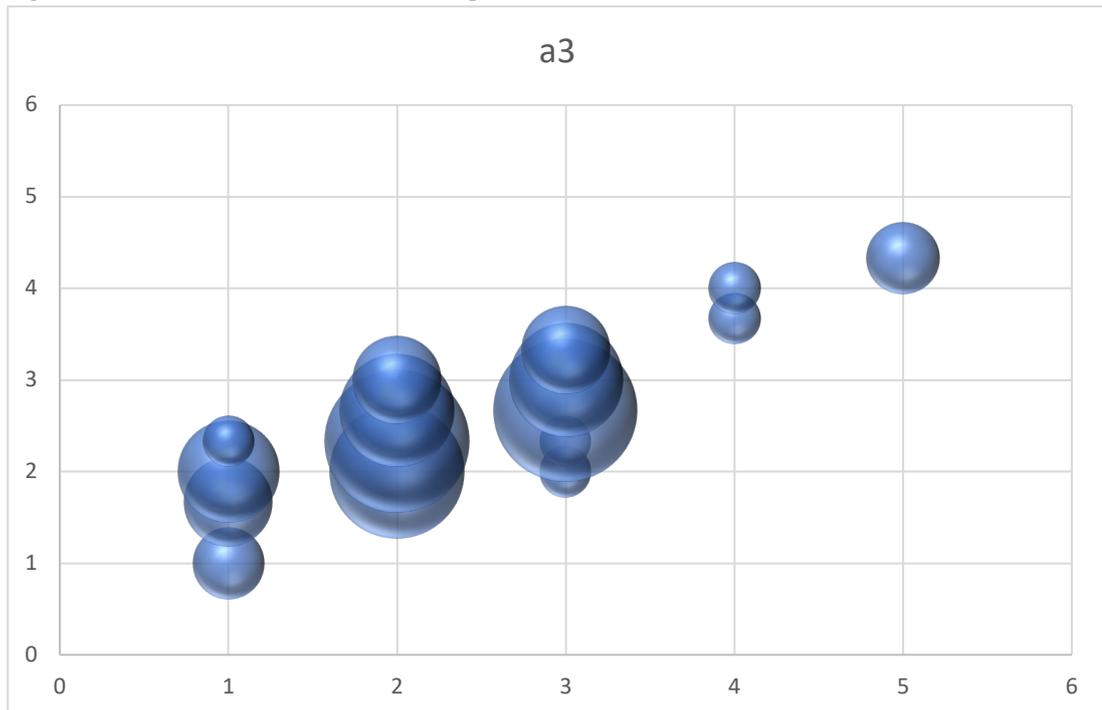
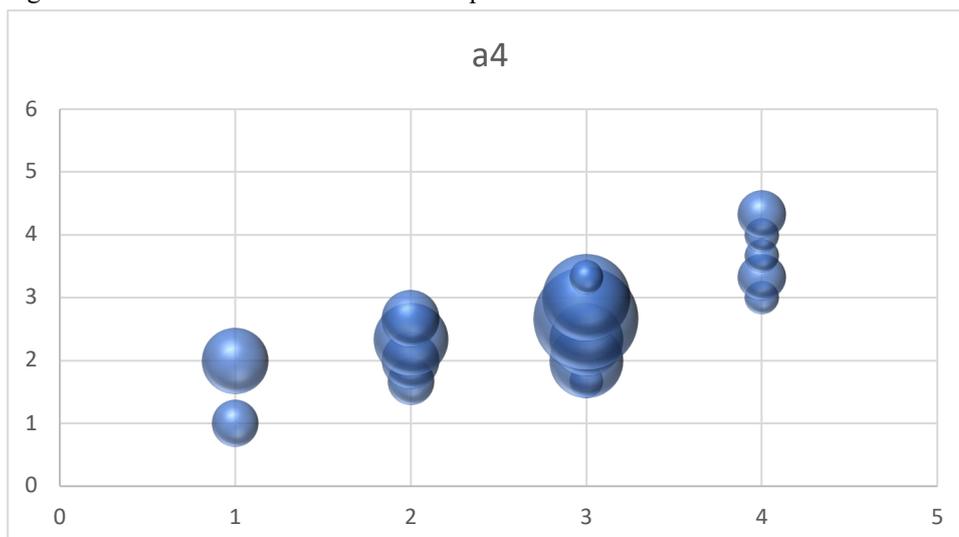


Figure 3.17: Linear correlation a4-A in the post- test.



It is noticeable that these bubbles are distributed in a linear manner (that is according to a straight line, which can be traced by combining the large bubbles), thus confirming the systematic relationship between the items and the synthesis value.

The analysis of the data confirms the correlation of the single item with the criterion of the average. This analysis then confirms the construct validity of the results to the INCA questionnaire used to assess the Intercultural Communicative Competence of the research participants, i.e. that it is right to use the averages to evaluate the Intercultural Communicative Competence, because each item evaluates a specific aspect of the Intercultural Communicative Competence and this aspect contributes to the final evaluation of the Intercultural Communicative Competence.

Research validity concerns the overall quality of the research project, of which internal and external validity are two main aspects. Since, in the presence of convenience samples, external validity is at stake (Mackey & Gass, 2015), the uniformity of control and experimental groups with respect to the demographic characteristics and socio-cultural base of the respondents has to be verified. This audit is part of Chapter 5. Data Analysis.

In quantitative research, research validity is demonstrated by providing evidence against some 'threats' to validity (Dörnyei, 2007:53). It is therefore important to think through the research design carefully to reduce as much as possible threats to internal validity

(Mackey & Gass, 2015). Some of the major threats to validity are highlighted below, as well as their management in this research project.

One of the most important threats is participant mortality: pre- and post- subject dropout is always a serious concern in the case of studies with questionnaires. The entire sample is greatly reduced, and this reduction can alter the composition of the sample if it is differential rather than random. In this project, the Beta phase was added to compensate for participant mortality and statistical analysis was carried out on distributions of Alpha and Beta groups in order to verify homogeneity (Section 5.1).

Other important threats are the Hawthorne effect (Mackey & Gass, 2015), namely the fact that respondents behave differently when they know they are being studied, and the 'halo' effect, i.e. participants may try to please the researcher by giving the answers they think are expected. In this project both threats are expected to have been controlled by separating the researcher from the instructor of the language course, and by not making the results of pre- tests public during the course of the research project.

The so-called 'practice effect', that is, the fact that the performance of the best respondents improved thanks to the fact of repeating the test several times, can also be a threat to research validity. In this project, this effect was mitigated by not repeating the same test, i.e. the same intercultural scenarios, in the pre- and post- tests.

As far as maturation, it is considered a strong likelihood that the number of respondents may change during the course of a research project. It is therefore important to measure how this change affects the target variables in the study. In this project, the control group is arguably an effective measure of the potential physiological increase of Intercultural Communicative Competence after 10 weeks of study abroad experience.

Chapter 4: The Learning Activities for the Experimental Group

“[...] by studying other cultures (-and-languages, I would add) (...) we may learn different possibilities of making sense of human life” (Byram, 1997:115)

The treatment for the experimental group of this quasi-experimental investigation consisted of five 30-minute sessions during regular class time of Italian language courses level B1 or B2 of the CEFR, each session consisted of activities aimed at the development of Intercultural Communicative Competence. The sessions were distributed in the ten weeks of the course duration, usually a session every two weeks.

Hofstede argues that the acquisition of intercultural communication skills goes through three stages: “awareness, knowledge and skills” (Hofstede et al, 2010: 358). Byram points out that “each component of intercultural competence is interrelated with others, and with language competence in intercultural communicative competence”, therefore it is not possible to study them separately (Byram, 1997: 76). The learning activities in this project kept this holistic approach and their aim was to develop the first two stages – ‘awareness’ and ‘knowledge’-, as proposed by Hofstede et al. (2010) and further explained by Hofstede, Pedersen & Hofstede (2002) in their book on cross-cultural training. The fact that in this project the intercultural learners resided in another culture (Italy) allowed them to put into practice what was theoretically addressed in class in order to develop their skills, which is the third and final element of the sequence proposed by Hofstede. The study abroad experience so becomes crucial in the development of intercultural communicative competence and acts as an alternative to the simulation games proposed by Hofstede, Pedersen & Hofstede (2002) to practise intercultural communication skills.

Since intercultural communicative competence cannot be taught as such, “but a model for *lifelong observation of intercultural communication* is fully teachable” (Balboni & Caon, 2014:7), the purpose of the treatment was to encourage the creation of a process rather than obtaining a standard result identical for all learners. The experimental group therefore worked to:

- a) Develop the awareness (of the individual values, one’s culture, the other culture).
- b) Develop the ability to separate observation (of an event, a situation) from its interpretation.

c) Learn to observe cultures objectively.

The learning style of the activities is experiential, based on the principle that students learn better by carrying out activities, than by being passive recipients (Kolb, 1984), and also because this approach aligns well with the underlying idea of using the study abroad experience as a phase of the experiential learning cycle developed by Kolb (1984) (see Section 2.3).

The design of the learning activities took as theoretical basis also the principles of the flipped classroom (Lage, Pratt & Treglia, 2000; Longo, 2016), that appeals to a broad range of learning styles and allows for the class time to be mainly devoted to group work and group discussions (Longo, 2016; Bevilacqua & Santiago, 2019). This contributed to make the sessions very interactive and primarily dedicated to practising the target language. This pedagogical approach made the integration of ICC activities into a foreign language course easier.

As for Italian language learning, these activities were integrated into courses level B1 or B2 of the CEFR, consequently relevant functions and related phrases were included and practised throughout the five sessions. Amongst these were:

- Asking for and giving opinions (*penso ...; credo che ... sia importante*);
- Making suggestions (*penso che dovremo dire/ aggiungere questo ...; si potrebbe anche dire/ aggiungere ...; forse è importante dire /aggiungere...*);
- Agreeing and disagreeing (*è vero, ma...; sono d'accordo, però ...; non sono molto d'accordo su ...*);
- Checking (*quindi tu vuoi dire...?; vuoi dire che ...? Che cosa intendi con ...?*).

The content and the learning materials for each session of the treatment are described in Sections 4.1 – 4.5 (one Section for each session of the treatment).

A schematic overview of the learning activities carried out with the experimental group is presented in Table 4.1. Classroom ICC activities were in Italian, as they were integrated into an Italian language class, Level B1 or B2 of the CEFR. The English translation is here included in brackets for the sake of clarity and access of this research to a wider readership. Assigned readings are chapters or excerpts from books in Italian, therefore the English translation is not enclosed.

The fieldwork started with a meeting of this researcher at the selected Italian language courses to recruit the research participants: the meeting consisted of the presentation and contextualization of the research project. Those who signed the *Consent form* (Appendix 2) were subsequently administered the pre- test at the end of the meeting.

Research start (both groups)	Presentation of the research project. Administration of the pre- test
Session 1 (experimental group only)	<i>Classroom activities: Simboli, eroi, rituali e valori culturali</i> (Cultural symbols, heroes, rituals and values).
Session 2 (experimental group only)	<i>Assigned readings:</i> “Il concetto di cultura” (Giaccardi, 2005:20-28) with reading comprehension exercises; <i>Classroom activities: Consapevolezza interculturale. Le dimensioni culturali.</i> (Intercultural awareness. Dimensions of culture)
Session 3 (experimental group only)	<i>Assigned readings:</i> “Differenze nella Distanza di potere tra Paesi: le radici familiari. Distanza di potere e scuola. Distanza di potere e sanità” (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010:78-83) with reading comprehension exercises; <i>Written Assignment:</i> cross-cultural journal: one entry (cross-cultural incidents) <i>Classroom activities: La relazione con l'autorità: distanza di potere nella famiglia e a scuola</i> (Relation to Authority: Power Distance in the family and at a school)
Session 4 (experimental group only)	<i>Assigned readings:</i> “Individualismo e collettivismo nella famiglia. Lingua personalità e comportamento nelle culture individualiste e collettiviste. Individualismo e collettivismo nella scuola” (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010:108-17) with reading comprehension exercises; <i>Written Assignment:</i> cross-cultural journal: one entry (evidences of Power Distance in Italian and other cultures) <i>Classroom activities: Il ruolo sociale dell'individuo rispetto al ruolo sociale del gruppo: individualismo vs collettivismo</i> (The social role of the individual: Individualism vs Collectivism)
Session 5 (experimental group only)	<i>Written Assignment:</i> cross-cultural journal: one entry (evidences of Individualism in Italian and other cultures) <i>Classroom activities: Tavola Rotonda: Comparare e osservare le culture</i> (Round Table: Comparing Cultures, Observing Cultures – discussion on cross-cultural incidents, cultural differences and similarities)
Research end (both groups)	Acknowledgement of the research participants. Administration of the post-test.

Table 4.1: Schematic overview of the learning activities in the treatment.

4.1. “*Symbols, heroes, rituals and cultural values*”

The aim of the first session of the treatment was to urge participants to reflect on the concept of culture and to raise awareness of its manifestations, particularly the heroes and cultural values. The session consisted of three activities, as per worksheet distributed in class (Figure 4.1), to be completed in small groups (3-4 students per

group), followed by a discussion in plenum. A reading comprehension exercise was subsequently assigned as homework. Below is provided the timed lesson plan:

1. Ice breaker: **Il tuo gruppo** (Your group) – ca. 4 minutes
2. Group discussion:
 - a. **Riflessione: che cos'è la cultura per voi?** (what is culture for you?) – ca. 7 minutes
 - b. Short reading and group discussion: **Discussione su eroi e valori culturali** (discussion on heroes and cultural values) – ca. 10 minutes
3. Feedback in plenum – ca. 7 minutes
4. Homework: **Compiti per casa** (in the worksheet, Figure 4.1) – ca. 2 minutes

The first activity was an ice-breaker: students introduced themselves by telling their group members two 'peculiar things' about themselves that they saw as representative. This activity proved to be successful in getting the students closer and open to work together. This activity encouraged them to look for similarities and common traits, such as beloved pets, TV series, sports and hobbies.

The second activity was a brainstorming exercise aimed at exploring the concept of culture and at developing ideas about its main components. The definition of culture is actually fundamental in order to proceed with comparing different cultures and eventually developing intercultural communicative competence. The aim of this activity was not to find a 'perfect' definition of culture, rather to help students become more aware of how cultures develop and manifest themselves (Utley, 2004:14). Depending on the class, it might be possible to have a volunteer for each group to present their group's definition and then have a discussion in plenum, with comments, agreements and disagreements. In this research project, with time constraints for the treatment sessions, the class instructors informally told the researcher they found the activities very interesting and stimulating and sometimes expanded them later.

The third activity was a discussion on cultural values. The development of awareness of the values is object of research in various disciplines. Here this researcher refers to the work and materials developed in the Anglo-American area within the social sciences as a support for trainees; see for example Sweitzer & King, 2009. In this sense the available teaching materials are rich and varied, and can be adapted and well integrated

into Italian L2 courses. For example, the iceberg image representing the visible and invisible aspects of culture (Utley, 2004) is commonly used. In this project the image of the onion as a representation of the layers of culture (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010:27) was presented together with the definitions of the concepts of ‘symbols’, ‘heroes’, ‘ritual’ and ‘cultural values’ (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010; Sweitzer & King, 2009). Students, divided into small groups with representatives of different cultures, were required to make a list of cultural heroes simultaneously indicating which values they represent and / or reinforce.

Figure 4.1: Worksheet for Session no. 1 of the treatment.

1 - Simboli, eroi, rituali e valori culturali

1) Il tuo gruppo
Chi c'è nel tuo gruppo? Scrivi il nome e due 'cose' caratteristiche di ciascun membro.

1) Riflessione: che cos'è la cultura per voi?

Il termine 'cultura' può avere diversi significati: leggete le seguenti definizioni di cultura e scegliete quella che è più vicina alla vostra idea di cultura. Se nessuna definizione è soddisfacente, scrivete la vostra definizione di cultura.

A) L'insieme di tutte le credenze, valori e norme condivise da un gruppo di persone.

B) Il modo in cui i membri di una società sono stati condizionati a pensare, sentire, interpretare e reagire.

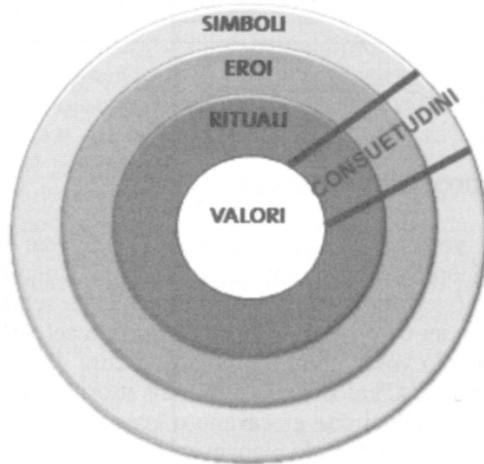
C) Tutto quello che si deve sapere e credere per essere accettati in una società.

D) Le regole non scritte del gioco sociale: è la programmazione collettiva della mente che distingue i membri di un gruppo da tutti gli altri.

La mia definizione:

1) Discussione

Sono molte le manifestazioni delle diversità culturali: tra i tanti termini utilizzati per descriverle, 'simboli', 'eroi', 'rituali' e 'valori' definiscono con precisione il concetto di cultura nella sua totalità. Le manifestazioni della cultura possono essere visualizzate



come gli strati di una cipolla: i simboli rappresentano lo strato più superficiale e i valori quello più profondo. I *simboli* sono parole, gesti, immagini, oggetti che hanno un significato solo per chi condivide la stessa cultura. Gli *eroi* sono persone, viventi o defunte, reali o immaginarie, con caratteristiche

particolarmente apprezzate da una cultura, che diventano modelli di riferimento. I *rituali* sono comportamenti tecnicamente superflui al fine di ottenere il risultato voluto, ma considerati socialmente essenziali. Un *valore* è un'idea o un modo di essere in cui si crede fortemente, qualcosa a cui si tiene molto e che è visibile nelle nostre azioni (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010; Sweitzer & King, 2009).

Fate una lista di eroi culturali (min. 1 per cultura). Spiegate perché li avete scelti e quali valori rinforzano e /o rappresentano.

Eroi

Valori che rinforzano/ rappresentano

Cultura (tedesca)

Cultura ...

Vocabolario: ecco un elenco di aree valoriali che possono essere importanti nella tua esperienza all'estero, puoi aggiungerne altre)

Autonomia

Famiglia

Impegno nel lavoro/ nello studio

Onestà

Igiene personale

Religione

Tolleranza

Libertà di espressione

Tempo

Uso di droghe

Sincerità

Consumo di alcol

4) Compiti per casa: Vocabolario

A – Leggi il paragrafo A a p. 23-4 del file “1_concetto cultura con es” su Moodle e trova i sinonimi delle seguenti parole presenti nel testo ed evidenziate in giallo

Nel testo

fornisce (vb. fornire)
consentire)
nostre (vb. fare nostre)

Sinonimo

in termini consente (vb.
operare mutamento facciamo
altrui processi negoziali

B – Leggi il paragrafo B a p. 25 del file “1_concetto cultura con es” su Moodle e trova i sinonimi delle seguenti parole presenti nel testo ed evidenziate in giallo

Nel testo

viene appresa (vb. apprendere)

Sinonimo

tacita acquisite (vb. acquisire)

Approfondimenti: Hofstede G, Hofstede G.J., Minkov M. (2010). *Culture e organizzazioni. Valori e strategie per operare efficacemente in contesti internazionali*. Milano, Franco Angeli.

From a strictly linguistic point of view, this activity allows for the development of the relevant lexical skills: it was initially presented with a list of words related to values (Figure 4.1 **Vocabolario**), during the discussion other words / values emerged and therefore became part of the learning outcomes (Figures 4.2 and 4.3).

Figure 4.2: List of values/ words emerged during the activity on cultural heroes.

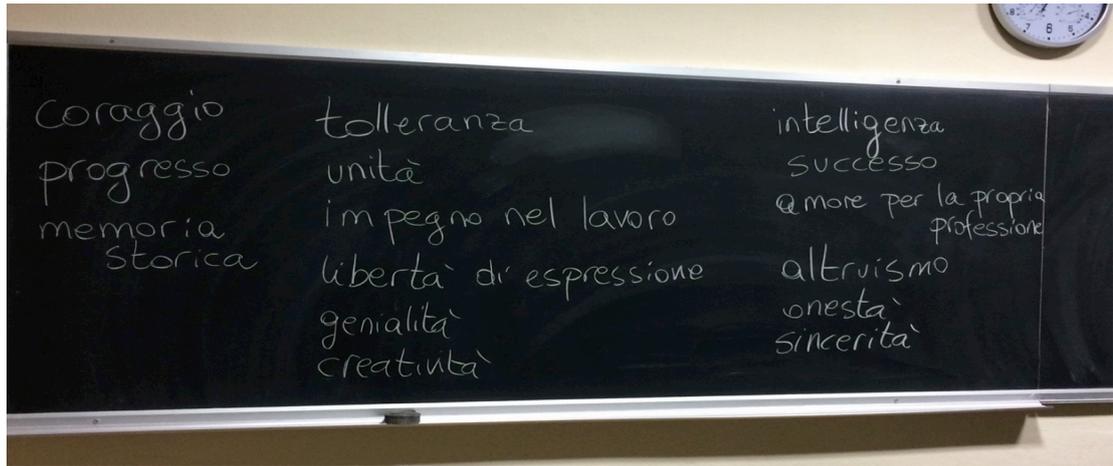
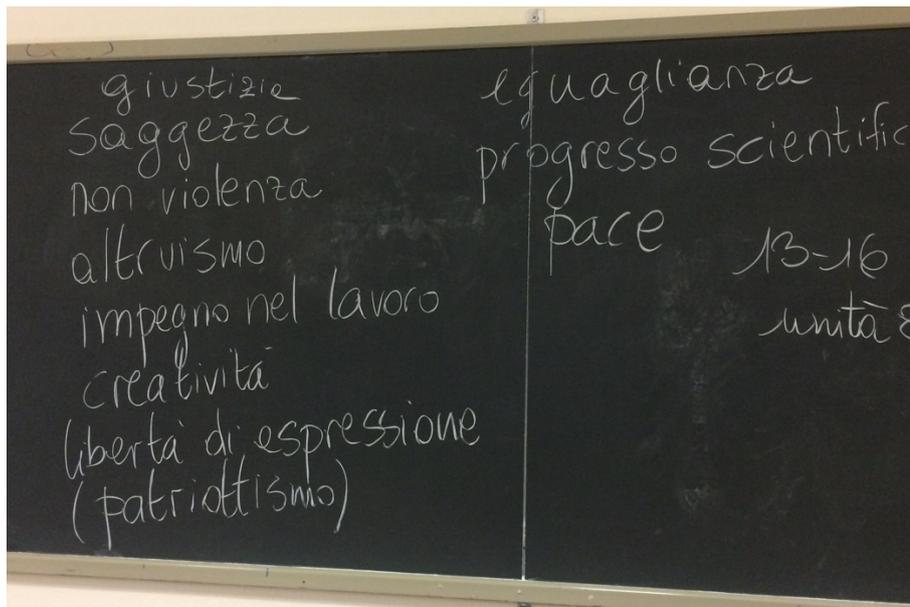


Figure 4.3: List of values/ words emerged during the activity on cultural heroes.



The last activity of the worksheet (*Compiti per casa: vocabolario*) consisted of an assigned reading with a vocabulary exercise. This task was recommended but optional.

The treatment was submitted to 3 Italian language classes, and as part of received feedback, the researcher made some small adjustments to meet the class instructors' requests. For example, in the first session some time was also added to explain the recurrent structure of each session, e.g. the worksheet to be distributed at the beginning

of each session, and homework to be found at the bottom of each worksheet. This allowed for a more efficient use of class time in the next sessions.

At the bottom of the worksheet, as in every worksheet, recommended readings (*Approfondimenti*) were included, in case the students or the instructor wanted to explore the subject further.

From the second sessions onwards, right at the end of the session the worksheet for the following session was posted by the course instructor on the Moodle site of the Italian language course, along with the assigned readings. Students were required to come prepared to class, with their homework done. Homework acted as a foundation, a discussion springboard, and offered the bigger picture, i.e. the scientific basis of the classroom activities. Homework also provided lexicon and some linguistic structures appropriate to discuss such topics in Italian. Furthermore, from the second session onwards, starting with an ice-breaker activity was no longer necessary, since the students already knew each other as they use group-work on a regular basis in the Italian language courses where this treatment was integrated.

4.2. “Intercultural Awareness. The Cultural Dimensions”

The second session focused on cultural awareness and presented the students with the model of dimensions of cultures (Hofstede et al., 2010). It consisted of four in-class activities. Its timed lesson plan is provided below:

1. Warm-up: *il concetto di cultura* (feedback of the homework) – ca. 4 minutes
2. Group discussion: Cross-cultural awareness: *che cosa vedi?* – ca. 13 minutes
3. Short explanation of key concepts: Cultural Awareness; the Dimensions of Culture, Hofstede’s Model of Cultural Dimensions – ca. 8 minutes
4. Short explanation of The Cross-Cultural Journal – ca. 5 minutes

Students were provided with a worksheet (Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.4: Worksheet for Session no. 2 of the treatment.

2 - Consapevolezza interculturale. Le dimensioni culturali.

1. Che cosa vedi? Guarda le immagini. Secondo te, dove siamo? Che cosa sta succedendo?

Immagine n. 1

Immagine n. 2

Immagine n. 3

2) Il diario interculturale.

Data:

Luogo:

OSSERVAZIONE/ DESCRIZIONE

In questa parte del diario descrivi che cosa hai visto. Descrivi una situazione o un evento che ti ha colpito perché diverso, strano, divertente, triste, etc. Sentimenti, emozioni e interpretazioni non devono essere scritti in questa parte. Scrivi solo i fatti.

OPINIONE/ANALISI

In questa parte scrivi quello che pensi, quello che provi relativamente alla situazione. Poi prova ad analizzare i tuoi pensieri, le tue emozioni e i tuoi sentimenti. C'è un aspetto della tua cultura che può influenzarti? Cosa c'è di diverso nella nuova cultura?

Approfondimenti: <https://geert-hofstede.com/national-culture.html>

The session started by examining the concept of culture as outlined in the assigned readings (Appendix 6): two excerpts on the concept of culture and its definition (Giaccardi, 2005:20-28). It then moved to the activity on cross-cultural awareness; this is an activity based on images (Figures 4.5, 4.7 and 4.8), inspired by the training of staff in companies operating in multicultural environments (Hofstede, Pedersen & Hofstede, 2002). In particular, students were asked to write down certain aspects of the projected images on the screen with PowerPoint slides: the place (where are we?) and the situation (what are they doing?). The purpose of the activity is not guessing what the image actually is (in some cases it is even impossible), but rather comparing one's answers with other members of the class and realize how the answers, which are actually interpretations, are influenced by the individual and cultural values of each respondent. Looking at the picture there are those who focused on family relationships, others on the characteristics of the individuals, some focused on gender differences, others on details attributable to professional or religious roles, etc.

Figure 4.5: Example of an image to be used to build awareness of values (taken from Hofstede, Pedersen & Hofstede, 2002:10)



Figure 4.6 shows the students' answers to the first image (Figure 4.5) written on a PPT slide during the in-class activity in order to facilitate the discussion and to support debriefing.

Figure 4.6: PPT slides with students' response to the 1st image (Figure 4.5) and debriefing

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Una preghiera prima di un pasto, due persone non vogliono pregare. • Persone concentrate a risolvere un problema. • Una conversazione difficile. • Una famiglia che ha appena ricevuto una triste notizia. • Una riunione. Le due donne sulla destra stanno parlando tra loro di un cellulare. • L'uomo al centro conduce la discussione. • Una riunione sta per cominciare. 	
<p>- Non è possibile capire che cosa sta succedendo in una determinata situazione solo <u>guardandola</u> o <u>osservandola</u>. C'è bisogno di altre informazioni.</p> <p>- Inconsciamente applichiamo <u>il nostro schema culturale di interpretazione</u> a tutte le situazioni.</p> <p>- Questo non vuol dire che la cultura da sola determina come si interpreta una immagine o una situazione.</p>	<p>- Anche la <u>propria storia personale</u> e la <u>propria personalità</u> hanno un ruolo importante.</p> <p>- In ogni caso, alcune interpretazioni fatte da persone di altre parti del mondo possono sembrarci molto strane.</p> <p>- Durante un'esperienza di studio/ lavoro all'estero ci sono tante occasioni in cui è difficile capire che cosa sta succedendo.</p> <p>- La <u>consapevolezza interculturale</u> può aiutare a comprendere quello che succede intorno a noi.</p>

Figure 4.7: Example of an image to be used to build awareness of the values (as amended from www.tuttomercatoweb.com/?action=read&id=361384, 5 November 2012)



Figure 4.8: Example of an image to be used to develop intercultural awareness (<http://forum.santabanta.com/showthread.htm?112847-Politicians-Sleeping-In-Public-Places>, 5 November 2012)



It is interesting to note that the discussion on Figure 4.8 proved to be very lively in all of the classes of the experimental group, as it was interpreted in very different ways. Some students said the four men, probably businessmen or politicians, were ‘sleeping’ because of tiredness or boredom, others said that picture depicts a way to pay the maximum attention in the Asian or maybe Korean culture (some students could read the signs near each person). This kind of activity served to focus the students' attention on the fact that just by looking at a situation you cannot understand what is happening, because each of us unconsciously applies his/her own interpretation scheme, which is the result of one's individual and cultural values.

This second activity with images prompted the third task, the presentation of the work of Hofstede and its cultural dimensions model (Hofstede et al., 2010). The activity on images made students reflect on some basic principles, as outlined by Hofstede, Pedersen & Hofstede (2002): all people are alike as they are biologically of the same species and all people are also unique individuals. Furthermore, all people are also social beings who are taught how to survive in a social world, coping with the big issues social anthropologists identified (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.1). “The way in which a group of people resolves these five issues is what we call culture” (Hofstede, Pedersen & Hofstede, 2002:39). This researcher then explained the key concepts underlying the following sessions and learning activities: Cultural Awareness; the Dimensions of Culture, Hofstede’s Model of Cultural Dimensions. In order to facilitate students’ understanding of the theoretical explanations, PPT slides were used as support (Figure 4.9). In this project, Hofstede’s model served as a tool to observe different cultures.

Figure 4.9: PPT slides used to support the explanation of Cultural Awareness; the Dimensions of Culture, Hofstede's Model of Cultural Dimensions

<p style="text-align: center;">Consapevolezza interculturale</p> <p>- Il punto centrale è imparare a <u>separare</u> osservazione da interpretazione.</p> <p>- E' necessario rimandare (posticipare) l'interpretazione di un fatto/ evento/ situazione fino a quando non <u>si conosce abbastanza</u> l'altra cultura.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Come posso conoscere un'altra cultura? E come posso fare un paragone con altre culture che conosco?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Analisi interculturale (<i>cross-cultural analysis</i>)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Elaborazione di modelli e sistemi per comparare le culture</p>													
<p style="text-align: center;">1) Le dimensioni culturali</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tutte le società, moderne o conservatrici, affrontano gli stessi problemi fondamentali; solo le soluzioni sono diverse (antropologi culturali, XX secolo). Quali sono i <u>problemi fondamentali e universali</u> comuni a tutte le società? 	<p style="text-align: center;">Problemi fondamentali e universali comuni a tutte le società:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> la relazione con l'autorità; la concezione del sé, in particolare: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> la relazione tra individuo e società; il concetto di femminilità e mascolinità; le modalità di gestione dei conflitti, inclusi il controllo dell'aggressività e la manifestazione dei sentimenti 													
<p style="text-align: center;">La ricerca di Geert Hofstede</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> L'analisi statistica della media nazionale delle risposte alle domande sui valori di dipendenti IBM simili tra loro, ma di nazionalità diversa, evidenzia problemi comuni, ma con soluzioni diverse da paese a paese (1970). Le quattro categorie di problemi fondamentali rappresentano le <i>dimensioni delle culture</i> <p style="text-align: center;">UNA DIMENSIONE È UN'ASPETTO DELLA CULTURA CHE PUÒ ESSERE MISURATO CONFRONTANDOLO CON ALTRE CULTURE NAZIONALI</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Le dimensioni culturali</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relazione con l'autorità → DISTANZA DI POTERE La concezione del sé in particolare: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> la relazione tra individuo e società → COLLECTIVISMO vs INDIVIDUALISMO il concetto di femminilità e mascolinità → FEMMINILITA' vs MASCOLINITA' le modalità di gestione dei conflitti, inclusi il controllo dell'aggressività e la manifestazione dei sentimenti → AVVERSIONE ALL'INCERTEZZA 													
<p style="text-align: center;">Il sondaggio dei valori cinesi (<i>Chinese Value Survey</i>, 1982)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Viene aggiunta la quinta dimensione: ORIENTAMENTO A LUNGO TERMINE vs ORIENTAMENTO A BREVE TERMINE <p>L'analisi del sondaggio dei valori mondiali (<i>World Values Survey</i>, 2007)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Viene aggiunta la sesta dimensione: INDULGENZA VS RESTRIZIONE 	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Problema fondamentale</i></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Relazione con l'autorità gerarchia</td> <td>Concezione del sé I: identità</td> <td>Concezione del sé II: genere</td> <td>Modalità di gestione dei conflitti etc: verità</td> <td>virtù</td> <td>benessere soggettivo</td> </tr> </table>	Relazione con l'autorità gerarchia	Concezione del sé I: identità	Concezione del sé II: genere	Modalità di gestione dei conflitti etc: verità	virtù	benessere soggettivo	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Dimensione culturale</i></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Distanza di potere (da piccola a grande)</td> <td>Individualismo vs Collettivismo</td> <td>Mascolinità vs Femminilità</td> <td>Avversione all'incertezza (da debole a forte)</td> <td>Orientamento a lungo termine vs Orientam. a breve termine</td> <td>Indulgenza vs Restrizione</td> </tr> </table>	Distanza di potere (da piccola a grande)	Individualismo vs Collettivismo	Mascolinità vs Femminilità	Avversione all'incertezza (da debole a forte)	Orientamento a lungo termine vs Orientam. a breve termine	Indulgenza vs Restrizione
Relazione con l'autorità gerarchia	Concezione del sé I: identità	Concezione del sé II: genere	Modalità di gestione dei conflitti etc: verità	virtù	benessere soggettivo									
Distanza di potere (da piccola a grande)	Individualismo vs Collettivismo	Mascolinità vs Femminilità	Avversione all'incertezza (da debole a forte)	Orientamento a lungo termine vs Orientam. a breve termine	Indulgenza vs Restrizione									

This researcher found that this model was useful as a teaching tool; it provided a valid reference framework for the students to decode everyday behaviours that can reveal cultural features. This model has been proven to be valid for all cultures (Ref- recent) and once you have learned how to use it, it can be applied in all intercultural contexts (ref recent).

The fourth and last activity of this second session was the presentation of the intercultural journal, supported by a PPT slide (Figure 4.10).

Figure 4.10: PPT slide used to support the presentation of the Cross-Cultural Journal

Il diario interculturale

È uno strumento didattico che si può usare in situazioni interculturali. Ti aiuta ad analizzare le tue reazioni alla nuova cultura.

<p>Data:</p> <p>Luogo:</p> <p>OSSERVAZIONE/ DESCRIZIONE</p> <p>In questa parte del diario descrivi che cosa hai visto. Descrivi una situazione o un evento che ti ha colpito perché diverso, strano, divertente, triste, etc. Sentimenti, emozioni e interpretazioni non devono essere scritti in questa parte. Scrivi solo i fatti.</p>	<p>OPINIONE/ANALISI</p> <p><i>In questa parte scrivi quello che pensi, quello che provi relativamente alla situazione. Poi prova ad analizzare i tuoi pensieri, le tue emozioni e i tuoi sentimenti. C'è un aspetto della tua cultura che può influenzarti? Cosa c'è di diverso nella nuova cultura?</i></p>
--	---

The core of intercultural awareness, which is the first step in the sequence to develop intercultural communication skills (Hofstede et al., 2010), is learning to separate observation from interpretation (Hofstede, Pedersen & Hofstede, 2002). One of the most appropriate teaching strategies to develop such ability results from keeping a journal of experiences: the entries are based on personal reflections that are then integrated with the theory studied in the classroom (Kohls & Knight, 1994; Baiutti & Paolone, 2018). For this purpose, the format of the 'cross-cultural journal' was selected. The format of the diary pages consisted of two columns: the left column was assigned to describe the fact or the event, whereas in the right column was reserved to note thoughts, observations and emotions. This format helped students learn how to separate the observation (of the event or situation) from its interpretation. The interpretation is usually based on deeply rooted values, which one is often initially unaware of. Through

the cross-cultural journal intercultural awareness is strengthened (Baiutti & Paolone, 2018). The effectiveness of this learning tool had already been argued in an article published by the researcher (Tarabusi, 2012), which examined an Italian language course with an experiential learning component. This study claimed that the learning outcomes of such a course were observed in the journal entries of the students, as keeping a cross cultural journal of the experience was essential among the course requirements. The following is an example of a journal entry that strongly illustrates the achievement of such a good, intercultural communicative competence (Tarabusi, 2012: 105):

Upon studying Italian cultures and customs I've definitely become more polite in Italy. I always say '*buongiorno*' to people I don't know and upon entering stores, and I always say '*arrivederci*' upon leaving. I've started taking my headphones out while in stores, and I've definitely become more interactive with people I don't know. These simple things have made me feel more a part of Florentine culture, and more people speak to me in Italian. I'd like to think it is because I fit in more. I've also been practicing my Italian more because of my Italian practices. Many tourists also seem to think I am Italian. Many people are surprised when I answer their poor attempts at Italian with English. It makes me feel like all my hard work is paying.

This journal entry shows how the student became aware of her own and the new culture's values and how she managed to adjust. Through the study of the cultural dimensions and the development of a deeper awareness of one's values, both individual and cultural, the student was able to identify some distinctive behaviours that s/he did not know in Italian culture, such as formally greeting when addressing adults, and not shutting off by isolating herself (keeping earphones on to listen to music) while shopping in stores. The student then tried to change her behaviour that up to that moment perfectly conformed to the canons of American culture. In fact, according to the students of that seminar class, American culture does not require any formal greeting between shop owner and customer, nor would it be considered inappropriate to keep earphones on while shopping for products, because respect for one's privacy and each individual's virtual bubble are highly valued. (Tarabusi, 2012). In that course the discussions focused on 'weird' behaviours or cross-cultural incidents directly experienced or observed by the students, the cultural dimensions helped shape the cultural framework and interpret the behaviour accordingly, as the following journal entry, on the Power Distance cultural dimension, shows (Tarabusi, 2012: 104):

In terms of power distance, the teacher has authority and is completely in charge. When the teacher yells at a student, the student accepts it and is expected to improve. In the US, it wouldn't be surprising to hear a student yell back or even threaten a teacher, such as saying, "My dad is a lawyer. He's going to sue you." In comparison, in the US, superiors and subordinates often interact socially as equals because of the lower power distance. Also, in such cultures, it is beneficial to show initiative. It would be difficult to find that self-determination in Italian culture.

The classroom setting was familiar to study abroad students, so cultural differences were easy to grasp. On the other hand, the following journal entry is based on an event that happened to a student outside of his volunteer service experience (Tarabusi, 2012: 104).

Similarly, medicine and healthcare also evidence a larger power distance. In an individualist culture like America's, patients typically interact with doctors as equals, providing them with as much information as possible as well as their own ideas of what is ailing them. Italy is almost the exact opposite, however. Patients treat doctors distinctly as superiors, consultations are far shorter, and the doctor remains in complete control from beginning to end; it is his examination of your body, his assessment of your symptoms, and his decision for the best prescriptions for your health. I discovered this firsthand for myself and my initial surprise was only reinforced each successive visit. I suffered from bronchitis for more than three weeks and over that period saw three different doctors through the campus health service. Each time I had the same experience, cordial and polite enough but firm and direct nonetheless. [...] Reflecting on this, I realized how stark a difference there is between a system where all adults interact as equals and one where profession predicates power. At home, I was a valuable client. Transplanted in Italy, not only am I completely subordinate, but I am expected to be entirely satisfied with the situation.

This study shows that when students are provided with a tool to compare cultures, such as Hofstede's model, their study abroad experience enhances those soft skills that are well spent in relationships, work and social life (Borgioli & Manuelli, 2013).

4.3. "Relation to Authority: Power Distance in the Family and at School"

The third session of the treatment focused on the first dimension of cultures as per Hofstede's model: power distance (Hofstede et al., 2010). It consisted of four in-class activities. This is the timed lesson plan:

1. Homework revision and short explanation of **Power distance**: ca. 7 minutes
2. Group discussion: my journal entry on power distance – ca. 10 minutes
3. Discussion in plenum - ca. 8 minutes
4. Short explanation of the second dimension: Individualism vs Collectivism – ca. 5 minutes

The assigned readings (Appendix 7) for this session were excerpts about the first dimension of national cultures: Power Distance (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010:78-83). The written assignment was a cross-cultural journal entry on cross-cultural

incidents they experienced first-hand or observed. Students were provided with a worksheet (Figure 4.11).

The session begins with the review of the exercise on the assigned readings (ex. no.1 in Figure 4.11).

Figure 4.11: Worksheet for Session no. 3 of the treatment.

3 - La relazione con l'autorità: Distanza di potere in famiglia e a scuola

1) Leggi i paragrafi evidenziati (p. 78-9 e p.80-1) e poi metti i seguenti comportamenti nella colonna corrispondente

- a) I bambini imparano il rispetto per i genitori e i membri anziani della famiglia
- b) I bambini possono sperimentare autonomamente la realtà
- c) I figli adulti trattano i genitori come amici o pari
- d) I bambini ubbidiscono ai genitori
- e) Il rispetto per i genitori è per tutta la vita, anche quando i figli sono adulti
- f) I bambini sono incoraggiati ad essere indipendenti
- g) I bambini possono dire 'no' ai genitori
- h) Ci si aspetta che i figli adulti si prendano cura dei genitori anziani e/o malati
- i) Ci si aspetta che gli studenti in classe prendano iniziative
- j) Gli studenti hanno molto rispetto per gli insegnanti, anche fuori dalla scuola
- k) In classe c'è una rigida disciplina, l'insegnante ha il controllo
- l) Quando uno studente si comporta male, spesso i genitori lo difendono contro l'insegnante
- m) Gli studenti fanno spesso domande
- n) L'insegnante è un *guru*, da lui/lei dipende il successo dell'apprendimento. "la scuola la fanno i professori".

<i>Società a piccola distanza di potere</i>	<i>Società a grande distanza di potere</i>
.....
.....
...	

2) Nella tua esperienza in Italia fino ad oggi hai osservato o vissuto in prima persona situazioni che possono essere considerate manifestazioni della distanza di potere nella società italiana? Racconta.

In this way, the key principles and the main characteristics of the Power Distance dimension were briefly reviewed as well as the main characteristics of the model, with the support of some PowerPoint slides (Figure 4.12).

The second activity was a discussion in small groups on the intercultural incidents as per the cross-cultural journal entries the students wrote as written assignment. The main concepts and features of this dimension were then elicited through open discussion in plenum and references to the students' personal experience in Italy. Some 'weird' behaviours may be highlighted and explanations were found; in this process of comparing and contrasting students practised how to separate observation from interpretation.

Figure 4.12: PowerPoint slides about the Power Distance dimension.

<p style="text-align: center;">La distanza di potere</p> <p>Questa dimensione culturale misura il modo in cui le società gestiscono le disuguaglianze. Infatti anche nelle società più semplici, come piccoli gruppi di cacciatori-raccoglitori, alcuni membri hanno maggior potere di altri (per es. alcuni cacciatori-raccoglitori sono più grandi, più forti, più intelligenti degli altri).</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">La distanza di potere (PD)</p> <p>“il livello al quale i membri meno potenti di un’istituzione o di un’organizzazione accettano che il potere sia disugualmente distribuito” istituzione = gli elementi fondanti delle società come la famiglia, la scuola e la comunità; organizzazione = il luogo di lavoro. (Hofstede et al., 2010)</p>																	
Slide no.1	Slide no. 2																	
<p style="text-align: center;">Sono analizzate le ‘coppie’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genitore–figlio → INDIV nella <u>famiglia</u> • Insegnante – studente → INDIV nella <u>scuola</u> • Capo – collaboratore → INDIV nel <u>posto di lavoro</u> <p>Autorità – cittadino → INDIV nello <u>stato</u></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Distanza di potere e scuola</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top; width: 50%;"> <p><i>Piccola distanza di potere</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gli studenti trattano gli insegnanti alla pari - Gli insegnanti si aspettano che gli studenti prendano l’iniziativa - Gli insegnanti sono esperti che trasmettono sapere impersonale </td> <td style="vertical-align: top; width: 50%;"> <p><i>Grande distanza di potere</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gli studenti hanno molto rispetto per gli insegnanti - Gli studenti parlano solo se invitati a farlo - Gli insegnanti sono dei <i>guru</i>, la qualità dell’apprendimento dipende dalla bravura del prof. (“la scuola la fanno i professori”) </td> </tr> </table>	<p><i>Piccola distanza di potere</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gli studenti trattano gli insegnanti alla pari - Gli insegnanti si aspettano che gli studenti prendano l’iniziativa - Gli insegnanti sono esperti che trasmettono sapere impersonale 	<p><i>Grande distanza di potere</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gli studenti hanno molto rispetto per gli insegnanti - Gli studenti parlano solo se invitati a farlo - Gli insegnanti sono dei <i>guru</i>, la qualità dell’apprendimento dipende dalla bravura del prof. (“la scuola la fanno i professori”) 															
<p><i>Piccola distanza di potere</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gli studenti trattano gli insegnanti alla pari - Gli insegnanti si aspettano che gli studenti prendano l’iniziativa - Gli insegnanti sono esperti che trasmettono sapere impersonale 	<p><i>Grande distanza di potere</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gli studenti hanno molto rispetto per gli insegnanti - Gli studenti parlano solo se invitati a farlo - Gli insegnanti sono dei <i>guru</i>, la qualità dell’apprendimento dipende dalla bravura del prof. (“la scuola la fanno i professori”) 																	
Slide no. 3	Slide no. 4																	
<p style="text-align: center;">Distanza di potere e famiglia</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top; width: 50%;"> <p><i>Piccola distanza di potere</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I genitori trattano i figli alla pari - I comportamenti indipendenti dei figli sono incoraggiati - I genitori dovranno provvedere a se stessi quando saranno vecchi o infermi </td> <td style="vertical-align: top; width: 50%;"> <p><i>Grande distanza di potere</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I genitori insegnano ai figli a obbedire - Il rispetto verso genitori e parenti anziani è una virtù fondamentale, per tutta la vita - Ci si aspetta che i figli si prendano cura dei genitori anziani o infermi (nonni vivono con le famiglie dei figli) </td> </tr> </table>	<p><i>Piccola distanza di potere</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I genitori trattano i figli alla pari - I comportamenti indipendenti dei figli sono incoraggiati - I genitori dovranno provvedere a se stessi quando saranno vecchi o infermi 	<p><i>Grande distanza di potere</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I genitori insegnano ai figli a obbedire - Il rispetto verso genitori e parenti anziani è una virtù fondamentale, per tutta la vita - Ci si aspetta che i figli si prendano cura dei genitori anziani o infermi (nonni vivono con le famiglie dei figli) 	<p style="text-align: center;">Indice di distanza di potere (PDI) per 76 Paesi e Regioni</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>Rank</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>Paese o Regione</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>Indice</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1 (con la distanza più grande)</td> <td>Malesia</td> <td>104</td> </tr> <tr> <td>51</td> <td>Italia</td> <td>50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>65-67</td> <td>Germania</td> <td>35</td> </tr> <tr> <td>76 (con la distanza più piccola)</td> <td>Austria</td> <td>11</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>[Hofstede et al. 2010, p. 100-03]</p>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Paese o Regione</i>	<i>Indice</i>	1 (con la distanza più grande)	Malesia	104	51	Italia	50	65-67	Germania	35	76 (con la distanza più piccola)	Austria	11
<p><i>Piccola distanza di potere</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I genitori trattano i figli alla pari - I comportamenti indipendenti dei figli sono incoraggiati - I genitori dovranno provvedere a se stessi quando saranno vecchi o infermi 	<p><i>Grande distanza di potere</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I genitori insegnano ai figli a obbedire - Il rispetto verso genitori e parenti anziani è una virtù fondamentale, per tutta la vita - Ci si aspetta che i figli si prendano cura dei genitori anziani o infermi (nonni vivono con le famiglie dei figli) 																	
<i>Rank</i>	<i>Paese o Regione</i>	<i>Indice</i>																
1 (con la distanza più grande)	Malesia	104																
51	Italia	50																
65-67	Germania	35																
76 (con la distanza più piccola)	Austria	11																
Slide no. 5	Slide no. 6																	

The session ended with a short explanation of the second cultural dimension: Individualism vs. Collectivism, with the support of some PowerPoint slides (Figure 4.13). Depending on the timing, especially if the discussion in plenum was longer than

Figure 4.13: PowerPoint slides about the Individualism vs Collectivism dimension.

<p style="text-align: center;">Individualismo vs Collettivismo</p> <p>Queste due parole non sono usate con una connotazione politica, infatti non si riferiscono al potere esercitato dallo Stato sull'individuo, ma si riferiscono al potere del gruppo sull'individuo.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Individualismo vs Collettivismo</p> <p>Nel mondo la grande maggioranza delle persone vive in società in cui l'interesse del gruppo prevale su quello individuale -> società <i>collettiviste</i> (noi/ loro, famiglia allargata comprendente nonni, zii, domestici) Nel mondo una minoranza di persone vive in società in cui l'interesse individuale prevale su quello del gruppo -> società <i>individualiste</i> (io, famiglia nucleare)</p>																	
<p>Slide no.1</p>	<p>Slide no. 2</p>																	
<p style="text-align: center;">Individualismo vs Collettivismo</p> <p>L'individualismo riguarda società nelle quali i legami tra individui sono allentati: si suppone che ognuno abbia cura di sé e della sua famiglia più stretta; all'opposto, il collettivismo, riguarda società nelle quali le persone, dalla nascita in poi, sono integrate in un gruppo forte e coeso, che continua a proteggerle per tutta la vita, in cambio di una lealtà incondizionata.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Sono analizzate le 'coppie'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genitore–figlio → INDIV nella <u>famiglia</u> • Insegnante – studente → INDIV nella <u>scuola</u> • Capo – collaboratore → INDIV nel <u>posto di lavoro</u> • Autorità – cittadino → INDIV nello <u>stato</u> 																	
<p>Slide no. 3</p>	<p>Slide no. 4</p>																	
<p style="text-align: center;">Individual.-Collettiv. e famiglia</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Società <u>collettiviste</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Le persone nascono in famiglie 'allargate' che continuano a dare protezione in cambio di lealtà • I bambini imparano che le opinioni personali non esistono • I figli adulti vivono con i genitori </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Società <u>individualiste</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ognuno nasce per prendersi cura di sé e della sua famiglia 'nucleare' • I bambini sono incoraggiati ad esprimere opinioni personali • I figli adulti lasciano la casa di famiglia </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Società <u>collettiviste</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Le persone nascono in famiglie 'allargate' che continuano a dare protezione in cambio di lealtà • I bambini imparano che le opinioni personali non esistono • I figli adulti vivono con i genitori 	<p>Società <u>individualiste</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ognuno nasce per prendersi cura di sé e della sua famiglia 'nucleare' • I bambini sono incoraggiati ad esprimere opinioni personali • I figli adulti lasciano la casa di famiglia 	<p style="text-align: center;">Individual.-Collettiv. e scuola</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Società <u>collettiviste</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gli studenti prendo-no la parola in classe solo se autorizzati dal gruppo • Obiettivo dell'istruzione è imparare come 'fare' • I diplomi permettono di entrare a fare parte di gruppi con maggior status sociale </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Società <u>individualiste</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gli studenti prendono la parola in classe individualmente, per propria scelta • Obiettivo dell'istruzione è imparare a imparare • I diplomi aumentano il valore economico e/o l'autostima </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Società <u>collettiviste</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gli studenti prendo-no la parola in classe solo se autorizzati dal gruppo • Obiettivo dell'istruzione è imparare come 'fare' • I diplomi permettono di entrare a fare parte di gruppi con maggior status sociale 	<p>Società <u>individualiste</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gli studenti prendono la parola in classe individualmente, per propria scelta • Obiettivo dell'istruzione è imparare a imparare • I diplomi aumentano il valore economico e/o l'autostima 													
<p>Società <u>collettiviste</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Le persone nascono in famiglie 'allargate' che continuano a dare protezione in cambio di lealtà • I bambini imparano che le opinioni personali non esistono • I figli adulti vivono con i genitori 	<p>Società <u>individualiste</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ognuno nasce per prendersi cura di sé e della sua famiglia 'nucleare' • I bambini sono incoraggiati ad esprimere opinioni personali • I figli adulti lasciano la casa di famiglia 																	
<p>Società <u>collettiviste</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gli studenti prendo-no la parola in classe solo se autorizzati dal gruppo • Obiettivo dell'istruzione è imparare come 'fare' • I diplomi permettono di entrare a fare parte di gruppi con maggior status sociale 	<p>Società <u>individualiste</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gli studenti prendono la parola in classe individualmente, per propria scelta • Obiettivo dell'istruzione è imparare a imparare • I diplomi aumentano il valore economico e/o l'autostima 																	
<p>Slide no. 5</p>	<p>Slide no. 6</p>																	
<p style="text-align: center;">Individual.-Collettiv. Sul posto di lavoro</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Società <u>collettiviste</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selezione e promozioni tengono conto del gruppo di appartenenza dei lavoratori • La relazione datore di lavoro – lavoratore è fondamentalmente morale, come un legame familiare • Internet e email meno apprezzati e poco usati </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Società <u>individualiste</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selezione e promozioni si suppone siano basate solo su competenze e regole aziendali • La relazione datore di lavoro – lavoratore è un contratto regolato dal mercato del lavoro • Internet e email molto apprezzati e molto usati </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Società <u>collettiviste</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selezione e promozioni tengono conto del gruppo di appartenenza dei lavoratori • La relazione datore di lavoro – lavoratore è fondamentalmente morale, come un legame familiare • Internet e email meno apprezzati e poco usati 	<p>Società <u>individualiste</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selezione e promozioni si suppone siano basate solo su competenze e regole aziendali • La relazione datore di lavoro – lavoratore è un contratto regolato dal mercato del lavoro • Internet e email molto apprezzati e molto usati 	<p style="text-align: center;">Indice di individualismo (IDV) per 76 Paesi e Regioni</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Rank</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Paese o Regione</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Indice</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1 (più indiv)</td> <td>USA</td> <td>91</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9</td> <td>Italia</td> <td>76</td> </tr> <tr> <td>32</td> <td>Spagna</td> <td>51</td> </tr> <tr> <td>76 (più coll.)</td> <td>Guatemala</td> <td>6</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Hofstede et al. 2010, p. 100-03</p>	Rank	Paese o Regione	Indice	1 (più indiv)	USA	91	9	Italia	76	32	Spagna	51	76 (più coll.)	Guatemala	6
<p>Società <u>collettiviste</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selezione e promozioni tengono conto del gruppo di appartenenza dei lavoratori • La relazione datore di lavoro – lavoratore è fondamentalmente morale, come un legame familiare • Internet e email meno apprezzati e poco usati 	<p>Società <u>individualiste</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selezione e promozioni si suppone siano basate solo su competenze e regole aziendali • La relazione datore di lavoro – lavoratore è un contratto regolato dal mercato del lavoro • Internet e email molto apprezzati e molto usati 																	
Rank	Paese o Regione	Indice																
1 (più indiv)	USA	91																
9	Italia	76																
32	Spagna	51																
76 (più coll.)	Guatemala	6																
<p>Slide no. 7</p>	<p>Slide no. 8</p>																	

planned, the presentation of the cultural dimension could be shortened and the slides used in the following session.

4.4. “The Social Role of the Individual: Individualism vs Collectivism”

The fourth session focused on the second dimension of national cultures: Individualism vs Collectivism and reviewed the students’ experience of the first dimension, Power Distance. The session consisted of three in-class activities. This is the timed lesson plan:

1. Group discussion: my journal entry on power distance – ca. 10 minutes
2. Homework revision and short explanation of *Individualism vs Collectivism*: ca. 10 minutes
3. Discussion in plenum - ca. 10 minutes

The relevant worksheet (Figure 4.14) was posted on the Moodle site of the course at the end of the previous session, along with the assigned readings. The assigned readings (Appendix 8) for this session were excerpts about the second dimension of national cultures: Individualism vs Collectivism (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010:108-17).

Figure 4.14: Worksheet for Session no. 4 of the treatment.

4. Il ruolo sociale dell'individuo rispetto al ruolo sociale del gruppo: Individualismo vs Collettivismo.	
1) Leggi il paragrafo “Individualismo e Collettivismo nella famiglia” (pp. 108 – 113) e metti i valori della lista nella colonna corrispondente.	
Lista di valori:	
a) mantenere l’armonia	
b) dire la verità	
c) esprimere l’opinione del gruppo	
d) esprimere l’opinione individuale	
e) essere leali verso il gruppo	
f) diventare presto autosufficienti, anche finanziariamente	
g) condividere le risorse, anche finanziarie	
h) celebrare rituali insieme	
i) provare senso di vergogna	
j) provare senso di colpa	
<i>Culture collettiviste</i>	<i>Culture individualiste</i>
.....	
2) Leggi il paragrafo “Individualismo e Collettivismo nella famiglia” (pp. 108 – 113) e metti i comportamenti della lista nella colonna corrispondente.	
Lista di comportamenti:	

- a) Frequentare spesso bar e ristoranti
- b) Ritrovarsi spesso a casa propria
- c) Quando in gruppo è accettabile stare in silenzio
- d) Quando in gruppo si sente il bisogno di parlare
- e) Matrimonio come contratto tra famiglie
- f) Matrimonio come contratto tra individui

Culture collettiviste

Culture individualiste

3) Leggi il paragrafo "Individualismo e Collettivismo nella scuola" (pp. 116-7) e abbina ogni paragrafo alla corrispondente sintesi del significato, come nell'esempio.

<i>Sintesi del significato del paragrafo</i>	<i>n. del paragrafo</i>
a) le differenze relative all'obiettivo dell'istruzione nelle culture individualiste e collettiviste	6
b) la scuola rafforza e sviluppa la relazione tra l'individuo e il gruppo, che è stata fissata nella coscienza durante i primi anni di vita in famiglia	
c) l'importanza dell'armonia nella classe collettivista	
d) il comportamento in classe di studenti appartenenti a culture collettiviste: la discussione	
e) il comportamento in classe di studenti appartenenti a culture collettiviste: I diversi background etnici	
f) l'importanza dell'imparzialità nella classe individualista	
g) il significato del diploma nelle culture individualiste e collettiviste	

4) Confronta la cultura italiana (in base alla tua esperienza in Italia fino ad oggi) con una cultura che conosci bene: hai notato delle differenze nei comportamenti che possono essere considerati elementi della dimensione individualismo/ collettivismo? Racconta.

successful way to overcome possible difficulties they had experienced in their everyday life and to realize that feeling awkward was a common experience among intercultural learners.

The cross-cultural journal proved to be an efficient tool that allowed for reflection and supported the transition from theory to practice, i.e. it helped students interpret the events or situations observed according to the cultural dimensions. In the next session their observations and reflections were discussed in plenum and debriefed. A cross-

cultural journal entry is given as an example (Figure 4.15)⁵, it is important to note that the journal entries were not included in the data collection agreed with the research site, the example below was given informally to the researcher by a course instructor.

Figure 4.15. Cross-cultural journal entry.

Student 5 (German)	
Infatti ci sono stati tanti situazioni quali mi sembravano strani... C'è un professore e in sua lezione e vietato da bere... Quando uno studente vuole fare una domanda, lui deve alzarsi.	Secondo me il rapporto tra i professori e studente è molto differente in comparazione di Germania. Laddove (almeno nella facolta dello sport...) la gerarchia e meno alta... Ovviamente anche noi dobbiamo parlare con il professore con un certo rispetto ma qua in Italia mi sento come un studente nella scuola qualche volte.

This entry shows how the model of cultural dimensions, in this case the Power Distance dimension, can be used to explain a behaviour that is perceived as 'strange' or 'different' by people of different cultures, i.e. by those who belong to a culture far from the Italian one in this respect. In this case: the German student (Germany PDI = 35) belongs to a culture with a smaller power distance than Italy (PDI = 50) and therefore it is very likely they do not understand the reasons for such behaviour in Italian university classrooms. The discussion in plenum allowed for cultural differences to emerge: in fact, this behaviour was not perceived as strange by students belonging to cultures with PDI similar to, or larger than, the Italian one, e.g. Spain (PDI = 57). It also allowed for reflection on how unconscious it is to interpret behaviours according to one's own cultural frame of reference, even when they occur in other cultures: "Here in Italy I feel like a student in the school sometimes" (Student 5). This sentence can be seen as an evidence that the process of separation fact-interpretation had begun, but that it had to be improved.

The second in-class activity was the review of the reading comprehension exercises (ex. 1- 3 in Figure 4.14), so that the main features of the Individualism vs Collectivism cultural dimension were refreshed and further analysed, as well as the relevant vocabulary.

⁵ This is the original entry, language mistakes included., As in all other original texts submitted by research participants throughout the thesis, language mistakes remain unedited.

The third and last in-class activity of the fourth session was a discussion in plenum on cultural differences that can be seen as evidences of the Individualism – Collectivism dimension of national cultures. This activity allows for potential misunderstandings about the cultural dimension to be explained and helps students improve their ability to separate observation from interpretation, which is at the core of ICC as previously stated.

4.5. Round Table: Comparing Cultures, Observing Cultures

The last session consisted of a round table on what behaviours can be considered as manifestations of Power Distance or Individualism.

The written assignment for this session was a cross-cultural journal entry about evidence and examples of Individualism vs Collectivism in Italian culture- or other cultures that the students experienced first-hand or observed. There were no assigned readings for this session. This session consisted of a round table discussion on the behaviours that may be considered manifestations of Power-Distance or of Individualism vs. Collectivism.

As warm-up a review of the main features of the model of dimensions of national cultures and of the two dimensions analysed, Power-Distance and Individualism vs Collectivism, was briefly organised through the support of an interactive PowerPoint (Figure 4.16).

At this point in the treatment the intercultural learners had acquired some theoretical knowledge on how cultures can be compared and also had learnt an appropriate vocabulary to express their views on this theme. They had also gained a wealth of experience, since they had been living in Italy for about ten weeks or more. Exchanging ideas and experiences with their peers has been demonstrated to be a very good way to increase cultural awareness (Baiutti & Paolone, 2018) with positive impact on motivation towards intercultural encounters (Méndez García, 2017) like those experienced daily by the research participants in this project during their study abroad. These activities gave them a chance to reflect on them, with increased awareness of balancing interpretation, judgement and factual description of an incident. Furthermore, through discussion, they realised that the intercultural incidents they observed or

Figure 4.16: PowerPoint slides of the fifth session.

<p style="text-align: center;">Le dimensioni culturali</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutte le società, moderne o conservatrici, affrontano gli stessi problemi fondamentali; solo le soluzioni sono diverse (antropologi culturali, XX secolo). • Quali sono i problemi fondamentali e universali comuni a tutte le società? <p>Slide no. 1</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Il modello delle dimensioni culturali</p> <p>Le sei categorie di problemi fondamentali rappresentano le <i>dimensioni delle culture</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">UNA DIMENSIONE E' UN ASPETTO DELLA CULTURA CHE PUO' ESSERE MISURATO CONFRONTANDOLO CON ALTRE CULTURE NAZIONALI</p> <p>Slide no. 2</p>				
<p>Tab. 3.3 - Principali differenze tra società a bassa e alta Distanza di potere: norme generali, famiglia, scuola, sanità</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">Bassa Distanza di potere</th> <th style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">Alta Distanza di potere</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Le disuguaglianze dovrebbero essere minimizzate • Le relazioni sociali dovrebbero essere gestite con attenzione • Le persone meno potenti e quelle più potenti dovrebbero essere interdipendenti • Le persone con minor potere sono a loro agio nell'interdipendenza • I genitori trattano i figli alla pari • I figli trattano i genitori e i parenti più anziani alla pari • I figli non sono fonte di sicurezza per i genitori quando invecchiano • Gli studenti trattano i docenti alla pari • Gli insegnanti si aspettano che gli studenti prendano l'iniziativa in classe • Gli insegnanti sono esperti che trasferiscono un sapere impersonale • Le politiche legate all'istruzione si focalizzano sulla scuola secondaria • La qualità dell'apprendimento dipende dalla comunicazione a due vie e dall'ecceellenza degli studenti • Le persone meno istruite detengono valori più autoritari di quelle più istruite • I pazienti trattano i medici alla pari, fornendo attivamente molte informazioni </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Le disuguaglianze sono attese e desiderate • Lo status dovrebbe essere controllato con fauto disciplina • Le persone con meno potere dovrebbero essere dipendenti • Le persone con meno potere sono emotivamente polarizzate tra dipendenza e contro dipendenza • I genitori insegnano ai figli a obbedire • Il rispetto verso genitori e parenti anziani è una virtù fondamentale e duratura per la vita • I figli sono una fonte di sicurezza per i genitori quando invecchiano • Gli studenti rispettano gli insegnanti, anche al di fuori della scuola • Gli insegnanti dovrebbero prendere tutte le iniziative in aula • Gli insegnanti sono dei guru che trasmettono il sapere personale • Le politiche legate all'istruzione si concentrano sulla università • La qualità dell'apprendimento dipende dall'ecceellenza dell'insegnante • Le persone dimostrano valori autoritari, indipendentemente dal grado d'istruzione • I pazienti trattano i medici come superiori, le consultazioni sono più brevi e controllate dai dottori </td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Slide no. 3</p>	Bassa Distanza di potere	Alta Distanza di potere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Le disuguaglianze dovrebbero essere minimizzate • Le relazioni sociali dovrebbero essere gestite con attenzione • Le persone meno potenti e quelle più potenti dovrebbero essere interdipendenti • Le persone con minor potere sono a loro agio nell'interdipendenza • I genitori trattano i figli alla pari • I figli trattano i genitori e i parenti più anziani alla pari • I figli non sono fonte di sicurezza per i genitori quando invecchiano • Gli studenti trattano i docenti alla pari • Gli insegnanti si aspettano che gli studenti prendano l'iniziativa in classe • Gli insegnanti sono esperti che trasferiscono un sapere impersonale • Le politiche legate all'istruzione si focalizzano sulla scuola secondaria • La qualità dell'apprendimento dipende dalla comunicazione a due vie e dall'ecceellenza degli studenti • Le persone meno istruite detengono valori più autoritari di quelle più istruite • I pazienti trattano i medici alla pari, fornendo attivamente molte informazioni 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Le disuguaglianze sono attese e desiderate • Lo status dovrebbe essere controllato con fauto disciplina • Le persone con meno potere dovrebbero essere dipendenti • Le persone con meno potere sono emotivamente polarizzate tra dipendenza e contro dipendenza • I genitori insegnano ai figli a obbedire • Il rispetto verso genitori e parenti anziani è una virtù fondamentale e duratura per la vita • I figli sono una fonte di sicurezza per i genitori quando invecchiano • Gli studenti rispettano gli insegnanti, anche al di fuori della scuola • Gli insegnanti dovrebbero prendere tutte le iniziative in aula • Gli insegnanti sono dei guru che trasmettono il sapere personale • Le politiche legate all'istruzione si concentrano sulla università • La qualità dell'apprendimento dipende dall'ecceellenza dell'insegnante • Le persone dimostrano valori autoritari, indipendentemente dal grado d'istruzione • I pazienti trattano i medici come superiori, le consultazioni sono più brevi e controllate dai dottori 	<p style="text-align: center;">La distanza di potere</p> <p>Può essere definita come il livello al quale i membri meno potenti di un'istituzione o di un'organizzazione accettano che il potere sia disugualmente distribuito. Per 'istituzione' si intendono gli elementi fondanti delle società come la famiglia, la scuola e la comunità; per organizzazione il luogo di lavoro. (Hofstede et al., 2010)</p> <p>Slide no. 4</p>
Bassa Distanza di potere	Alta Distanza di potere				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Le disuguaglianze dovrebbero essere minimizzate • Le relazioni sociali dovrebbero essere gestite con attenzione • Le persone meno potenti e quelle più potenti dovrebbero essere interdipendenti • Le persone con minor potere sono a loro agio nell'interdipendenza • I genitori trattano i figli alla pari • I figli trattano i genitori e i parenti più anziani alla pari • I figli non sono fonte di sicurezza per i genitori quando invecchiano • Gli studenti trattano i docenti alla pari • Gli insegnanti si aspettano che gli studenti prendano l'iniziativa in classe • Gli insegnanti sono esperti che trasferiscono un sapere impersonale • Le politiche legate all'istruzione si focalizzano sulla scuola secondaria • La qualità dell'apprendimento dipende dalla comunicazione a due vie e dall'ecceellenza degli studenti • Le persone meno istruite detengono valori più autoritari di quelle più istruite • I pazienti trattano i medici alla pari, fornendo attivamente molte informazioni 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Le disuguaglianze sono attese e desiderate • Lo status dovrebbe essere controllato con fauto disciplina • Le persone con meno potere dovrebbero essere dipendenti • Le persone con meno potere sono emotivamente polarizzate tra dipendenza e contro dipendenza • I genitori insegnano ai figli a obbedire • Il rispetto verso genitori e parenti anziani è una virtù fondamentale e duratura per la vita • I figli sono una fonte di sicurezza per i genitori quando invecchiano • Gli studenti rispettano gli insegnanti, anche al di fuori della scuola • Gli insegnanti dovrebbero prendere tutte le iniziative in aula • Gli insegnanti sono dei guru che trasmettono il sapere personale • Le politiche legate all'istruzione si concentrano sulla università • La qualità dell'apprendimento dipende dall'ecceellenza dell'insegnante • Le persone dimostrano valori autoritari, indipendentemente dal grado d'istruzione • I pazienti trattano i medici come superiori, le consultazioni sono più brevi e controllate dai dottori 				
<p style="text-align: center;">Individualismo vs Collettivismo</p> <p>L'individualismo appartiene alle società nelle quali i legami tra individui sono allentati: si suppone che ognuno abbia cura di sé e della sua famiglia più stretta; all'opposto, il collettivismo, riguarda società nelle quali le persone, dalla nascita in poi, sono integrate in un gruppo forte e coeso, che continua a proteggerle per tutta la vita, in cambio di una lealtà incondizionata.</p> <p>Slide no. 5</p>					

experienced first-hand in everyday life were common and shared by their peers.

The class instructors informally told this researcher that they found the activities very interesting and stimulating and sometimes they continued to use them and expanded them in their classes; in some cases, the cross-cultural journal was integrated in the written assignments of the course. An intercultural component was added to the learning activities related to the movie *Caro Diario* (Dear Diary, 2008), where the parent-children relationship is depicted: students were asked to analyse it using the dimensions of national cultures.

The round tables discussions of both phases Alpha and Beta were lively, and participants were very vocal: most of them succeeded in separating observation from interpretation. This suggests that the National Culture Dimensions model is an effective tool to observe and compare cultures. Since the recordings of the round tables were made only with the technology available to the researcher in that setting (the microphone integrated into the laptop), they unfortunately resulted unusable due to the poor quality of the audio. Whilst the main focus of this research study is quantitative in nature, these additional data would have generated further thick description of the impact of the treatment.

Chapter 5 will focus on data analysis. The pre- and post- tests will be statistically analysed in order to verify if the sample is unique and homogenous and to assess the intercultural communicative competence at the beginning and at the end of the experimentation.

Chapter 5: Data Analysis

“Torture numbers, and they will confess to anything.” (Georg Easterbrook in Huff D., 1993)

This chapter proceeds to the analyses of the data collected with the Intercultural Competence Assessment questionnaire (INCA Project, 2004), appropriately modified in the section on biographical information, and reduced in length (the video-based activity and role-play in the part related to Intercultural Encounters were eliminated).

Specifically, this chapter will examine whether the experimental group had been encouraged to develop a greater level of ICC while carrying out of targeted didactic activities, as compared to the control group, which did not carry out any specific ICC-focused didactic activities.

The questionnaire consists of three parts:

1. Biographical information, 18 items (i1-i17), most closed-response, 5 open-ended. This part is present only in the pre-test;
2. Intercultural Profile, 21 items (i18-i38) with closed answer on Likert scale 1-3, this part is present in the pre- and post- test;
3. Intercultural Encounters, open answers to 4 intercultural scenarios: in the pre- test it consists of 5 items (i39-i43), in the post-test it consists of 10 items (i44-i53).

The design of the research includes the carrying out of the pre-treatment questionnaire by the experimental and control groups, the carrying out of the specific learning activities (see Chapter 4) aimed at developing the ICC by the experimental group, and the carrying out of the post-treatment questionnaire by the experimental and control groups. The complete data, i.e. respondents who answered both questionnaires, and on which the analysis of the data is therefore concentrated, consists of a sample of 58 respondents (Table 5.1), compared to the administration of the pre- test to 96 respondents in two chronologically distinct phases (Table 5.2).

	<i>Alpha phase</i>	<i>Beta phase</i>	<i>Tot.</i>
Control Group	9	20	29
Experimental Group	13	16	29
Tot. <i>n</i>	22	36	58

Table 5.1. The complete data

	<i>Participants in the pre-test</i>			<i>Participants also in the post-test</i>		
	<i>Exp.</i>	<i>Contr</i>	<i>TOT.</i>	<i>Exp.</i>	<i>Contr</i>	<i>TOT.</i>
Alpha phase	20	15	35	13	9	22
Beta phase	32	29	61	16	20	36
TOT.	52	44	96	29	29	58

Table 5.2. The research sample

It is necessary to recall that the data collection was carried out through two chronologically distinct phases, the Alpha phase in the second semester of the 2015-16 academic year, and the Beta phase in the first semester of the 2016-17 academic year. The analysis of the data must initially verify the homogeneity of the two phases in such a way as to be able to retain the collected data belonging to a single, or unique, sample. Given the structure of the test, the uniqueness of the sample is verified through the analysis of the Biographical Information (i1-i17), comparing the responses of the Alpha phase with those of the Beta phase. This analysis constitutes section 5.1.

Once the uniqueness of the sample has been verified, the data are analysed in order to verify the homogeneity and comparability of the sample, i.e. to verify if the control and experimental groups have homogeneous characteristics that allow the comparison of the results. Given the structure of the test, the homogeneity of the sample is initially verified through the analysis of the biographical information (i1-i17), comparing the responses of the experimental group with those of the control group. This analysis constitutes section 5.2.

Subsequently, the Intercultural Profile data of the pre- test are analysed to determine the homogeneity of the experimental group with the control group. In this case it is expected that there are no significant differences between the responses of the two groups with respect to the items (i18-i38). This analysis constitutes section 5.3.

Therefore, the analysis of the data presented in sections 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 provides the basis for the starting situation of the experimentation. The analysis of the data presented in the following sections makes it possible to determine the effect of the experimentation, i.e. the carrying out of specific didactic activities on the development of the ICC by the experimental group.

The analysis of the data then moves to the core of this research project through the analysis of the data related to the Intercultural Encounters (i39-i53): in section 5.5 the ICC is analysed at the beginning and end of the experimentation, and the differences in output between the control and experimental groups are compared in order to determine the impact of the treatment on the development of the ICC.

Finally, section 5.6 compares the intercultural profile (i18-i38) of the experimental and control groups post- test. In this case significant differences are expected between the responses of the two groups relative to the items (i18-i38). To complete the analysis of the Intercultural Profile data, we also proceed to compare the responses between pre- and post- test tests of the control and experimental groups of the i18-i38 items. This analysis constitutes section 5.7.

5.1. The Uniqueness of the Sample

Since the data collection was carried out in two distinct phases, it became necessary first of all to verify that the two phases could be united: hence the null hypothesis and the alternative hypothesis for the first part of data analysis are as follows:

Null Hypothesis, \mathcal{H}_0 : the Alpha phase and the Beta phase have similar distributions for the answers to the Intercultural Competence Assessment questionnaire.

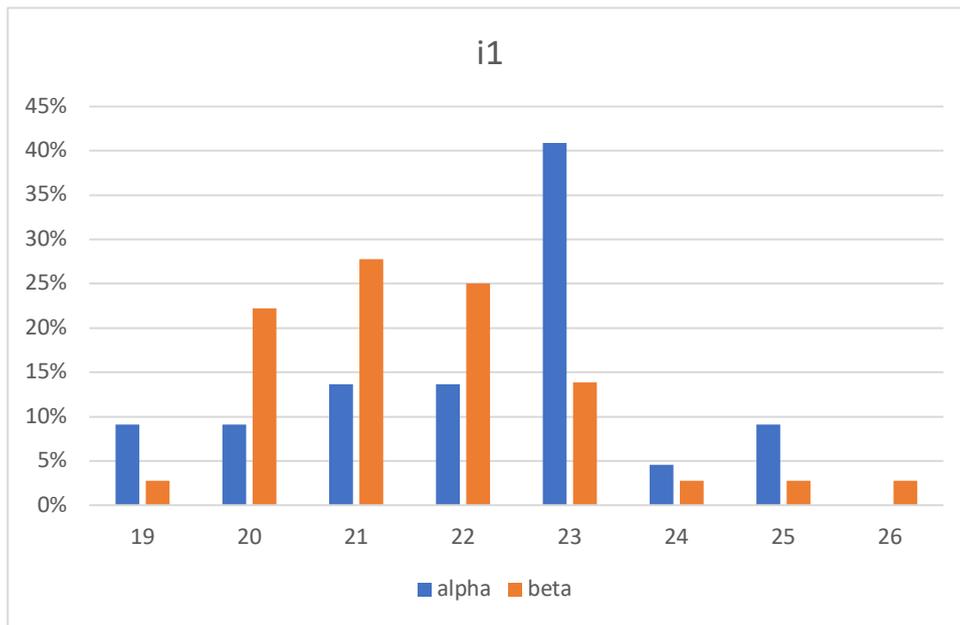
Alternate Hypothesis, \mathcal{H}_1 : the Alpha phase and the Beta phase do not have similar distributions for the answers to Intercultural Competence Assessment questionnaire.]

To verify the uniqueness of the sample, i.e. if the data collected in two chronologically distinct phases are homogenous and comparable, given the structure of the test, we proceed to the analysis of the biographical information (i1-i17), comparing the responses of the Alpha phase with those of the Beta phase. Data relating to items 1-17 are shown in Appendix A. The distributions of the context variables of the 22 respondents of the Alpha phase are compared with the distributions of the 36 respondents of the Beta phase. Percentage distributions are compared, and shown in the graphs, because Alpha and Beta have different sizes (Alpha phase $n = 22$, Beta phase $n = 36$).

i1 – Age

Age is a continuous variable. For this type of items, the bar graph and the table with averages and p -values are shown. The bar graph (Figure 1) shows the age distribution of the Alpha and Beta groups, the age of the respondents is indicated on the x-axis and the percentage of respondents on the axis of ordinates. It can be seen that in both groups the greatest distribution appears to be in the age of 21-23 years, although with small variations between the two groups in the number of marginal ages.

Figure 5.1. Distribution in per cent by age of Alpha and Beta



The mean age (Table 5.3) is very similar in the two groups: 22.18182 years for the Alpha group and 21.58333 for the Beta group. The T-test is performed to verify that the means of the two distributions are coincident.

Statistical tests performed on this variable have shown that the age distribution is similar in the two phases (p -value = .1782). The p -value, or probability coefficient, indicates the weight of the evidence against H_0 , it goes from 0 to +1, the closer it is to 0, the stronger the evidence against H_0 is, and thus it will be rejected. In our case:

H_0 = the age distribution is similar in Alpha and Beta phases.

H_a = the age distribution is not similar in Alpha and Beta phases.

Most studies require that very small p -values be observed, $p < 0.05$, to reject H_0 . (Agresti & Finlay 2009). 1782 is greater than .05 so the null hypothesis cannot be

rejected, i.e. the calculation of the p -value shows that the age distribution is similar in Alpha and Beta phases.

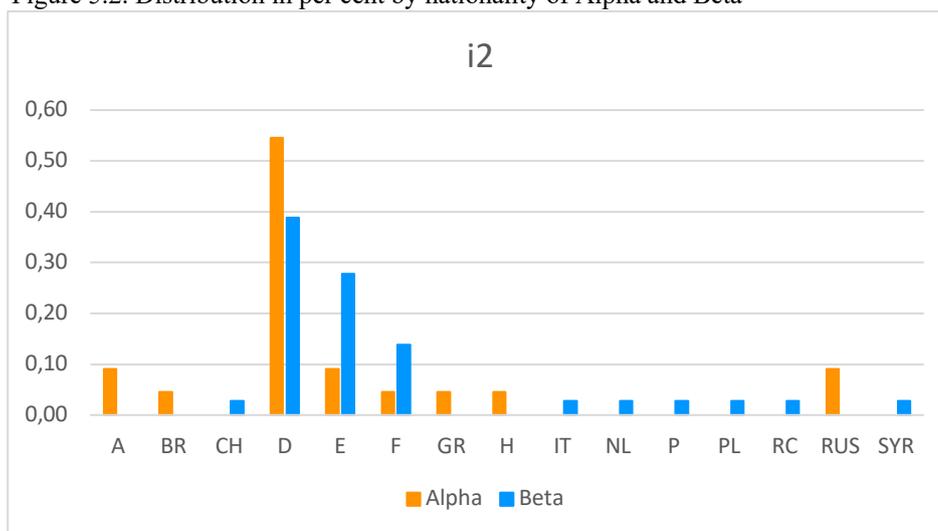
	Alpha	Beta
mean	22.18182	21.58333
T	1.3702	
p -value	.1782	

Table 5.3: Mean and p -value for age distribution

i2 – Nationality

This is a disconnected qualitative variable. Given the modalities of this variable it is possible to state only if these are the same or different (Borra & Di Ciaccio, 2014). These variables are represented graphically through histograms of the percentage frequencies in order to compare the two populations with different number of respondents (Figure 5.2). On the x-axis the nationalities are shown, on the axis of ordinates the percentages of respondents (0.60 = 60%, etc.) The samples are very heterogeneous within them, but similar to each other: in the Alpha phase 8 different nationalities are represented and 10 in the Beta phase. In both phases the prevalence of German and Spanish students is highlighted; the other nationalities are under 10%. It is interesting to note in both phases the lack of English-speaking students in these Intermediate level courses (B1 and B2).

Figure 5.2. Distribution in per cent by nationality of Alpha and Beta⁶

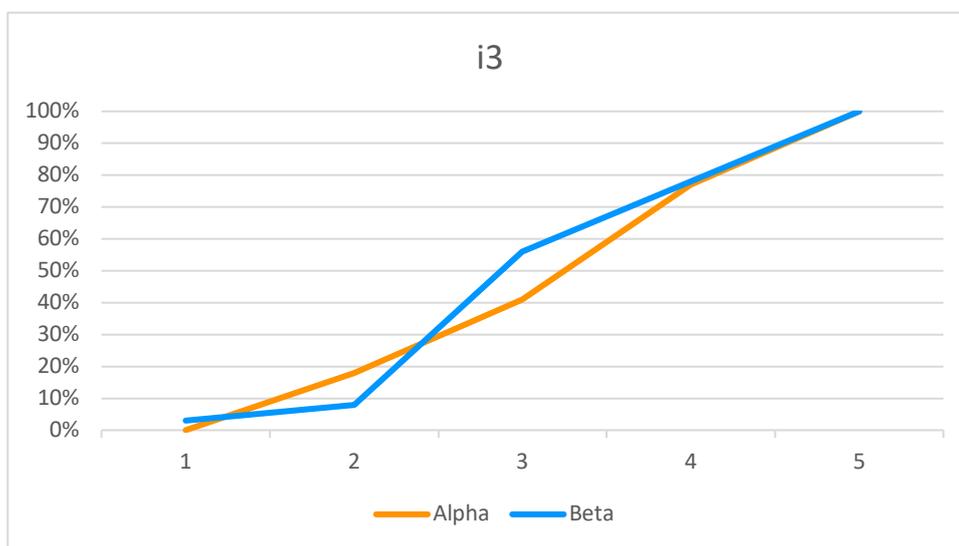


⁶ A = Austria; BR = Brazil; CH = Switzerland; D = Germany; E = Spain; F = France; GR = Greece; H = Hungary; IT = Italy; NL = Netherlands; P = Portugal; PL = Poland; RC = China; RUS = Russia; SYR = Syria

i3 – Academic standing

Respondents were asked to indicate their academic standing (first year - freshmen, second year - sophomore, third year - junior, fourth year – senior, or other). This item was added to the original INCA questionnaire, to adapt it to the characteristics of the research sample. It is an ordinal quantitative variable. These variables are analysed by the distribution of the cumulative percentage frequencies, which do not depend on the sample size (Figure 5.3). The graph visually represents the distributions and compares them, so you can easily identify any divergences. On the x- axis the academic standing (1 = freshmen, 2 = sophomore, 3 = junior, 4 = senior, 5 = other) and on the ordinate axis the percentage of respondents is reported. From the analysis of the percentage distributions we note that quota of respondents in the two phases do not show significant differences, in fact the two distributions have a similar trend, with a concentration of respondents in the first three years of the course (60% of the Beta group and 40% of the Alpha group).

Figure 5.3. Academic Standing of Alpha and Beta

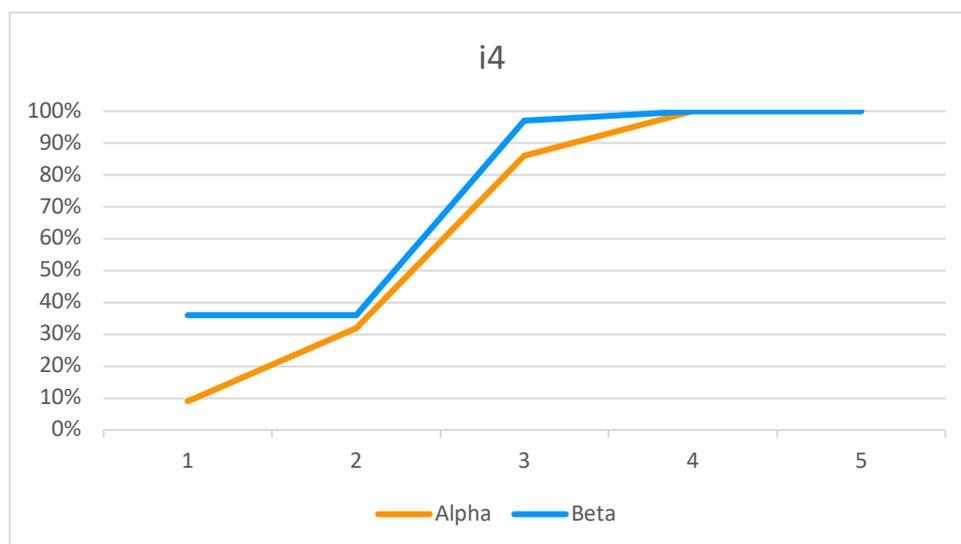


i4 – Italian language course currently enrolled in

Respondents were asked to indicate which Italian language course they were currently enrolled in (B1.1, B1.2, B2.1, B2.2, C1, other). This item was added to the original

INCA questionnaire, to adapt it to the characteristics of the research sample. The classification in levels, and therefore the definition of the options of the i4, follows the organization of the site hosting the data collection. It should be recalled that only intermediate responders (B1 and B2 according to the classification used by the host centre) could participate in the search, therefore the last two options (C1 and other) result with 0 respondents. This is an ordinal quantitative variable, and such variables are analysed by the distribution of the cumulative percentage frequencies, which do not depend on the sample size (Figure 5.4). The graph visually represents the distributions and compares them, so that any divergences can be easily identified. The course level (1 = B1.1, 2 = B1.2, 3 = B2.1, 4 = B2.2, 5 = C1) is shown on the x-axis and the percentage of respondents on the y-axis; it should be noted that, to make the chart more understandable, option 6 - *other* - is not shown). From the analysis of the percentage distributions we note that the quota of respondents in the two phases do not show significant differences, about 40% of both phases are enrolled in courses B1.1 or B1.2 and over 80% of both phases is enrolled in courses B1.1 or B1.2 or B2.1.

Figure 5.4. Italian language course currently enrolled in of Alpha and Beta



i5 – How long have you been here in Florence?

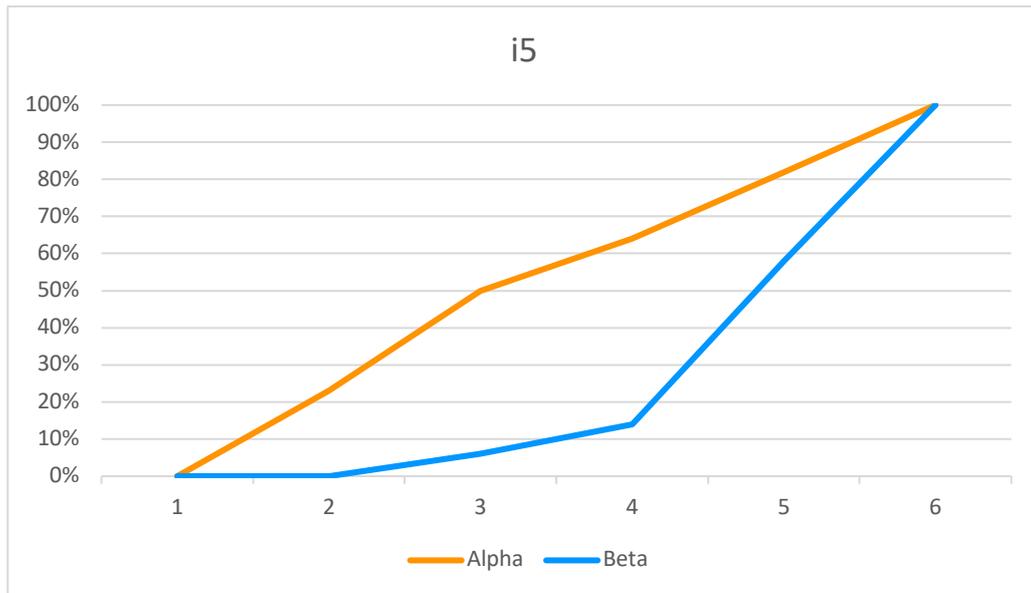
The questionnaire investigates how much time has passed between the arrival at the host site and the beginning of the Italian language course (Figure 5.4). This item was added to the original INCA questionnaire, to adapt it to the characteristics of the research

sample. It should be noted here that the organization of the host university publishes, for each semester, only the first useful date in which the courses can begin, the detailed calendar is then published by each individual School. As a result, the arrival of students with international mobility grants follows the different detailed calendars and it is therefore impossible to have all the students start an Italian language course right after their arrival at the host site. According to the site hosting the data collection for this research, this would be the ideal situation, the Italian language course being at the core of the study abroad experience. Italian language courses, to which students from all schools can enrol, start after the courses have started in all the Schools. As a consequence, arrivals at the host university cannot be concentrated in a short period of time, as in other countries, and there is also a difference between the first (Beta phase) and the second academic semester (Alpha phase).

This is a closed-ended item with 6 options available (less than a week, 1 week, 2 weeks, 3 weeks, 1 month, more than 1 month), options have been defined by the host office based on information they have. It is an ordinal quantitative variable. These variables are analysed by the distribution of the cumulative percentage frequencies, which do not depend on the sample size (Figure 5.5). The graph visually represents the distributions and compares them, so you can easily identify any divergences. The period of time spent on site before the beginning of the language course (1 = less than a week, 2 = 1 week, 3 = 2 weeks, 4 = 3 weeks, 5 = 1 month, 6 = more than 1 month) is shown on the x-axis and on the y-axis the percentage of respondents. The analysis of percentage distributions shows the differences between the Alpha and Beta phases: about 50% of the Alpha phase spent on site up to 2 weeks compared to 6% of the Beta phase. This graph shows that in the Alpha phase (second academic semester) the start of Italian language courses is closer to student arrivals, which is considered the desirable situation. On the other hand, in the Beta phase (first academic semester), the arrivals are distributed over a longer period of time, and therefore students spend more time between their arrival on site and the start of Italian language courses. Even if there is no uniformity between the Alpha phase and the Beta phase relative to the time spent on site before the test, considering that many studies have shown that staying in a country of different culture per se does not necessarily lead to an increase of the ICC (Deardorff 2006; Pedersen 2010), this lack of uniformity is appraised as not relevant for the present research, and therefore the sample can be considered unique. It is however important to

note this difference, in order to manage it with appropriate teaching strategies. For example, with the students of the Beta phase, since the beginning of the courses, activities can be carried out that refer to their experiences in Italian culture, while activities aimed at orienting them in the city would be of little use. The opposite is true for the Alpha phase courses.

Figure 5.5. Length of stay in Florence before the test pre- of Alpha and Beta

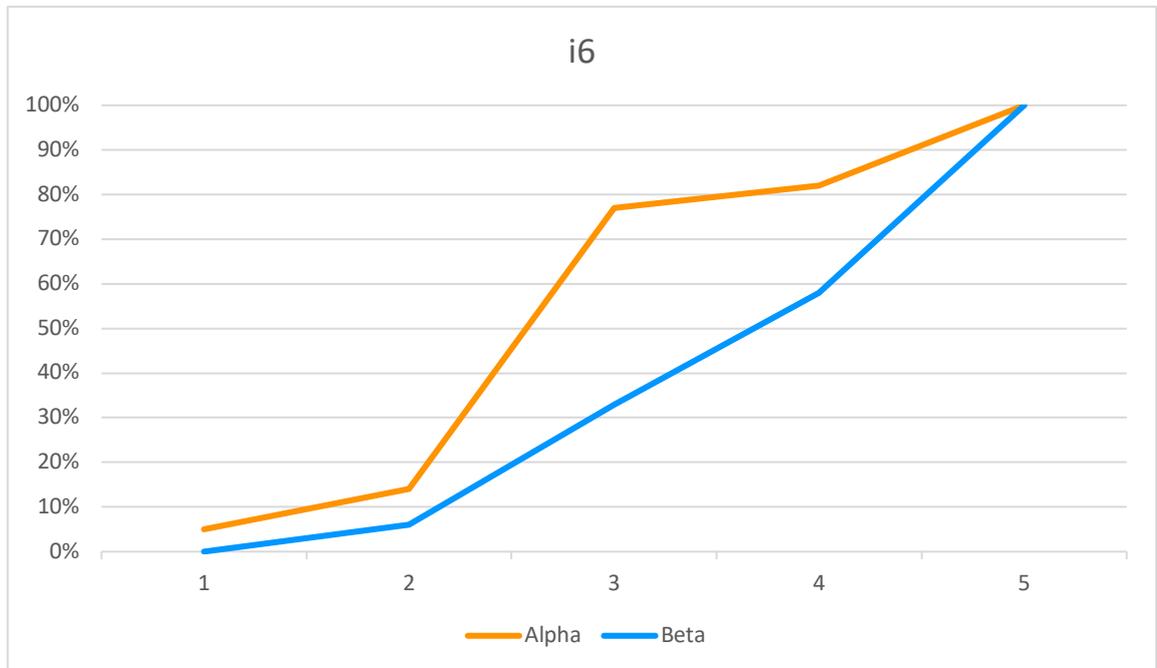


i6 – How long will you be studying at the University of Florence overall?

Respondents were asked to indicate how long they would be studying at the University of Florence overall, i.e. the length of their scholarship. This item was added to the original INCA questionnaire, to adapt it to the characteristics of the research sample. This is a closed-response item with 5 options available (3 months, 4 months, 5 months, 6 months, more than 6 months), the options have been defined by the host site based on the characteristics of the Erasmus scholarships, e.g. 3 months is the minimum length. It is an ordinal quantitative variable. These variables are analysed by the distribution of the cumulative percentage frequencies, which do not depend on the sample size (Figure 5.6). The graph visually represents the distributions and compares them, so you can easily identify any divergences. On the x-axis there is the period of time that respondents will spend on site overall (1 = 3 months, 2 = 4 months, 3 = 5 months, 4 = 6 months, 5 = more than 6 months) and on the y-axis the percentage of respondents. The

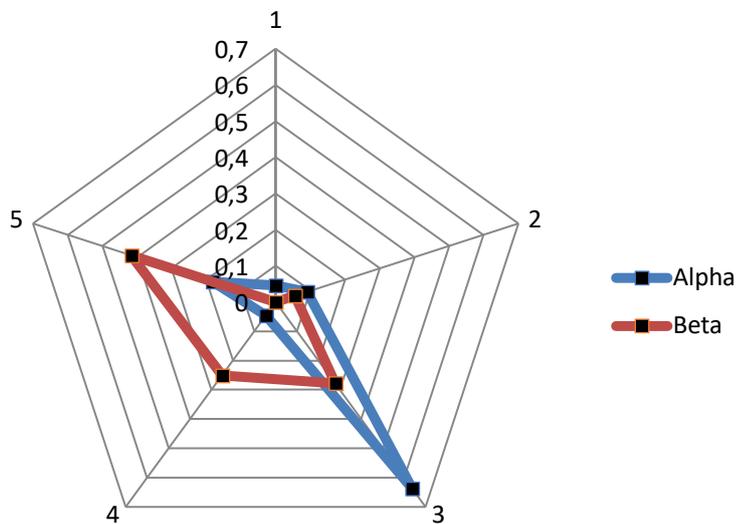
graph shows the differences between the Alpha phase and the Beta phase because the two distributions do not overlap. In the Alpha phase about 80% of respondents expect to study at the host university 3, 4 or 5 months, compared to about 30% of the Beta phase.

Figure 5.6. Forecast of length of stay the host university of Alpha and Beta



This lack of homogeneity between the Alpha and Beta phases can also be visualized with the representation of data in a radar graph (Figure 5.7): the pentagon vertices represent the period of time that respondents expect to study on site overall (1 = 3 months, 2 = 4 months, 3 = 5 months, 4 = 6 months, 5 = more than 6 months), the number of respondents is shown as a percentage of each spoke. This chart allows you to see the percentages of response to each option and at the same time to compare the two groups. The areas of distributions do not overlap and therefore highlight differences between the two groups. The most represented study forecast in the Alpha phase is option 3 (5 months) with more than 60%, in the Beta phase the most represented study forecasts are option 5 (more than 6 months) with about 40% and option 4 (6 months) with 25%. So in the Beta phase 65% of respondents expect to study on site 6 months or more. In conclusion, the data show that the students of the Beta phase (first academic semester) will be studying longer at the host university than those of the Alpha phase.

Figure 5.7. Distribution by forecast of the length of stay of Alpha and Beta



This variable is strongly influenced by the organization of Erasmus mobility grants. The difference between the two phases can be attributed to the fact that those who have a scholarship of 6 months or more attend two academic semesters and therefore must arrive on site in the first semester (Beta phase), those who arrive on site in the second semester have a shorter scholarship and expect to spend 3-5 months only on site.

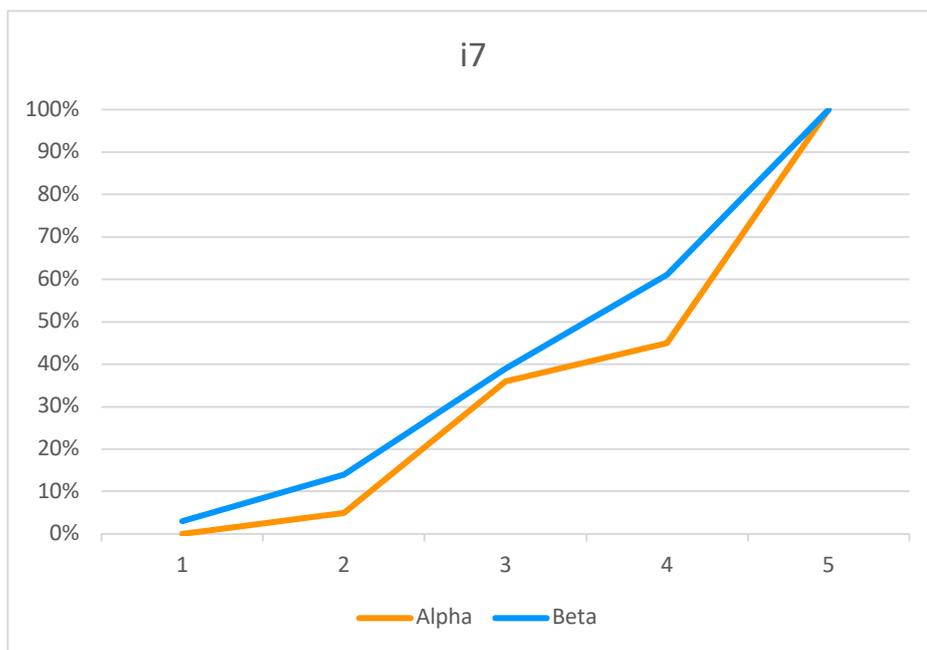
Also in this case, as for i5, the lack of homogeneity between the Alpha and Beta phases is considered irrelevant for the outcome of the research, as it is a datum related to a future forecast. It is however important to note this difference, which can be useful both for the purpose of outlining the profile of Erasmus students, and in the programming phase of linguistic interventions. For the purposes of developing the ICC, the fact that second semester students will spend a shorter period on site than in the first semester should be taken into account. Finally, it is worth recalling that the INCA test adopted for this research indicates that, among the objectives of the first part of the test, is that of gathering information (INCA Assessor Manual, 2004 p.13), and at the same time raising awareness in the respondents (Precht & Davidson Lund, 2007). The evaluation part of the ICC is that with the Intercultural Scenarios.

Items 7-17, although part of the Biographical Information, focus on the intercultural contacts and experiences of the respondents. The researcher made no changes to the multiple-choice options of the original INCA test. Minor changes to the wording of some items were made, as specified below.

i7 – How many friends from abroad do you have?

Respondents were asked to indicate how many friends from abroad they have. This is a closed-response item with 5 options available (0, 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7 or more). It is an ordinal quantitative variable. These variables are analysed by the distribution of the cumulative percentage frequencies, which do not depend on the sample size (Figure 5.8). The graph visually represents the distributions and compares them, so you can easily identify any divergences. On the x-axis the number of friends from abroad is shown (1 = 0 friends, 2 = 1-2 friends, 3 = 3-4 friends, 4 = 5-6 friends, 5 = 7 or more friends) and on y-axis the percentage of respondents. For this item the distributions of the two groups overlap. From the analysis of percentage distributions, there are no significant differences between the two phases, in both about 40% of respondents have up to 4 friends from abroad.

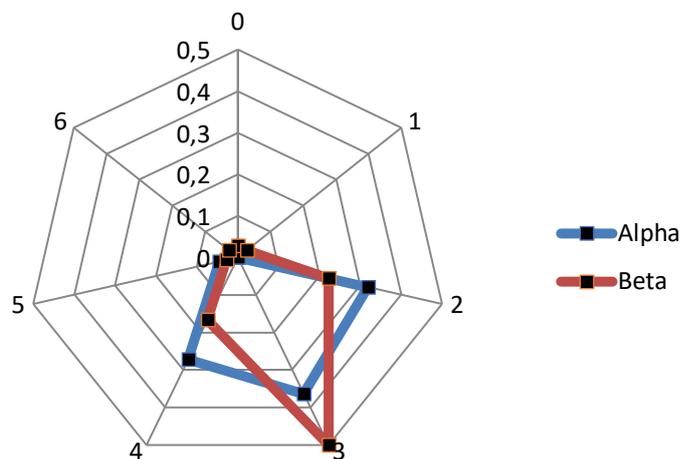
Figure 5.8. How many friends from abroad of Alpha and Beta



i8 – How many languages do you speak well?

Respondents were asked to indicate how many languages they speak well, without specifying what ‘well’ means and relying on the responder's self-assessment. It is an open-ended item. It is a continuous variable. For this type of items, the radar (Figure 5.9) and the table with averages and p -values (Table 5.4) are shown. In the radar graph the vertices of the polygon represent the number of languages spoken well, the quantity of respondents is reported in percentage on each spoke. About 50% of the Beta phase state that they speak 3 languages well, compared to about 40% of the Alpha phase. The two areas related to the Alpha and Beta phases overlap and are similar.

Figure 5.9. Distribution by number of languages spoken well of Alpha and Beta



The p -value, or probability coefficient, indicates the weight of the evidence against H_0 and goes from 0 to +1. The closer it is to 0, the stronger the evidence against H_0 is, thus it will be rejected. In our case:

H_0 = the Alpha and Beta phases are homogeneous.

H_a = the Alpha and Beta phases are not homogeneous.

Most studies require that very small p -values be observed, $p < 0.05$, to reject H_0 . (Agresti & Finlay 2009). In this case p -value = .1869, is higher than 0.05, so H_0 cannot be rejected, i.e. the calculation of the p -value shows that there are no significant differences between the two phases.

	Alpha	Beta
mean	3.0000	2.7541
T	1.3307	
<i>p</i> -value	.1869	

Table 5.4: Mean and *p*-value for languages spoken well

For this variable the average is settled on 3 languages spoken well in both phases. Therefore, the distributions of this variable also confirm the homogeneity of the Alpha and Beta groups.

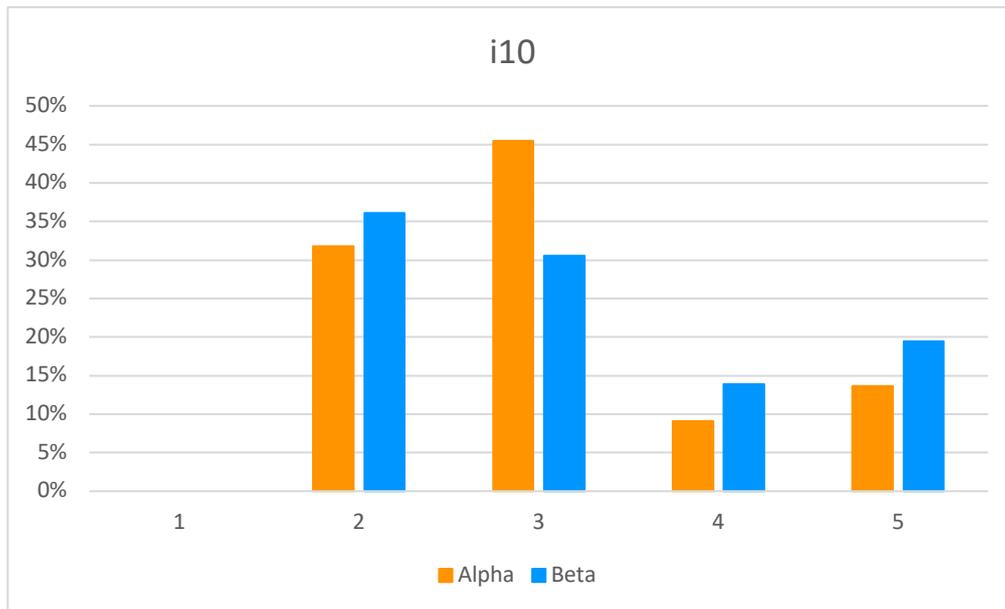
i9 – Where and how did you learn these languages?

Respondents were asked to indicate where and how they learned the languages they “speak well”. This is an open-ended item. The decision is made not to use this item to verify the uniqueness of the sample because the formulation of the question is ambiguous: it does not allow to diversify between the learning place (for example family, school, etc.) and the way of learning (e.g. spontaneous, guided, etc.), nor does it allow for diversification of places and ways in case of more than one "well-spoken" language; i8 shows that the average is 3 languages well spoken and that the vast majority speak well more than 1 language.

i10 –How often have you dealt with people from other countries in your academic or professional life?

Respondents were asked to indicate how often they have dealt with people from other countries in their academic or professional life. This is a closed-response item with 5 options available (never, a couple of times, quite often, often, very often). The phrase "academic or" was added to the original wording in the INCA test. It is a disconnected qualitative variable. Given the modalities of this variable it is possible to state only if these are the same or different (Borra & Di Ciaccio, 2014). These variables are represented graphically through histograms of the percentage frequencies in order to compare the two populations with different number of respondents (Figure 5.10). On the x-axis it is reported how often they have dealt with people from other countries (1 = never, 2 = a couple of times, 3 = quite often, 4 = often, 5 = very often) and on the axis of ordinates the percentage of respondents.

Figure 5.10. How often they have dealt with people from other countries of Alpha and Beta

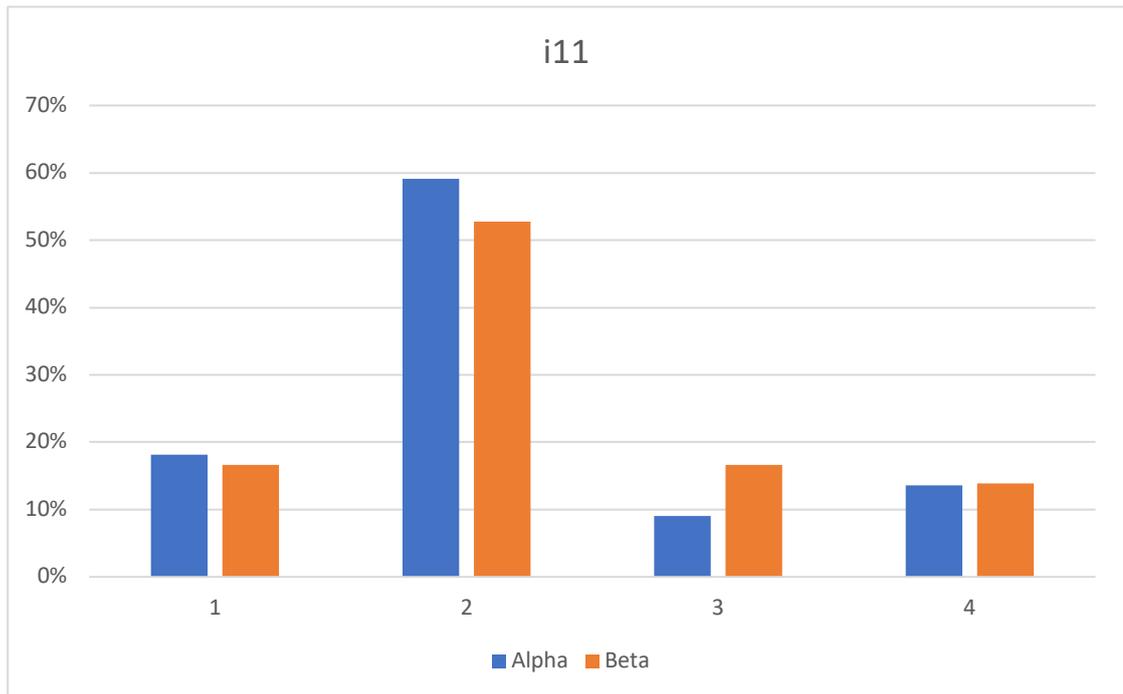


From of the graph we can see that the two phases do not show significant differences and are comparable to each other. For example, in the Beta phase 36% of respondents have dealt a couple of times with people from other countries (option 2), in the Alpha phase 32%. Option 3, they have dealt quite often with people from other countries, presents a small difference (45% Alpha versus 31% Beta); by joining options 3 and 4 (quite often and often) that difference vanishes (46% Alpha vs. 45% Beta).

i11 – Have you ever studied or worked in a work group with members from various cultures?

Respondents were asked to indicate if they **had** ever studied or worked in a work group with members from various cultures. This is a closed-response item with 4 options available (never, a couple of times, quite often, often). The phrase "studied or" was added to the original wording in the INCA test. It is a disconnected qualitative variable. Given the modalities of this variable it is possible to state only if these are the same or different (Borra & Di Ciaccio, 2014). These variables are represented graphically through histograms of the percentage frequencies in order to compare two populations with different number of respondents (Figure 5.11). On the x-axis it is reported how often they have studied or worked with people from other countries (1 = never, 2 = a couple of times, 3 = quite often, 4 = often) and on the y-axis the percentage of respondents. In both groups about 60% of respondents have studied or worked with people from different countries, about 20% never and about 10% often.

Figure 5.11. How often they have studied or worked in a work group with people from other countries of Alpha and Beta

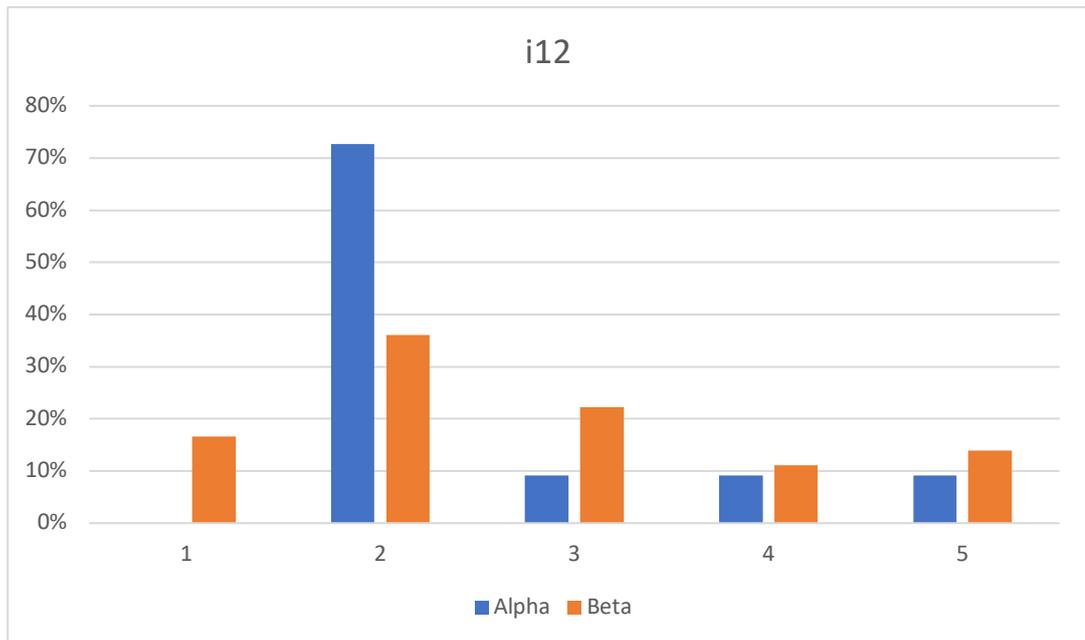


From the reading of the graphs it emerges that the two phases do not show significant differences and are comparable to each other.

i12 – How often do you read books that are written in foreign languages?

Respondents were asked to indicate how often they read books written in foreign languages. This is a closed-response item with 5 options available (never, rarely, quite often, often, very often). It is a disconnected qualitative variable. Given the modalities of this variable it is possible to state only if these are the same or different (Borra & Di Ciaccio, 2014). These variables are represented graphically through histograms of the percentage frequencies in order to compare the two populations with different number of respondents (Figure 5.12). On the x-axis the available options are shown (1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = quite often, 4 = often, 5 = very often), the percentages of respondents on the axis of ordinates.

Figure 5.12. How often they read books in foreign languages of Alpha and Beta

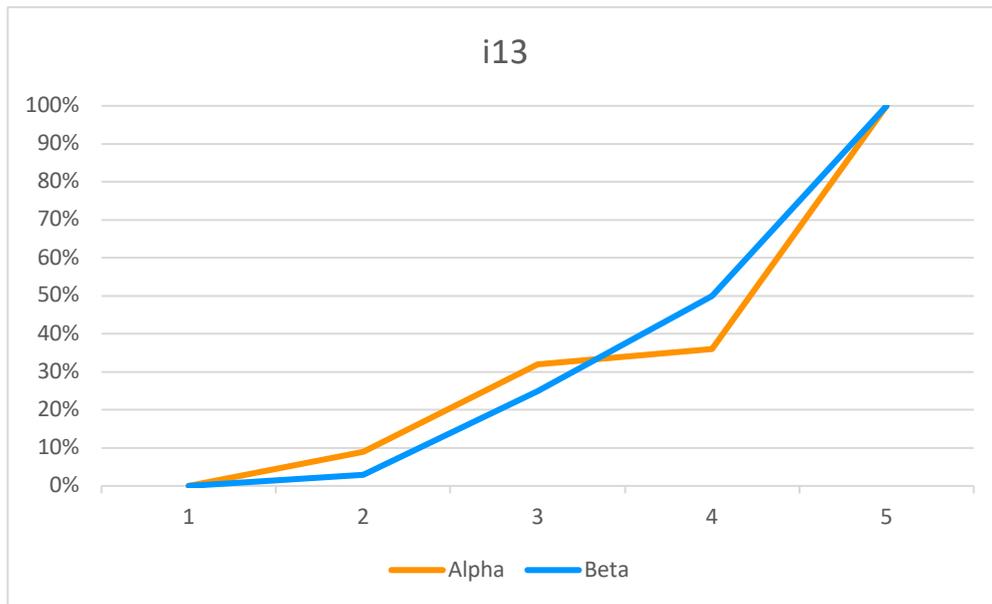


From the graphs it emerges that the two phases do not show significant differences and are comparable with each other, only in the case of option 2 (rarely) compared to 73% of the Alpha group there is 36% of the Beta group, but joining the options 1 and 2 that difference is reduced to 73% of the Alpha group compared to 53% of the Beta group.

i13 – How often have you been abroad?

Respondents were asked to indicate how often they have been abroad. It is a multiple-choice item, with 5 choices (this is my first time, 2 times, 3-5 times, 6-10 times, more than 10 times). It is an ordinal quantitative variable. These variables are analysed by the distribution of the cumulative percentage frequencies, which do not depend on the sample size (Figure 5.13). The available options are shown on the x- axis (1 = this is my first time, 2 = 2 times, 3 = 3-5 times, 4 = 6-10 times, 5 = more than 10 times), the percentage of respondents on the y-axis.

Figure 5.13. How often abroad of Alpha and Beta



The graph shows that the two distributions overlap. From the analysis of the percentage distributions we note that the two phases do not show significant differences between them.

i14 – Which countries have you been to?

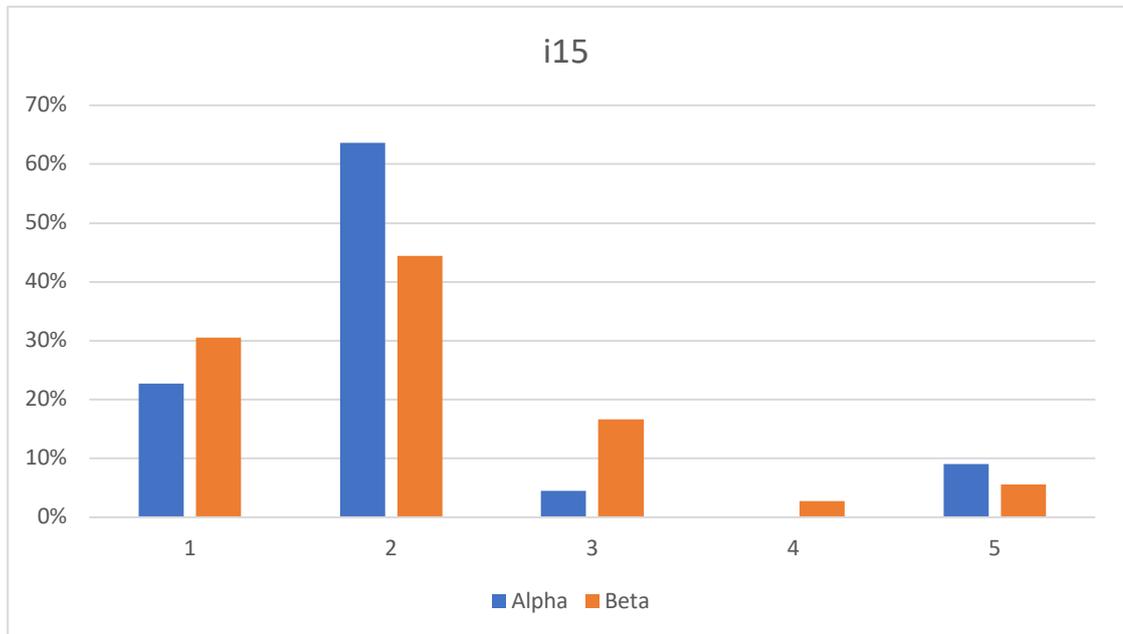
Respondents were asked to indicate which countries they had been to. This is an open-ended item. It is decided not to use this item to verify the uniqueness of the sample because the formulation of the question is ambiguous: the answers to this item are not objectively comparable, for example lists of 10 or more countries of all 5 continents were given, as well as very short lists, 1 or 2 European countries.

i15 – How often have you been abroad while studying or carrying out your job?

Respondents were asked to indicate how often they had been abroad while studying or carrying out their job. It is a multiple-choice item, with 5 choices (never, a couple of times, quite often, often, very often). The phrase “studying or” was added to the original wording in the INCA test, to adapt the item to the characteristics of the research participants. It is a disconnected qualitative variable. Given the modalities of this variable it is possible to state only if these are the same or different (Borra & Di Ciaccio, 2014). These variables are represented graphically through histograms of the percentage frequencies in order to compare the two populations with different number of

respondents (Figure 5.14). On the x-axis the available options are shown (1 = never, 2 = a couple of times, 3 = quite often, 4 = often, 5 = very often), on the axis of ordinates the percentages of respondents.

Figure 5.14. How often they have been abroad while studying or working of Alpha and Beta



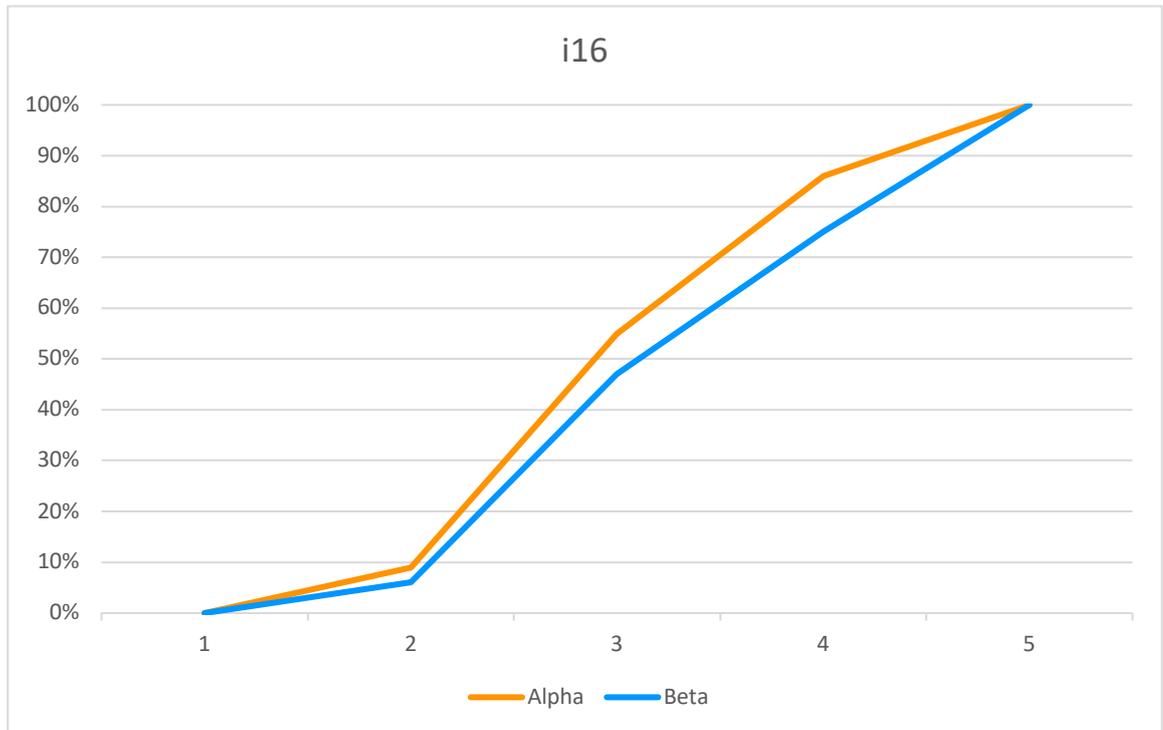
From the graphs we can see that the two phases do not show significant differences and are comparable to each other. Option 2, they had been abroad a couple of times, shows a small difference (64% Alpha versus 44% Beta), by combining options 2 and 3 ('a couple of times' and 'quite often') this difference is reduced a lot (69% Alpha versus 61% Beta).

i16 – How long did your longest stay abroad last?

Respondents were asked to indicate how long their longest stay abroad lasted. This is a multiple-choice item with 5 options available (1-2 days, 3 days-1 week, 8 days-1 month, 1-6 months, more than 6 months). It is an ordinal quantitative variable. These variables are analysed by the distribution of the cumulative percentage frequencies, which do not depend on the sample size (Figure 5.15). On the x-axis the available options are shown (1 = 1-2 days, 2 = 3 days-1 week, 3 = 8 days-1 month, 4 = 1-6 months, 5 = more than 6 months), on the y-axis the percentages of the respondents.

For this item the distributions of the two groups overlap. From the analysis of percentage distributions, there are no significant differences between the two phases, in both for about 50% of respondents the longest period abroad was 8 days - 1 month.

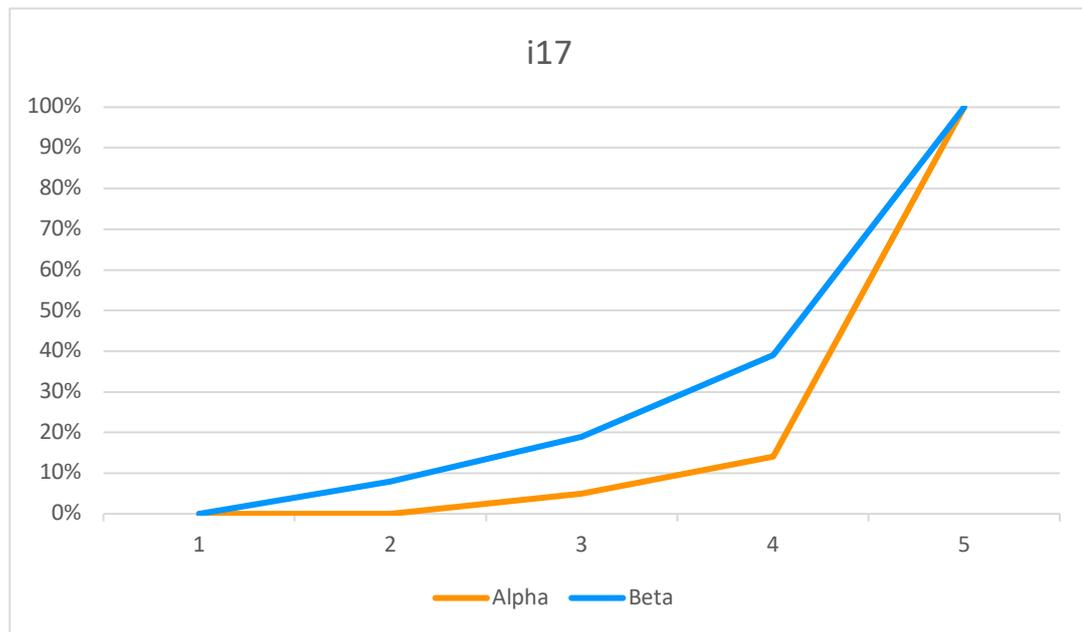
Figure 5.15. How long the longest stay abroad lasted of Alpha and Beta



i17 – How many different countries have you visited already?

Respondents were asked to indicate how many different countries they have had already visited. This is a multiple-choice item, with 5 options available (0, 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7 or more). It is an ordinal quantitative variable. These variables are analysed by the distribution of the cumulative percentage frequencies, which do not depend on the sample size (Figure 5.16). On the x-axis the available options are shown (1 = 0 country, 2 = 1-2 countries, 3 = 3-4 countries, 4 = 5-6 countries, 5 = 7 or more countries), on the y-axis the percentage of respondents.

Figure 5.16. How many different countries they have already visited of Alpha and Beta



For this item the distributions are very similar, with a similar trend although with small percentage differences: 39% of the Beta group had visited up to 5-6 countries (option 4) compared to 14% of the Alpha group.

This analysis of i1-i17 of the pre- tests, Biographical information, showed that there are no significant differences between the Alpha and Beta phases and therefore the two groups can be combined into a single sample of 58 respondents. This sample size allows for both the search for correlations (minimum 30 participants, reported by Dörnyei, 2007; minimum 50 participants, Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003), and the control-experimental procedure (minimum of 15 participants per group, reported by Dörnyei, 2007; Mackey & Gass, 2005).

5.2. The Homogeneity of the Sample as per the Biographical Information

After demonstrating that the two phases, Alpha and Beta, are homogeneous and can be combined in a single sample (Table 5.5), we proceeded to analyse the characteristics of the control and experimental groups to verify that the sample was homogeneous. If the sample is uniform and homogeneous, it is possible to use the questionnaires of the complete data (the respondents who performed pre- and post- test) to check whether the carrying out of the didactic activities aimed at the development of the ICC by the

experimental group had an impact on the development of the ICC of the experimental group itself. The answers of the 29 respondents of the control group are compared with the 29 respondents of the experimental group to verify the homogeneity of the sample.

	<i>Control group</i>	<i>Experimental group</i>	<i>Tot.</i>
Alpha Phase	9	13	22
Beta Phase	20	16	36
Tot. <i>n</i>	29	29	58

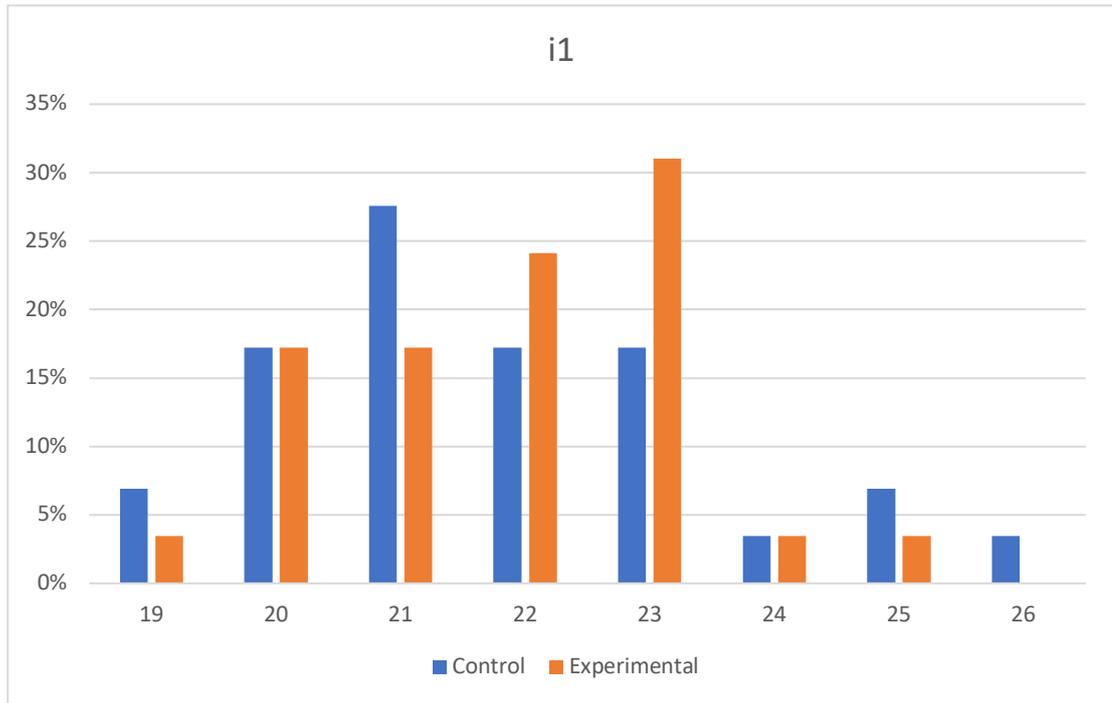
Table 5.5. The research sample (synthesis)

Given the structure of the INCA test used for the pre- and post- measurements, the homogeneity of the sample is initially verified by analysing the biographical information (i1-i17), comparing the responses of the experimental group with those of the control group. The data relating to items 1-17 are shown in Appendix B. The description of items 1-17 has already been presented in Section 5.1, and it is reported here only in order to make graphs and tables more easily understandable.

i1 – Age

Age is a continuous variable. For this type of items, the bar chart and the table with averages and *p*-values are shown. The bar graph (Figure 5.17) shows the age distribution of the experimental and control groups, on the x-axis the age of the respondents is reported and on the y-axis the percentage of respondents. The graph shows that the ages most represented in both groups are 20-23 years, with a slight predominance of 21-years in the control group and 23-years in the experimental group. The bar graph and the table with averages and *p*-values are shown.

Figure 5.17: age distribution in control and experimental groups



The mean age (Table 5.6) is very similar, 21.759 in the control group and 21.862 in the experimental group, p -value is .8061 so the sample can be considered homogeneous with respect to this variable.

	Age	
	Control	Experim.
Mean	21.759	21.862
p -value	.8061	

Table 5.6: mean and p -value of the age variable

The p -value, or probability coefficient, indicates the weight of the evidence against H_0 . It goes from 0 to +1, the closer it is to 0, the stronger the evidence against H_0 is; thus it will be rejected. In our case:

H_0 = the experimental and control groups are homogeneous.

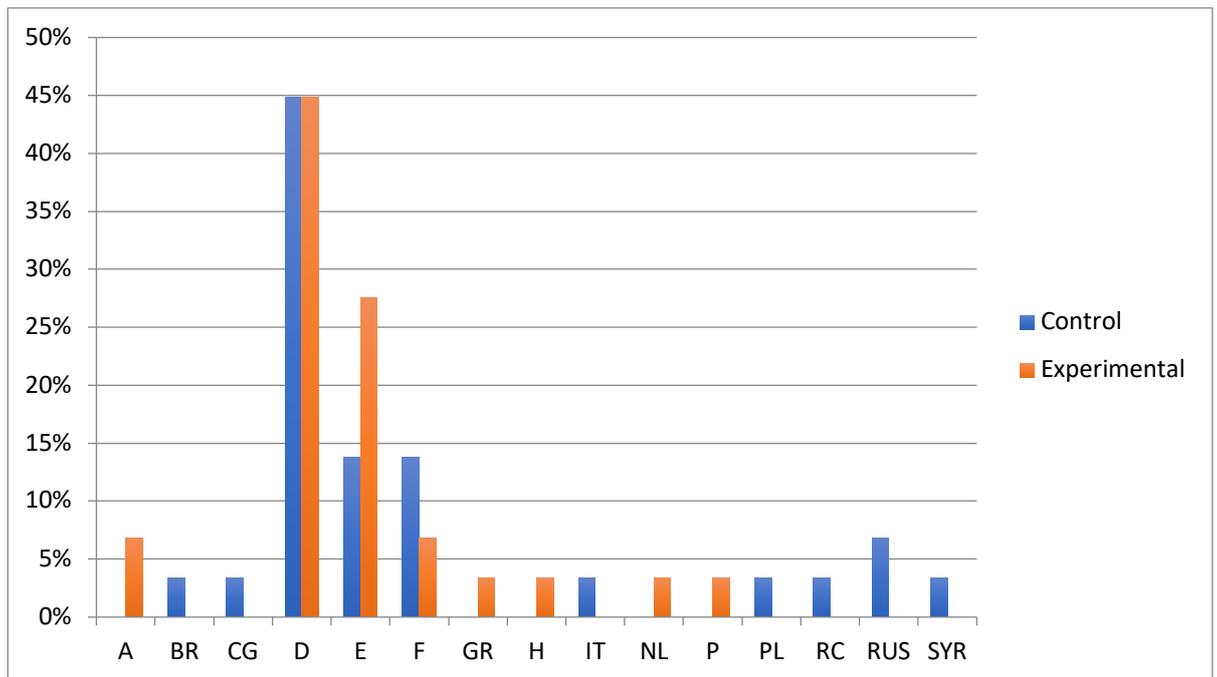
H_a = experimental and control groups are not homogeneous.

Most studies require that very small p -values be observed, $p < 0.05$, to reject H_0 . (Agresti & Finlay 2009).

i2 – Nationality

It is a disconnected qualitative variable. Given the modalities of this variable it is possible to state only if these are the same or different (Borra & Di Ciaccio, 2014). These variables are graphically represented through histograms of the percentage frequencies in order to also compare populations with different number of respondents (Figure 5.18), for homogeneity with section 4.1 the representation is maintained in percentage frequencies, even if, randomly, the control and experimental groups have the same number of respondents ($n = 29$) and could therefore be represented with absolute values. In this case the number of respondents (from 1 to 29) would be reported on the y-axis, and the graph would not be comparable with that of the Alpha group - Beta group comparison for the same variable. On the x-axis the nationalities are shown, on that of ordinates the percentages of the respondents.

Figure 5.18. Distribution by nationality of control and experimental groups⁷



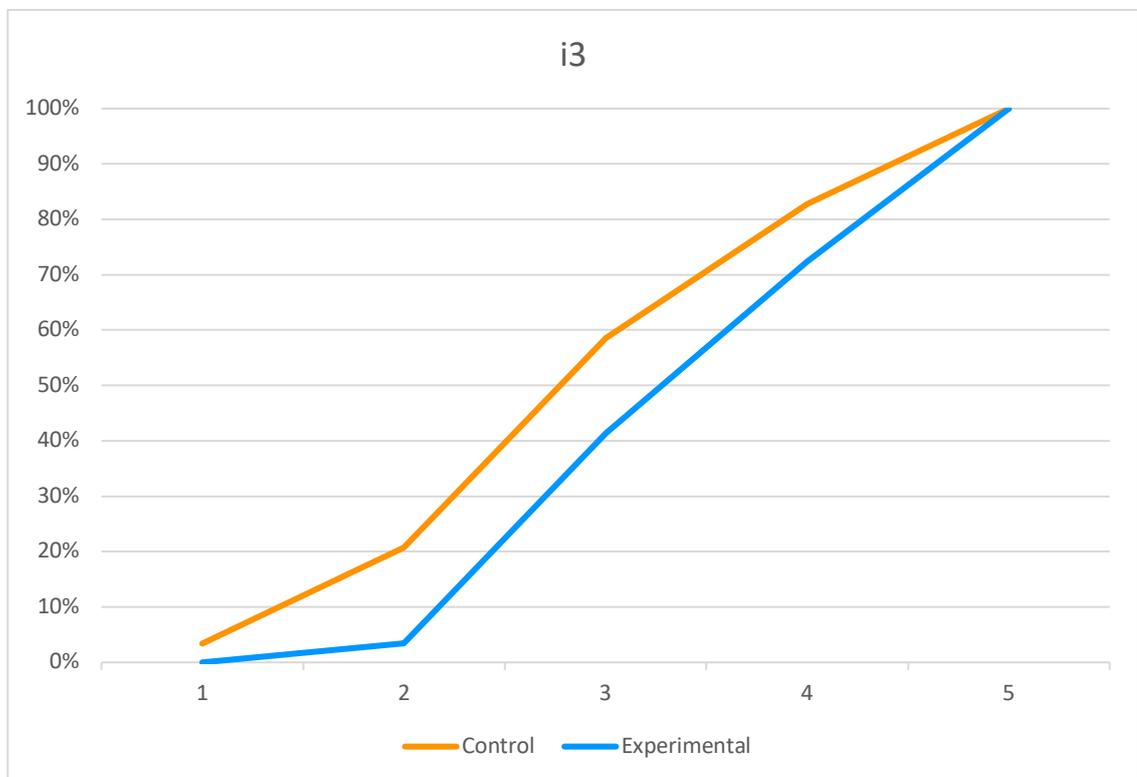
⁷ A = Austria; BR = Brazil; CH = Switzerland; D = Germany; E = Spain; F = France; GR = Greece; H = Hungary; IT = Italy; NL = Netherlands; P = Portugal; PL = Poland; RC = China; RUS = Russia; SYR = Syria

Both samples are very heterogeneous within them, but homogeneous among them: in the Experimental group 8 and in the Control group 10 different nationalities are represented. In both groups there is a clear prevalence of German respondents (45%), Spanish and French. The analysis of this variable confirms the homogeneity of the experimental and control groups.

i3 – Academic standing

Respondents were asked to indicate their academic standing (first year - freshmen, second year - sophomore, third year - junior, fourth year – senior, other). It is an ordinal quantitative variable. These variables are analysed by the distribution of the cumulative percentage frequencies, which do not depend on the sample size (Figure 5.19). This type of chart visually represents the distributions and compares them, so you can easily identify any divergences. On the x-axis the academic standing is shown (1 = first year - freshmen, 2 = second year - sophomore, 3 = third year - junior, 4 = fourth year - senior, 5 = other), on that of ordinates the percentages of respondents.

Figure 5.19. Academic Standing of control and experimental groups



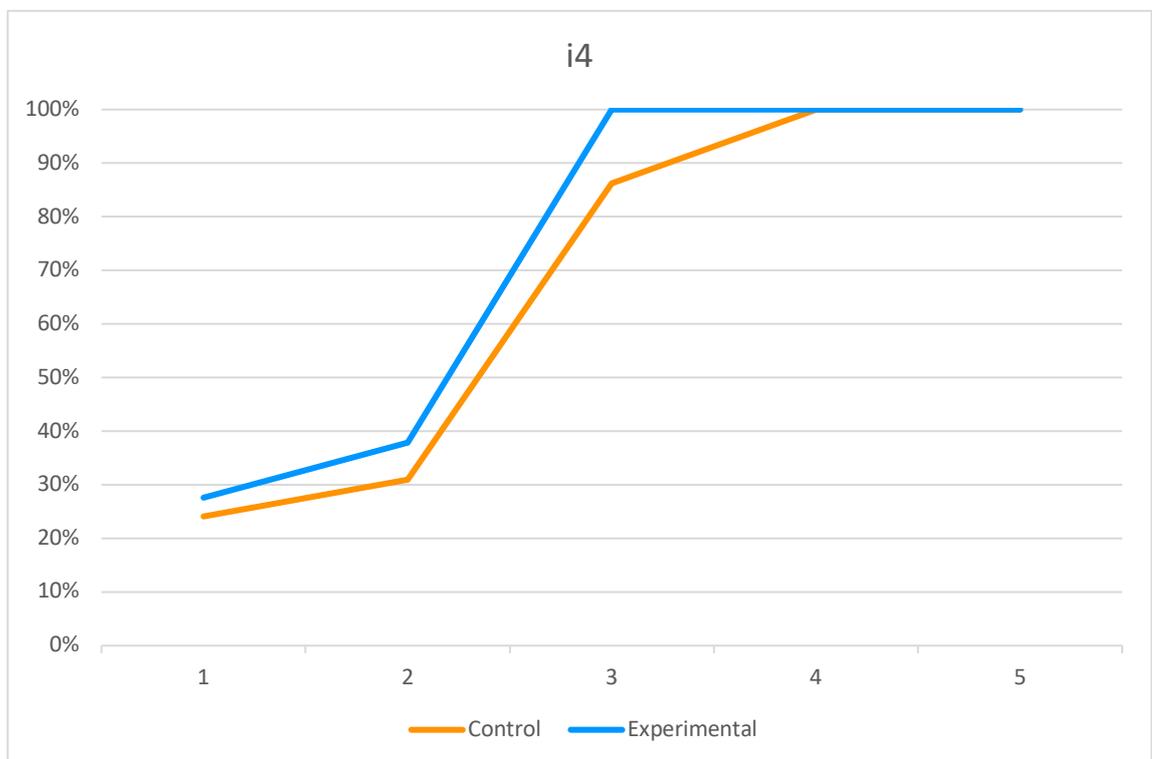
The graph shows that the two distributions have a similar trend, with a concentration of respondents up to the third year of the course (41% experimental group and 58% control

group). From the analysis of the percentage distributions we note that the quota of respondents in the two groups do not show significant differences and the sample can be considered homogeneous in relation to this variable.

i4 – Italian language course currently enrolled in

Respondents were asked to indicate which Italian language course they were currently enrolled in (B1.1, B1.2, B2.1, B2.2, C1, other). It is an ordinal quantitative variable. These variables are analysed by the distribution of the cumulative percentage frequencies, which do not depend on the sample size (Figure 5.20). Also in this case the graph serves to visualize similarities or divergences between the experimental and control groups. The course level (1 = B1.1, 2 = B1.2, 3 = B2.1, 4 = B2.2, 5 = C1) is shown on the x-axis, with the percentages of the respondents on the y-axis. Since the last two options ('C1' and 'other') result with 0 respondents, the option 6 ('other') is not shown, in order to make the chart more understandable.

Figure 5.20. Italian language course currently enrolled in of control and experimental groups

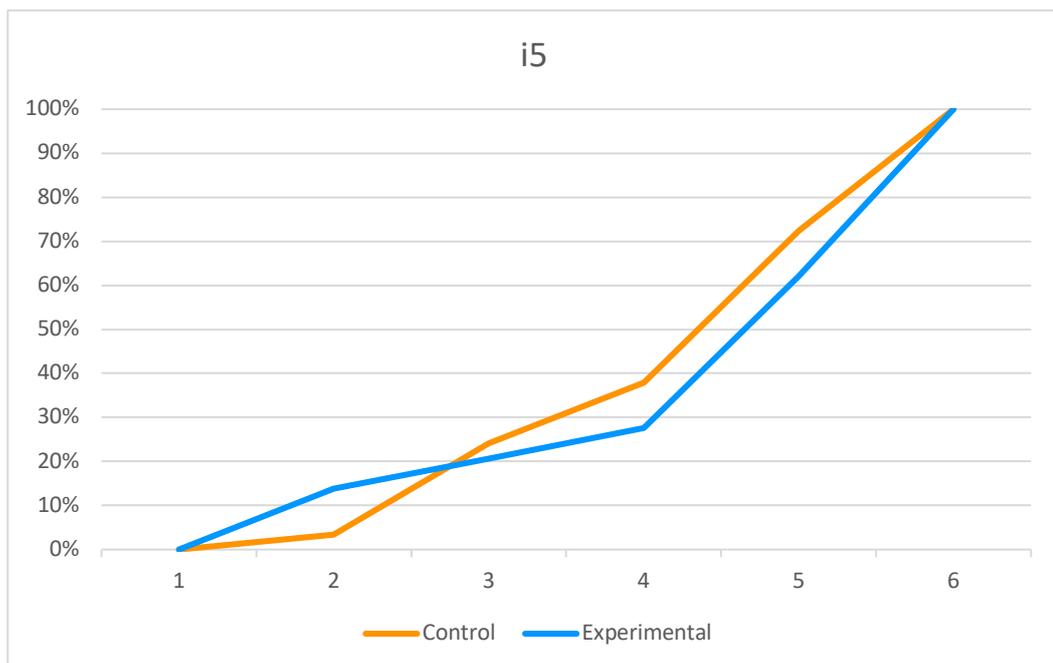


The graph shows that the two distributions have a similar trend and can be overlapped; in both groups about 30% are enrolled in the B1 level courses. The analysis of this variable thus confirms the homogeneity of the experimental and control groups.

i5 – How long have you been here in Florence?

The questionnaire investigates how much time has passed between the arrival at the host site and the beginning of the Italian language course (Figure 5.21). This is a closed-ended item with 6 options available (less than a week, 1 week, 2 weeks, 3 weeks, 1 month, more than 1 month), options have been defined by the host office based on information they have. It is an ordinal quantitative variable. These variables are analysed by the distribution of the cumulative percentage frequencies, which do not depend on the sample size. The graph visually represents the distributions and compares them, so you can easily identify similarities or divergences. The period of time spent on site before the beginning of the language course (1 = less than a week, 2 = 1 week, 3 = 2 weeks, 4 = 3 weeks, 5 = 1 month, 6 = more than 1 month) is shown on the x-axis and on the y-axis the percentage of respondents.

Figure 5.21. Length of stay in Florence before the test pre- of the control and experimental groups



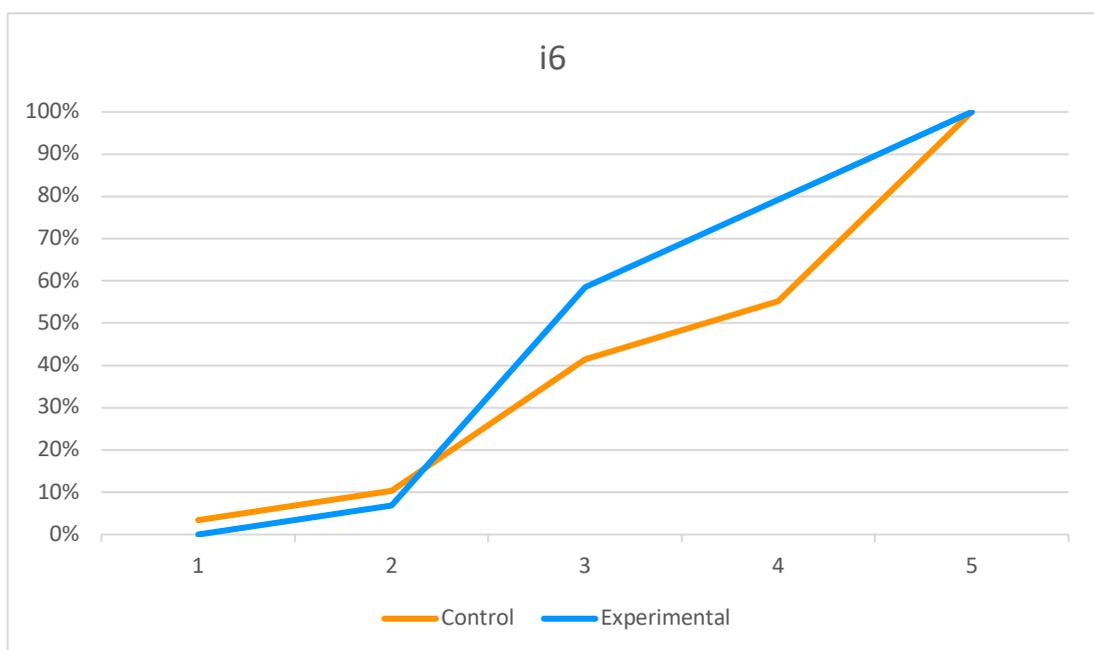
In this case, the graph shows two overlapping distributions, in both groups about 20% of respondents are on-site up to 2 weeks before the start of the course, and about 30% up to 3 weeks before the start of the course. The divergences highlighted for this variable while comparing the Alpha phase and the Beta phase (section 4.1 p.7) are not found in the experimental group - control group comparison, because these two groups contain respondents of both phases, evidently distributed in such a way as to make the

experimental and control groups homogeneous. The analysis of this variable confirms the homogeneity between the two groups.

i6 – How long will you be studying at the University of Florence overall?

Respondents were asked to indicate how long they would be studying at the University of Florence overall, i.e. the length of the scholarship. This is a closed-response item with 5 options available (3 months, 4 months, 5 months, 6 months, more than 6 months), the research host has defined the options. It is an ordinal quantitative variable. These variables are analysed by the distribution of the cumulative percentage frequencies, which do not depend on the sample size (Figure 5.22). The graph shows the distributions of the experimental and control groups, and allows for their comparison in order to highlight similarities or divergences. On the x-axis there is the period of time they will spend on site over all (1 = 3 months, 2 = 4 months, 3 = 5 months, 4 = 6 months, 5 = more than 6 months) and on the y-axis the percentage of respondents. The graph shows two rather similar distributions with small divergences in the central options: 58% of the experimental group say they want to study at the place of destination up to 5 months, compared to 41% of the control group. Moreover, 79% of the experimental group say that they will be studying at the host site up to 6 months, compared to 55% of the control group.

Figure 5.22. Length of scholarship for the host university of the control and experimental groups



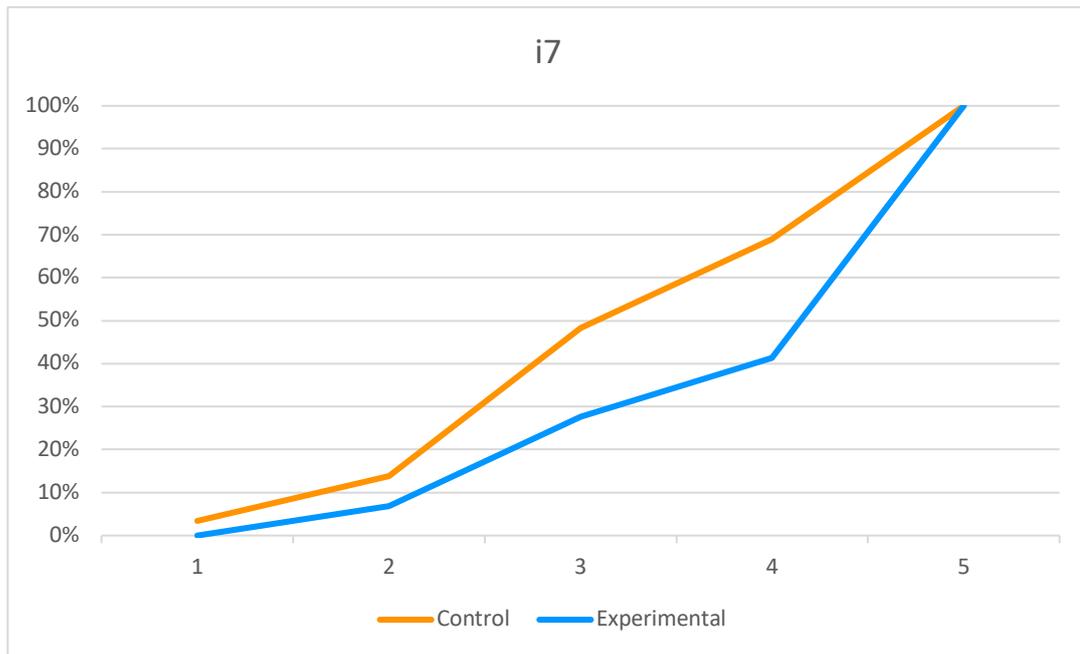
These small differences related to the estimated length of studying at the host site are strongly influenced by the organization of Erasmus mobility grants. The divergences highlighted for this variable in comparison phase Alpha phase - Beta phase (Section 4.1) are also found in the comparison between the experimental group and the control group, because these two groups contain respondents of both phases, evidently distributed in a manner homogeneous enough as to maintain these divergences. As we have seen while comparing the Alpha phase and the Beta phase, those who have a scholarship of 6 months or more must necessarily arrive at the destination in the first academic semester, therefore the students cannot be homogeneously distributed in the two phases, Alpha and Beta, and probably not even in the control and experimental groups (which are composed of students of the Alpha and Beta phases). Also in this case, as per in the analysis of Alpha and Beta phases, the non-homogeneity between the experimental and control groups is considered irrelevant for the outcome of the research, as it is a datum related to a future forecast.

Items 7-17, although part of the Biographical Information, focus on intercultural contacts and experiences of the respondents. The comparison between the control and the experimental group is continued in order to verify the homogeneity of the sample. It should also be noted that the analysis of these answers also provides interesting information on the intercultural background of respondents, which can be useful in the educational programming phase, as we will see in detail later.

i7 – How many friends from abroad do you have?

Respondents were asked to indicate how many friends from abroad they have. This is a closed-response item with 5 options available (0, 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7 or more). It is an ordinal quantitative variable. These variables are analysed by the distribution of the cumulative percentage frequencies, which do not depend on the sample size (Figure 5.23). On the x-axis the number of friends from abroad is shown (1 = 0 friends, 2 = 1-2 friends, 3 = 3-4 friends, 4 = 5-6 friends, 5 = 7 or more friends) and on the axis of ordinates the percentage of respondents. From the analysis of the percentage distributions, there are small differences between the two groups: 48% of the control group has up to 4 friends from abroad, 41% of the experimental group has up to 6.

Figure 5.23. How many friends from abroad of control and experimental groups.



From the analysis of the percentage distributions we note that the quota of respondents in the two phases do not show significant differences. The analysis of this variable confirms the homogeneity of the two groups.

i8 – How many languages do you speak well?

Respondents were asked to indicate how many languages they speak well. It is an open-ended item. It is a continuous variable. For this item the distributions of the experimental and control groups are visualized with the radar chart and the table with averages and *p*-values (Figure 5.24 and Table 5.7). The radar graph allows an immediate visualization of the comparison of the responses of the two groups. The radar is a regular polygon with as many vertices as the available options (in our case the number of languages spoken well, from 0 to 6). Each spoke, which connects the centre of the polygon with each vertex, must be considered as an axis on which the value corresponding to that option is reported (the percentage of respondents who speak well that number of languages). In this radar graph the vertices of the polygon represent the number of languages spoken well, the number of respondents is reported in percentage on each spoke, the areas of polygons drawn by joining points allow a quick visualization of similarities and divergences between the two groups. The two areas related to the control and experimental groups overlap and are similar. 45% of both groups claim to speak 3 languages well: given that more than half of the respondents

answered the INCA questionnaire in English and that there is no respondent of British or Irish nationality, it can be assumed that the three languages are the L1, English and Italian. 21% of both groups claim to speak 4 languages well.

Figure 5.24: Distribution of languages spoken well in control and experimental groups

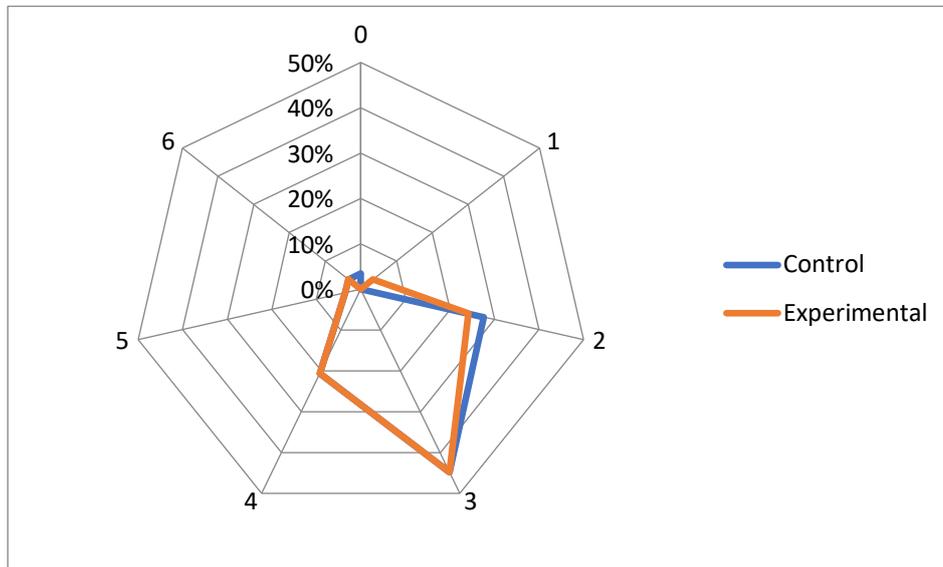


Table 5.7 shows some statistical tests performed on this variable. The average of well-spoken languages is 2.90 for the control group and 3.07 for the experimental group. We then proceeded to calculate the p -value, or probability coefficient, which indicates the weight of the evidence against H_0 , it goes from 0 to +1, the closer it is to 0, the stronger the evidence against H_0 is, thus it will be rejected. In our case:

H_0 = the experimental and control groups are homogeneous.

H_a = experimental and control groups are not homogeneous.

Most studies require that very small p -values be observed, $p < 0.05$, to reject H_0 . (Agresti & Finlay 2009). In our case p -value is .5162, so a high value, therefore H_0 cannot be rejected, i.e. the calculation of p -value shows that experimental and control groups are homogeneous.

Languages spoken well		
	Control	Experimental
Mean	2.896552	3.068966
p -value	.5162	

Table 5.7: mean and p -value of the variable Languages spoken well

As the radar chart (Figure 5.24) and the statistical tests (Table 5.7) clearly show, even with regard to the variable “Languages spoken well” there is uniformity in the distribution between the control group and the experimental group and the sample can be considered homogeneous.

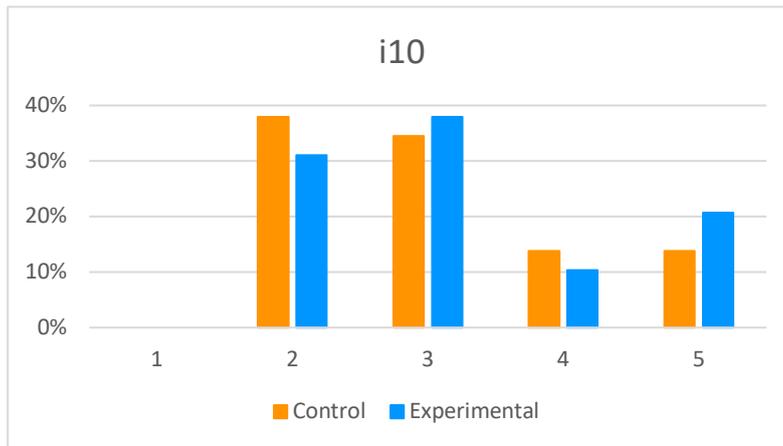
i9 – Where and how did you learn these languages?

Respondents were asked to indicate where and how they learned the languages they “speak well”. This is an open-ended item. It is decided not to use this item to verify the homogeneity of the sample because the formulation of the question is ambiguous: it does not allow to diversify between learning place (for example family, school, etc.) and way of learning (e.g. spontaneous, guided, etc.), nor does it allow for diversification of places and ways in the case of more than one "spoken well" language, which, as we saw in the i8 analysis, is by far the most frequent case.

i10 –How often have you dealt with people from other countries in your academic or professional life?

Respondents were asked to indicate how often they have dealt with people from other countries in their academic or professional life. This is a closed-response item with 5 options available (never, a couple of times, quite often, often, very often). It is a disconnected qualitative variable. Given the modalities of this variable it is possible to state only if these are the same or different (Borra & Di Ciaccio, 2014). These variables are represented graphically through histograms of the percentage frequencies so as to compare also two populations with different number of respondents (Figure 5.25), for homogeneity with section 4.1 the representation is maintained in percentage frequencies, even if, randomly, the control and experimental groups have the same number of respondents, and could therefore be represented with the absolute values, in which case the number of respondents would be reported on the y-axis (from 1 to 29). On the x-axis it is reported how often they have dealt with people from other countries (1 = never, 2 = a couple of times, 3 = quite often, 4 = often, 5 = very often) and on the axis of ordinates the percentage of respondents.

Figure 5.25. How often they have dealt with people from other countries in their academic or professional life of control and experimental groups



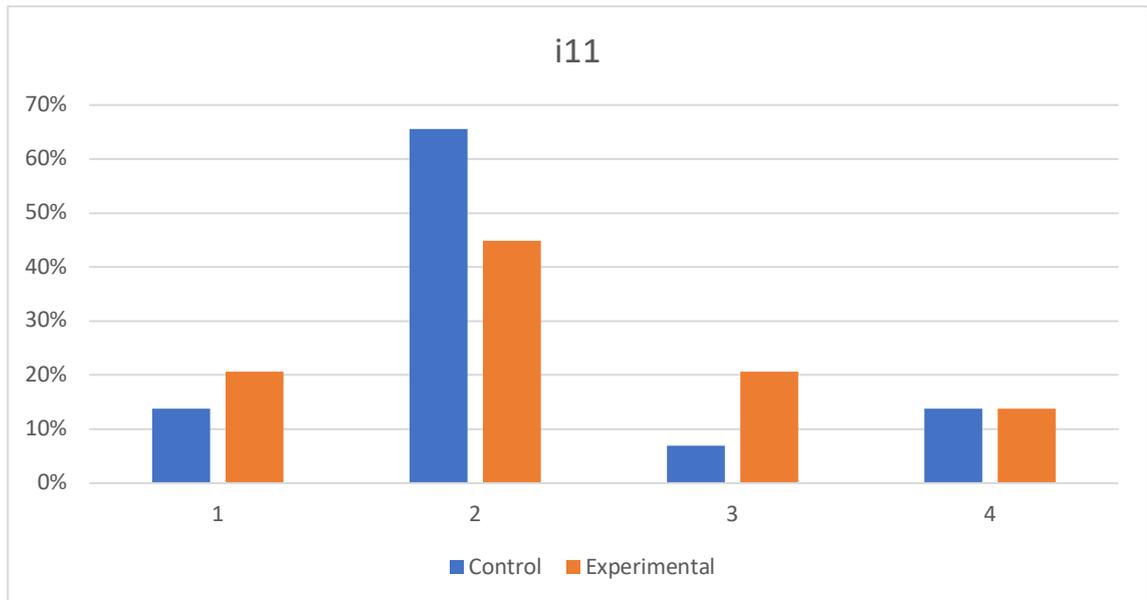
38% of the experimental group and 30% of the control group have dealt quite often with people from different countries in their academic or professional life, 31% of the experimental group and 38% of the control group a couple of times. From the graph it emerges that the two groups do not show significant differences and are comparable to each other. The analysis of this variable confirms the homogeneity of the two groups.

i11 – Have you ever studied or worked in a work group with members from various cultures?

Respondents were asked to indicate if they have ever studied or worked in a work group with members from various cultures. This is a closed-response item with 4 options available (never, a couple of times, quite often, often). It is a disconnected qualitative variable. Given the modalities of this variable it is possible to state only if these are the same or different (Borra & Di Ciaccio, 2014). These variables are represented graphically through histograms of the percentage frequencies so as to compare also two populations with different number of respondents (Figure 5.26). For homogeneity with section 4.1 the representation is maintained in percentage frequencies, even if, randomly, the control and experimental groups have the same number of respondents, and could therefore be represented with the absolute values, in which case the number of respondents would be reported on the y-axis (from 1 to 29). On the x-axis it is reported how often they have studied or worked with people from other countries (1 = never, 2 = a couple of times, 3 = quite often, 4 = often) and on the axis of ordinates the percentage of respondents. In both groups the most represented option is 2 (a couple of times), 66% of the control group and 45% of the experimental group.

The graph shows that the two groups do not show significant differences and are comparable to each other. The analysis of the responses to this item provides interesting information also from an educational point of view: in fact, a lack of familiarity emerges with multicultural working groups.

Figure 5.26. How often they have studied or worked in a work group with people from other countries of control and experimental groups



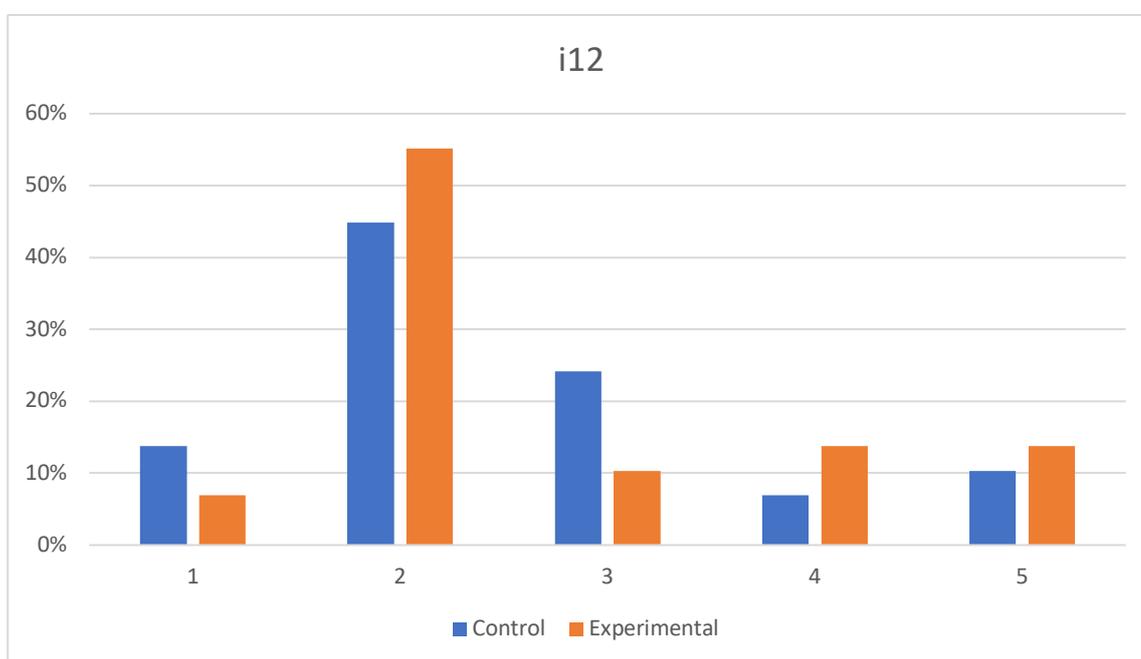
The language class for Erasmus students could therefore become the ideal place in which experimenting intercultural group working, and then reflecting on similarities and cultural differences. It is also to be noted that the school is one of the sources of Hofstede's software of the mind (1991) and an environment in which intercultural differences have been studied for some time (Hofstede, 1986).

i12 – How often do you read books that are written in foreign languages?

Respondents were asked to indicate how often they read books that are written in foreign languages. This is a closed-response item with 5 options available (never, rarely, quite often, often, very often). It is a disconnected qualitative variable. Given the modalities of this variable it is possible to state only if these are the same or different (Borra & Di Ciaccio, 2014). These variables are represented graphically through histograms of the percentage frequencies so as to compare also two populations with different number of respondents (Figure 5.27), for homogeneity with section 4.1 the representation is maintained in percentage frequencies, even if, randomly, the control

and experimental groups have the same number of respondents, and could therefore be represented with the absolute values, in which case the axis of ordinates would show the number of respondents (from 1 to 29). On the x-axis it is reported how often they read books in foreign languages (1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = quite often, 4 = often, 5 = very often), on the y-axis the percentages of the respondents. Also for this variable the distributions of the two groups do not show significant differences and the two groups are homogeneous. In both groups the most represented option is n. 2 (rarely) with 55% of the experimental group and 45% of the control group.

Figure 5.27. How often they read books in foreign languages of control and experimental groups



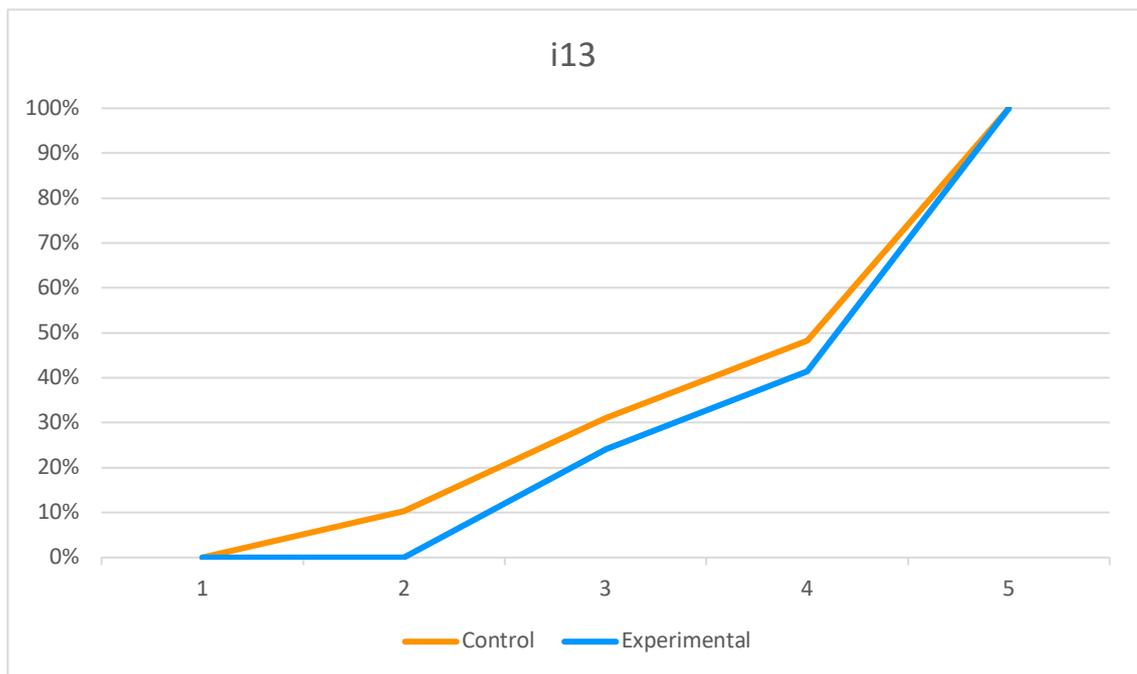
The analysis of the answers to this item provides interesting information also from an educational point of view: the habit of reading books in foreign languages, once a cornerstone of learning foreign languages and cultures (Balboni, 2012), seems to have become little diffused, probably to the advantage of other more technological habits. Therefore, proposing to this type of students educational activities, based on reading books in foreign languages, could find a certain resistance from the students, who would probably appreciate activities based more on other materials, such as films, songs, blogs, or articles available online.

i13 – How often have you been abroad?

Respondents were asked to indicate how often they have been abroad. It is a multiple-choice item, with 5 choices (this is my first time, 2 times, 3-5 times, 6-10 times, more than 10 times). It is an ordinal quantitative variable. These variables are analysed by the distribution of the cumulated percentage frequencies, which do not depend on the sample size (Figure 5.28). The available options are shown on the x-axis (1 = this is my first time, 2 = 2 times, 3 = 3-5 times, 4 = 6-10 times, 5 = more than 10 times), the percentage of respondents on the y-axis.

The graph shows that the two distributions overlap, and the groups homogeneous. 41% of the experimental group and 48% of the control group have been abroad up to 10 times. Only 10% of the control group and even none of the experimental group have been abroad up to two times. The analysis of this data shows a great familiarity with trips abroad, therefore during the educational planning phase it will be possible to anticipate activities based on such experiences.

Figure 5.28. How often abroad of control and experimental groups



i14 – Which countries have you been to?

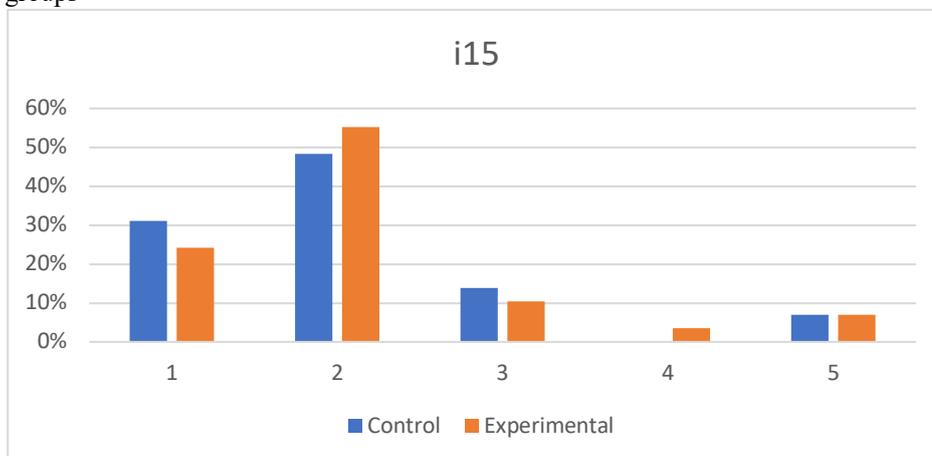
Respondents were asked to indicate which countries they have been to. This is an open-ended item. We decided not to use this item to verify the homogeneity of the sample

because the formulation of the question is ambiguous: the answers to this item are not objectively comparable, for example there were lists of more than 10 countries around the world along with answers containing the indication of only one or two European countries. In addition, data on the various countries visited do not provide any useful information for the purpose of this research, which aims to detect the impact of educational activities based on the National Culture Model by Hofstede on the development of the ICC. The eventual correlation between the visited countries and the development of the ICC is not part of the research objectives.

i15 – How often have you been abroad while studying or carrying out your job?

Respondents were asked to indicate how often they have been abroad while studying or carrying out their job. It is a multiple-choice item, with 5 choices (never, a couple of times, quite often, often, very often). It is a disconnected qualitative variable. Given the modalities of this variable it is possible to state only if these are the same or different (Borra & Di Ciaccio, 2014). These variables are graphically represented through histograms of the percentage frequencies so as to compare also populations with different number of respondents (Figure 5.29), for homogeneity with section 4.1 the representation is maintained in percentage frequencies, even if, randomly, the control and experimental groups have the same number of respondents and could therefore be represented with absolute values. The available options are shown on the x-axis (1 = never, 2 = a couple of times, 3 = quite often, 4 = often, 5 = very often), the percentage of respondents on the y-axis.

Figure 5.29. How often they have been abroad while studying or working of control and experimental groups

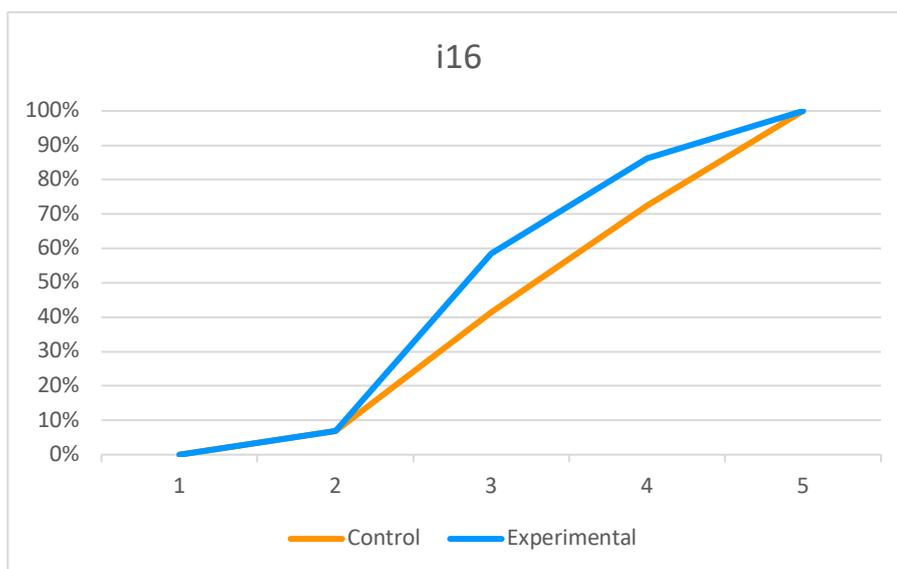


The majority of respondents (55% of the experimental group and 48% of the control group) have been a couple of times abroad while studying or working, 25-30% of both groups ever. The other options are poorly represented in both groups. From the graph it emerges that the two groups do not show significant differences and are homogeneous with each other.

i16 – How long did your longest stay abroad last?

Respondents were asked to indicate how long their longest stay abroad lasted. This is a multiple-choice item with 5 options available (1-2 days, 3 days-1 week, 8 days-1 month, 1-6 months, more than 6 months). It is an ordinal quantitative variable. These variables are analysed by the distribution of the cumulative percentage frequencies, which do not depend on the sample size (Figure 5.30). On the abscissas axis the available options are shown (1 = 1-2 days, 2 = 3 days-1 week, 3 = 8 days-1 month, 4 = 1-6 months, 5 = more than 6 months), on axis of ordinates the percentages of the respondents. This is a multiple-choice item with 5 options available (1-2 days, 3 days-1 week, 8 days-1 month, 1-6 months, more than 6 months). It is an ordinal quantitative variable. These variables are analysed by the distribution of the cumulative percentage frequencies, which do not depend on the sample size (Figure 5.30). On the x-axis the available options are shown (1 = 1-2 days, 2 = 3 days-1 week, 3 = 8 days-1 month, 4 = 1-6 months, 5 = more than 6 months), on y-axis the percentages of the respondents.

Figure 5.30. Length of the longest stay abroad of control and experimental groups

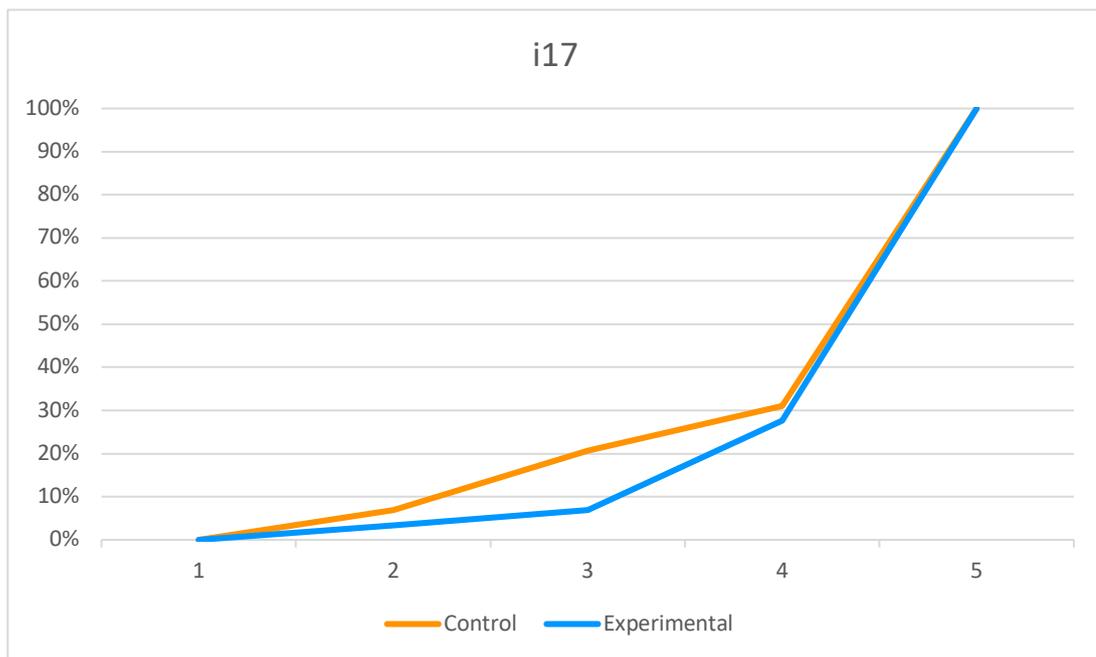


For this item the distributions of the two groups are very similar and do not show significant differences, in both groups for over 40% of respondents the longest period abroad was up to 1 month. The analysis of this variable thus confirms the homogeneity of the experimental and control groups.

i17 – How many different countries have you visited already?

Respondents were asked to indicate how many different countries they have already visited. This is a multiple-choice item, with 5 options available (0, 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7 or more). It is an ordinal quantitative variable. These variables are analysed by the distribution of the cumulative percentage frequencies, which do not depend on the sample size (Figure 5.31). On the x-axis the available options are shown (1 = 0 country, 2 = 1-2 countries, 3 = 3-4 countries, 4 = 5-6 countries, 5 = 7 or more countries), on the y-axis the percentage of respondents.

Figure 5.31. How many different countries already visited in the control and experimental groups



For this item the distributions are very similar and overlap. The graph shows that about 30% of both groups have visited up to 6 countries, the vast majority of respondents have visited 7 or more. Also for this item the distributions of the two groups are very similar and do not show significant differences. The analysis of this variable thus confirms the homogeneity of the experimental and control groups.

The analysis of the Biographical Information (i1-i17) of control and experimental groups shows that the distributions are similar and therefore the control and experimental groups can be considered homogeneous. In this way, it is possible to carry out the experimental procedure, which requires at least 15 participants per group (reported by Dörnyei, 2007; Mackey & Gass, 2005).

5.3. The Homogeneity of the Sample as per Intercultural Contacts and Experiences

The uniqueness of the sample, i.e. the data collected in two chronologically distinct phases were homogeneous and comparable, was verified in section 5.1., and the Alpha and Beta phases merged. In section 5.2 the homogeneity of the sample was verified, i.e. if the control and experimental groups have homogeneous characteristics and are therefore comparable through the analysis of the Biographical Information, i1- i17. In this section we proceed to verify the homogeneity and comparability of the sample through the analysis of the incoming intercultural profile of the control and experimental groups. That is, the answers to i18-i38 of the pre- test are compared. In this analysis we expect no significant differences in the responses of the two groups. The INCA test outlines the intercultural profile through 21 items evaluated with Likert scale to 3 options: these are statements related to intercultural situations the respondents may have experienced first-hand or that they can imagine. Respondents are required to tick the most appropriate option (Not applicable, Maybe, Fully applicable).

The analysis consists in calculating the frequencies of response to each item for the control and experimental groups and in evaluating the mean and the mode, i.e. the value observed in the distribution with greater frequency (Agresti & Finlay, 2009), for these distributions. For each item, the table of absolute frequencies is shown; taking into account the equal number of the two groups ($n = 29$) it is not necessary to work with the relative percentage frequencies, while on the contrary it was necessary when comparing the Alpha and Beta phases (section 5.1) which have different numerosity (Alpha phase $n = 22$, Beta phase $n = 36$). The same was done in section 5.2 for reasons of opportunity, i.e. to make the graphs of the two sections comparable. The Likert scale answers (Not applicable, Maybe, Fully applicable) were assigned scores (1, 2 and 3 or 3, 2, 1) based on the directionality of the statement.

The analysis of the i18-i38 items of the *Intercultural Profile* is shown below

i18: In restaurants I often eat dishes with ingredients that I don't know.

Most of the students in both groups answer *Maybe* to this statement. The average of the scores of the two groups is very similar (2 for the control group and 2.17 for the experimental group), as well as the distribution of responses (mode = 2 *Maybe*, in both groups).

i18		
	Control	Exper.
Not applicable 1	6	2
Maybe 2	17	20
Fully Applicable 3	6	7
Mean	2,00	2,17
Mode	2	2

Table 5.8. Distribution of the response frequencies for item 18

The analysis of this item confirms the homogeneity of the experimental and control groups.

For educational purposes this distribution on all three available options suggests a lack of awareness of the value of food as a manifestation of culture. Therefore, activities aimed at exploring the concept of culture and analysing its manifestations are very appropriate, as for example those of session 1 of the experimental group treatment.

i19: I often seek contact with other people in order to learn as much as possible about their culture.

The most frequent answers to this statement are *Fully applicable* and *Maybe* for both groups. The average of the scores of the two groups is very similar (2.48 for the control group and 2.59 for the experimental group), as well as the distribution of responses (mode = 3 *Fully applicable* in both groups).

i19		
	Control	Exper.
Not applicable 1	2	1
Maybe 2	11	10
Fully Applicable 3	16	18
Mean	2,48	2,59
Mode	3	3

Table 5.9. Distribution of response frequencies for item 19

The analysis of this item confirms the homogeneity of the experimental and control groups.

For educational purposes it is interesting to note the propensity of respondents for learning through direct experience ('contact with other people') rather than theoretical (e.g. reading books in foreign languages, see analysis i12 in section 5.2). It therefore seems opportune to try to exploit the potential of Kolb's experiential learning cycle with specific didactic activities, as it was done in this research project.

i20: When other people don't feel comfortable in my presence, I notice it.

The most frequent answer to this statement is *Fully applicable* for both groups. The average of the scores of the two groups is very similar (2.72 for the control group and 2.69 for the experimental group), as well as the distribution of responses (mode = 3 *Fully applicable* in both groups).

i20		
	Control	Exper.
Not applicable1	0	1
Maybe 2	8	7
Fully Applicable 3	21	21
Mean	2,72	2,69
Mode	3	3

Table 5.10. Distribution of the response frequencies for item 20

The analysis of this item confirms the homogeneity of the experimental and control groups.

It is interesting to note that the respondents seem to have already developed a certain sensitivity and awareness that can be useful and can facilitate the development of the ICC with appropriate teaching activities.

i21: I find it difficult to adapt to people from diverse origins.

The most frequent answers to this statement are *Not applicable* and *Maybe* for both groups. No one answered *Fully applicable*. The average of the scores of the two groups is very similar (2.69 for the control group and 2.66 for the experimental group), as well

as the distribution of responses (mode = 3 *Fully applicable* in both groups). For this statement the directionality of the scores assigned to the answers is 3.2.1.

i21		
	Control	Exper.
Fully applicable 1	0	0
Maybe 2	9	10
Not applicable 3	20	19
mean	2,69	2,66
mode	3	3

Table 5.11. Distribution of the response frequencies for item 21

The analysis of this item confirms the homogeneity of the experimental and control groups.

Additionally, in this case the respondents show to have, at least in principle, already a certain flexibility in their behaviours, which is fundamental for developing the ICC.

i22: When other people behave in a way that I don't understand, I ask them why they are doing this.

The most frequent answer to this statement is *Maybe* for both groups, even if all three options are well represented. The average of the scores of the two groups is very similar (1.97 for the control group and 2.10 for the experimental group), as well as the distribution of responses (mode = 2 *Maybe* in both groups).

i22		
	Control	Exper.
Not applicable 1	7	5
Maybe 2	16	16
Fully Applicable 3	6	8
Mean	1,97	2,10
Mode	2	2

Table 5.12. Distribution of the response frequencies for item 22

The analysis of this item confirms the homogeneity of the experimental and control groups.

The prevalence of *Maybe* responses, and the distribution of responses on all three options, suggests a need for didactic intervention: the ability to ask for explanations before drawing conclusions on apparently incomprehensible behaviour is considered fundamental for the development of the ICC (Hofstede, Pedersen & Hofstede, 2002). However, in this group of students it does not seem to be a consolidated practice.

i23: When I hear about a catastrophe happening in another country I think about the people there and their fate.

The most frequent answer to this statement is *Fully applicable* for both groups. The average of the scores of the two groups is very similar (2.66 for the control group and 2.69 for the experimental group), as well as the distribution of responses (mode = 3 *Fully applicable* in both groups).

i23		
	Control	Exper.
Not applicable1	1	2
Maybe 2	8	5
Fully Applicable 3	20	22
mean	2,66	2,69
mode	3	3

Table 5.13. Distribution of the response frequencies for the item 23

The analysis of this item confirms the homogeneity of the experimental and control groups.

The formulation of the statement does not allow detecting particular sensitivity or specifically intercultural skills, it is still useful for raising awareness and reflecting upon the other.

i24: When I am a newcomer in a group with people from a different country, I try to find out the rules in this group by observing their behaviour.

The most frequent answer to this statement is *Fully applicable* for both groups. The average of the scores of the two groups is very similar (2.72 for the control group and 2.69 for the experimental group), as well as the distribution of responses (mode = 3 *Fully applicable* in both groups)

i24		
	Control	Exper.
Not applicable1	1	1
Maybe 2	6	7
Fully Applicable 3	22	21
Mean	2,72	2,69
Mode	3	3

Table 5.14. Distribution of the response frequencies for the item 24

The analysis of this item confirms the homogeneity of the experimental and control groups.

The prevalence of '*Fully applicable*' responses to this item seems to confirm both the propensity to experiential rather than theoretical learning, and the difficulty in asking for explicit explanations in case of difficulty in interpersonal situations. Therefore, educational initiatives that take into account these characteristics of the students are desirable.

i25: When a conversation with people from different countries fails, I ask all persons involved to explain their positions.

The most frequent answer to this statement is *Maybe* for both groups, even if all three options are well represented. The average of the scores of the two groups is very similar (1.90 for the control group and 1.97 for the experimental group), as well as the distribution of responses (mode = 2 *Maybe* in both groups).

i25		
	Control	Exper.
Not applicable1	8	7
Maybe 2	16	16
Fully Applicable 3	5	6
Mean	1,90	1,97
Mode	2	2

Table 5.15. Distribution of the response frequencies for item 25

The analysis of this item confirms the homogeneity of the experimental and control groups.

The prevalence of *Maybe* responses and the distribution of responses on all three options suggests a need for didactic initiative: knowing the importance of making critical points explicit is fundamental in the development of the ICC (Hofstede, Pedersen & Hofstede, 202). Since asking for explanations and explaining problems do not seem to be acquired behaviours, it may be necessary to develop them with specific activities, such as the plenary discussion included in the experimental group's treatment.

i26: When conversation partners use gestures and expressions that are unknown to me, I ignore them.

The most frequent answer to this statement is *Not applicable* for both groups. The average of the scores of the two groups is similar (2.69 for the control group and 2.45 for the experimental group), as well as the distribution of the responses (mode = 3 *Not applicable* in both groups). For this statement the directionality of the scores assigned to the answers is 3.2.1.

i26		
	Control	Exper.
Fully applicable 1	1	2
Maybe 2	7	12
Not applicable 3	21	15
Mean	2,69	2,45
Mode	3	3

Table 5.16. Distribution of the response frequencies for the item 26

The analysis of this item confirms the homogeneity of the control and experimental groups.

For educational purposes it is interesting to note, albeit indirectly, a certain sensitivity towards the value of body language, which together with other verbal and non-verbal languages contributes to communication (Balboni, 1999): respondents declare that they do not ignore gestures and expressions unknown to them. One can therefore assume a favourable attitude to learning the value and meaning of non-verbal languages for intercultural communication, sometimes neglected in foreign language courses. Specific didactic activities, such as "What do you see" in session 2 of the treatment, can be very useful and appropriate.

i27: When talking to other people I always watch their body language

The most frequent answers to this statement are *Fully applicable* and *Maybe* for both groups. The average of the scores of the two groups is equal (2.59), the distribution of responses is similar (mode = 3 *Fully applicable* in both groups).

i27		
	Control	Exper.
Not applicable1	1	2
Maybe 2	11	8
Fully Applicable 3	17	19
Mean	2,55	2,59
Mode	3	3

Table 5.17. Distribution of the response frequencies for item 27

The analysis of this item confirms the homogeneity of the control and experimental groups.

Complementary to i26, this item reveals the sensitivity towards body language: the prevalence of *Fully applicable* answers and the strong representation of the *Maybe* answer suggest both awareness and need for deepening towards the value and meaning of body language in intercultural communication. Also in this case activities like "What do you see" in session 2 of the treatment can be very useful and appropriate to develop such skills.

i28: In conversations with speakers of other languages I avoid unclear or ambiguous words.

The most frequent answers to this statement are *Fully applicable* and *Maybe* for both groups. The average of the scores of the two groups is very similar (2.48 for the control group and 2.38 for the experimental group), as is the distribution of responses, while mode is not significantly different (mode = 3 *Fully applicable* with 15 answers for the group of control and mode = 2 *Maybe* with 14 answers for the experimental group).

i28		
	Control	Exper.
Not applicable1	1	2
Maybe 2	13	14
Fully Applicable 3	15	13

Mean	2,48	2,38
Mode	3	2

Table 5.18. Distribution of the response frequencies for the item 28

Analysis of this item shows non-significant differences in control and experimental groups.

The prevalence of *Maybe* and *Fully applicable* answers and the distribution of responses on all three options suggests a need for didactic intervention: compared to a large group of respondents who seem to have awareness and mastery of the problems inherent in the use of language with people of different cultures, there is an equally large group that does not have the same skills. It is necessary to strengthen the knowledge and use of strategies to manage problematic situations as well as the reflection on the use of language in different cultures. In this regard, the activity of session 4 of the treatment, which proposes a reflection on the use of language as a manifestation of the cultural dimension Individualism-Collectivism, is very appropriate.

i29: I get confused when there are no reliable transport timetables in the country where I spend my holiday.

The most frequent answer to this statement is *Maybe* for both groups, even if all the options are well represented. The average of the scores of the two groups is very similar (1.93 for the control group and 1.90 for the experimental group) also the distribution of the responses is similar (mode = 2 *Maybe* in both groups). For this statement the directionality of the scores assigned to the answers is 3.2.1.

i29		
	Control	Exper.
Fully applicable 1	8	10
Maybe 2	15	12
Not applicable 3	6	7
Mean	1,93	1,90
Mode	2	2

Table 5.19. Distribution of the response frequencies for the item 29

The analysis of this item confirms the homogeneity of the control and experimental groups.

It is interesting to note the prevalence of *Maybe* answers to this item and the distribution of responses on all three options: this result seems to suggest that the punctuality of means of transport is not a priority for respondents, who are, as we have seen, a heterogeneous group of nationalities, without any British or American members. Perhaps this priority was present in the test designers.

i30: When I observe people in other countries, I often guess how they are feeling.

The most frequent answer to this statement is *Maybe* for both groups, even if all the options are represented. The average of the scores of the two groups is similar (2.14 for the control group and 2.38 for the experimental group), as well as the distribution of responses (mode = 2 *Maybe* in both groups).

i30		
	Control	Exper.
Not applicable 1	5	1
Maybe 2	15	16
Fully Applicable 3	9	12
Mean	2,14	2,38
Mode	2	2

Table 5.20. Distribution of the response frequencies for the item 30

The analysis of this item confirms the homogeneity of the control and experimental groups.

We note the prevalence of *Maybe* responses to this item and the distribution of responses on all three options: this is probably due to a rather generic formulation of the statement, which however does not seem to suggest clear directions for educational intervention for the development of the ICC.

i31: I often change my plans when I am on holiday abroad.

The most frequent answer to this statement is *Maybe* for both groups, even if all the answers are well represented. The average of the scores of the two groups is similar (2.07 for the control group and 2.31 for the experimental group), as well as the distribution of the responses (mode = 2 *Maybe* in both groups).

i31		
	Control	Exper.
Not applicable 1	7	3
Maybe 2	13	14
Fully Applicable 3	9	12
Mean	2,07	2,31
Mode	2	2

Table 5.21. Distribution of the response frequencies for item 31

The analysis of this item confirms the homogeneity of the control and experimental groups.

Also in this item we notice the prevalence of *Maybe* responses and the distribution of responses on all three options: probably this is due to a rather generic formulation of the statement, which however does not seem to suggest clear directions of educational intervention for the development of the ICC.

i32: When the behaviour of people from other cultures alienates me, I avoid making contact with them.

The most frequent answer to this statement is *Maybe* for both groups, even if all the options are well represented. The average of the scores of the two groups is very similar (2.24 for the control group and 2.14 for the experimental group), as well as the distribution of responses (mode = 2 *Maybe* in both groups). For this statement the directionality of the scores assigned to the answers is 3.2.1.

i32		
	Control	Exper.
Fully applicable 1	4	3
Maybe 2	14	19
Not applicable 3	11	7
Mean	2,24	2,14
Mode	2	2

Table 5.22. Distribution of the response frequencies for the item 32

The analysis of this item confirms the homogeneity of the control and experimental groups.

Also in this item we notice the prevalence of *Maybe* responses and the distribution of responses on all three options: it seems to confirm the need to develop strategies to manage problematic situations, such as developing cultural awareness and learning to explicitly ask for information and explanations. These issues are at the core of the educational activities carried out by the experimental group.

i33: I don't have problems in suddenly changing to one of my other languages during a conversation.

The most frequent answers to this statement are *Fully applicable* and *Maybe* for both groups. The average of the scores of the two groups is similar (2.59 for the control group and 2.48 for the experimental group), as well as the distribution of responses (mode = 3 *Fully applicable* in both groups).

The analysis of this item confirms the homogeneity of the control and experimental groups.

i33		
	Control	Exper.
Not applicable 1	1	3
Maybe 2	10	9
Fully Applicable 3	18	17
Mean	2,59	2,48
Mode	3	3

Table 5.23. Distribution of the response frequencies for item 33

Such a distribution of the responses indicates a good familiarity of respondents with the use of languages other than L1, also confirmed by the answers to the i8 on the number of 'well spoken' languages (section 5.2), in which over 65% of respondents declares that he speaks 3 or 4 languages well. This linguistic richness can be useful in the intercultural comparison phase.

i34: I always follow the rules of my own culture if I am not sure of how to behave properly when dealing with people from other cultures

The most frequent answers to this statement are *Fully applicable* and *Maybe* for both groups. The average of the scores of the two groups is quite similar (1.52 for the control group and 1.90 for the experimental group), as the distribution of responses; the mode is

not significantly different (mode = 1 *Fully applicable* with 16 answers for the group of control and mode = 2 *Maybe* with 12 answers for the experimental group). For this statement the directionality of the scores assigned to the answers is 3.2.1.

i34		
	Control	Exper.
Fully applicable 1	16	10
Maybe 2	11	12
Not applicable 3	2	7
Mean	1,52	1,90
Mode	1	2

Table 5.24. Distribution of the response frequencies for the item 34

The analysis of this item shows non-significant differences in control and experimental groups.

For educational purposes, this item too shows that respondents find it difficult using appropriate strategies in the event of intercultural problems, as was also noted in the analysis of i24 and i32: only a few respondents (9) state '*not applicable*' the solution to follow the rules of their culture in intercultural situations, which would be the most appropriate response from an intercultural perspective. An educational intervention aimed at showing tools and strategies is necessary, as for example, asking explicit questions about the habits and customs of a different culture or discussing together about any differences in behaviour that may be found. These activities are part of the treatment of the experimental group.

i35: When colleagues from other cultures in my work group come to work later and/or take longer breaks, I adopt their work habits.

The most frequent answer to this statement is *Not applicable* in the control group and *Maybe* in the experimental group, even if all the answers are well represented. The average of the scores of the two groups is quite similar (1.66 for the control group and 2.00 for the experimental group), as well as the distribution of responses; mode is not significantly different (mode = 1 *Fully applicable* with 15 responses for the group control and mode = 2 *Maybe* with 11 answers for the experimental group).

i35		
	Control	Exper.
Not applicable 1	15	9
Maybe 2	9	11
Fully Applicable 3	5	9
Mean	1,66	2,00
Mode	1	2

Table 5.25. Distribution of the response frequencies for the item 35

The analysis of this item shows non-significant differences in control and experimental groups.

The prevalence of *Not applicable* responses and the distribution of responses on all three options suggests the need for didactic intervention, although perhaps this heterogeneity in responses depends on whether the statement refers to a work context although respondents are students. Probably the instructions given in person before the administration of the test, i.e. which could also imagine situations of study as well as work, may not be clear enough. It is also necessary to keep in mind that working or studying in groups is not a consolidated practice in all cultures, so this statement may not be meaningful to determine any teaching initiatives in case of administration to multicultural groups, as is the case of this research.

i36: If I have behaved inappropriately towards a colleague from another culture, I think of how to compensate for it without further hurting him.

The most frequent answer to this statement is *Fully applicable* for both groups. The average of the scores of the two groups is similar (2.83 for the control group and 2.69 for the experimental group), as well as the distribution of responses (mode = 3 *Fully applicable* in both groups).

i36		
	Control	Exper.
Not applicable 1	0	1
Maybe 2	5	7
Fully Applicable 3	24	21
Mean	2,83	2,69
Mode	3	3

Table 5.26. Distribution of the response frequencies for the item 36

The analysis of this item confirms the homogeneity of the control and experimental groups.

For educational purposes, the distribution of responses demonstrates a good cultural awareness, which must be taken into account in planning and carrying out the planned activities.

i37: When there are colleagues in my work area who constitute an ethnic minority, I try to involve them in the majority group.

The most frequent answers to this statement are *Fully applicable* and *Maybe* for both groups. The average of the scores of the two groups is similar (2.55 for the control group and 2.66 for the experimental group), as well as the distribution of responses (mode = 3 *Fully applicable* in both groups).

i37		
	Control	Exper.
Not applicable1	2	0
Maybe 2	9	10
Fully Applicable 3	18	19
Mean	2,55	2,66
Mode	3	3

Table 5.27. Distribution of the response frequencies for the item 37

The analysis of this item confirms the homogeneity of the control and experimental groups.

For educational purposes, the distribution of responses mainly on *Fully applicable* and *Maybe* shows a good cultural awareness in the majority of respondents that must be taken into account in the planning and execution of the planned activities.

i38: When colleagues or superiors from abroad criticise my work, I consider changing my work habits accordingly

The most frequent answers to this statement are *Maybe* and *Fully applicable* for both groups. The average of the scores of the two groups is similar (2.28 for the control group and 2.45 for the experimental group), as well as the distribution of the responses (mode =

2 *Maybe* in the control group and 2 *Maybe* and 3 *Fully applicable* in the experimental group).

i38		
	Control	Exper.
Not applicable1	4	1
Maybe 2	13	14
Fully Applicable 3	12	14
Mean	2,28	2,45
Mode	2	2 and 3

Table 5.28. Distribution of the response frequencies for item 8

The analysis of this item confirms the homogeneity of the control and experimental groups.

For educational purposes, the distribution of responses mainly on *Fully applicable* and *Maybe* also suggests in this case a good intercultural awareness, which must be taken into account in the classroom. It is also noted that the statement refers to a work context but respondents are students and that even the habit of receiving criticism on one's work, such as working in groups of the i35, is not consolidated in all cultures, so this statement may not be meaningful to determine any didactic initiatives in case of administration to multicultural groups, as is the case with this research.

From the analysis of the frequencies of the responses, of the averages and of the mode of the items 18-38 of the control and experimental groups, there are little significant differences. These results can be summarized in Figures 5.32 and 5.33, which report the percentage distribution of responses for each group. On the abscissas axis the items 18-38 are reported, on the axis of the ordinates the response percentages. The colour indicates the answer option (1, 2 or 3). Yellow is the response percentage 1, the blue answer 2, the red answer 3. Since the rating scale is an ordered score (1 <2 <3) it makes sense to line up the answers. In this way, the boundary between yellow and blue represents the percentage of respondents who answered 1 while the border between blue and red represents the percentage of respondents who answered 1 or 2. 100% i.e. the extreme red are the respondents who have answered 1 or 2 or 3 (clearly the totality of the respondents).

Figure 5.32. Percentage distribution of responses to items 18-38 of the control group.

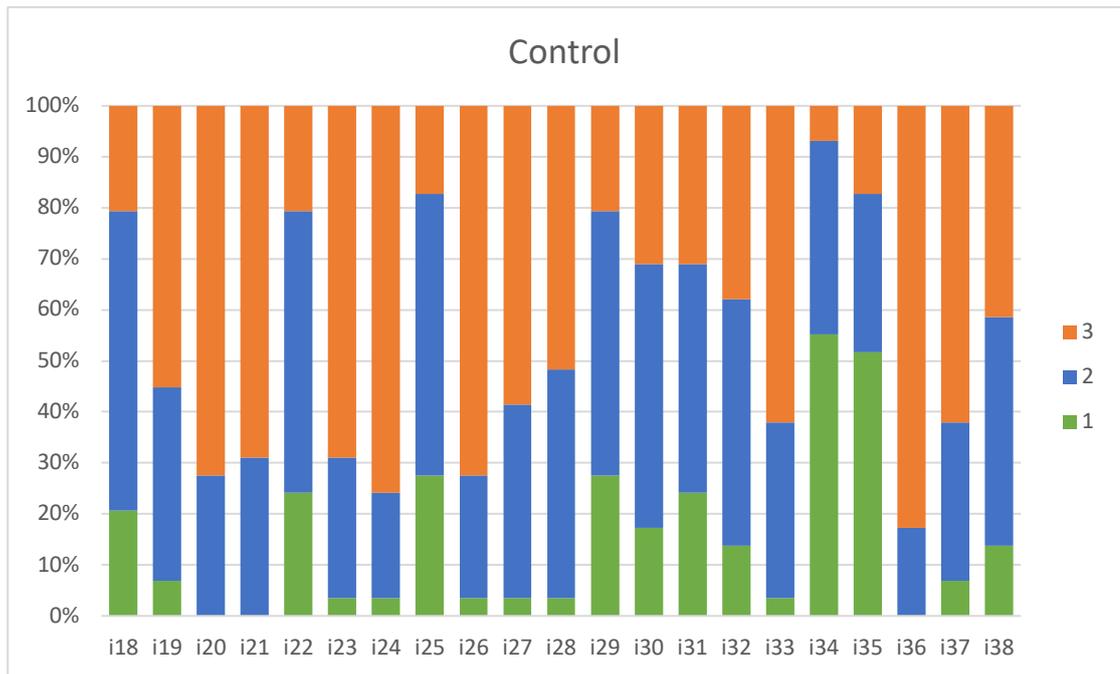
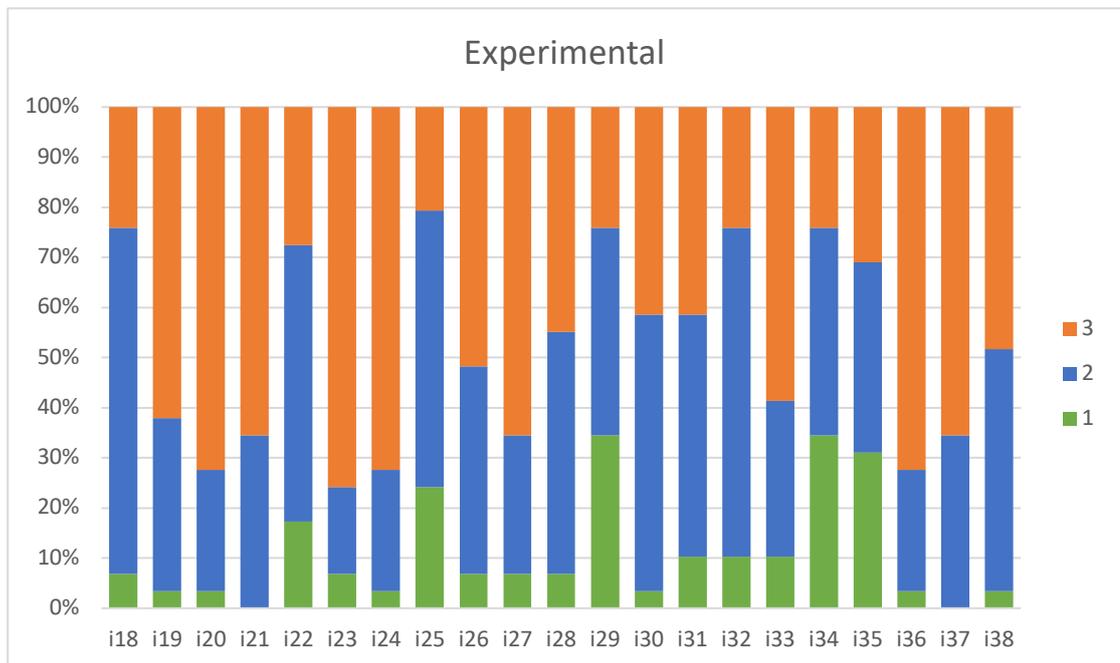


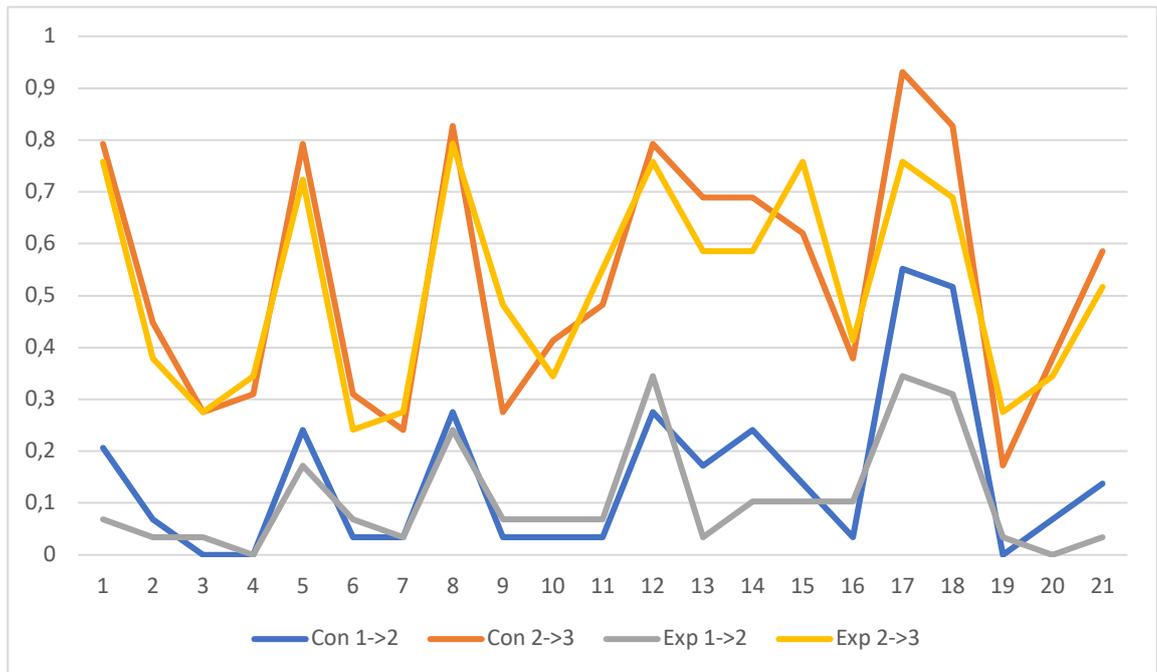
Figure 5.33. Percentage distribution of responses to items 18-38 of the experimental group



The homogeneity of the control and experimental groups is shown in the overlaid graph of the level lines (Figure 5.34). The boundaries given in Figures 5.32 and 5.33 are represented in Figure 5.34 until forming, for each group, a profile for answers 1 (at the

bottom of the graph) and for answers 1 and 2 (at the top of the graph). It is noted that the two groups have perfectly overlapping profiles, confirming their homogeneity.

Figure 5.34. Level lines of the i18-i38 response frequency distributions of the control and experimental groups



The analysis of the items 18-38 then verifies that the control and experimental groups are homogeneous and comparable with each other from the start, as also verified through the analysis of the items 1-17 (section 5.2).

This preliminary analysis illustrated in sections 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 allowed us to join the Alpha and Beta phases and therefore to consider a single sample the 58 respondents who performed the pre- and post- tests. It also showed that there are no significant differences between the experimental and control groups and therefore the two groups are comparable to each other. It is therefore possible to submit the experimental group to the treatment and to compare the results of the post- test with the control group.

This preliminary analysis also made it possible to gather information on respondents that was useful during the planning and carrying out of teaching activities, because it highlighted some potentials and limitations of respondents' competences from an intercultural perspective.

5.4. Intercultural Scenarios: Analysing the Open-ended Responses

In sections 5.1-5.3 the data analysis of items 1-38 verified that the research sample is unique, homogeneous, and therefore its results comparable. In this section the analysis focuses on the items related to the Intercultural Communicative Competence assessment, the core of this research project. The aim of this analysis is to describe the test results as per the three macro-components of the ICC: Knowledge, Openness and Adaptability.

The third and last section of the questionnaire consists of 4 Intercultural Encounters or Scenarios: respondents read a text about an intercultural situation and have to answer multiple choice or open-ended questions. Each scenario can consist of 1 or more items, i.e. open-ended questions that help respondent give a thorough answer, however only one score to each macro-component involved is given. The answers are assessed by the assessor (in this case by the researcher) according to the evaluation grid attached to the INCA questionnaire, 5 levels of competence were identified (basic, lower intermediate, intermediate, upper intermediate, and full competence), so scores go from 1 to 5 in each macro-component. Each scenario covers one or two macro-components of the ICC, as detailed below (Table 5.29).

	<i>PRE- TEST</i>				<i>POST- TEST</i>			
	<i>Scena- rio 1</i>	<i>Scena- rio 2</i>	<i>Scena- rio 3</i>	<i>Scena- rio 4</i>	<i>Scena- rio 1</i>	<i>Scena- rio 2</i>	<i>Scena- rio 3</i>	<i>Scena- rio 4</i>
Knowledge	x			x	x			x
Openness		x	x			x	x	
Adaptability	x	x	x	x		x	x	x

Table 5.29: ICC components covered by scenarios

The test requires that each macro-component be assessed by 2 or 3 or 4 scenarios, i.e. in the pre- test Knowledge is assessed by Scenarios 1 and 4, Openness by Scenarios 2 and 3, Adaptability by Scenarios 1, 2, 3 and 4. In the post- test Knowledge is assessed by Scenarios 1 and 4, Openness by Scenarios 2 and 3, Adaptability by Scenarios 2, 3 and 4. The structure of the INCA test provides that the evaluation of the ICC is represented by the final result, i.e. level of competence, in each of the 3 macro-components, the test result will therefore not be a single final score. For this reason focusing on the results relative to each macro-component is considered useful in this first phase of analysis of the ICC. In this section the descriptive analysis of each macro-component is done with measures of central tendency (the mean) and measures of variability (the variance and the

coefficient of variation), which provide indices of how varied the scores are (Agresti & Finlay, 2009; Dörnyei, 2007). Variance is the average distance of the scores from the mean, it gives information about the variability of scores for every single item; Coefficient of Variation (CV) allows to compare the variability of the phenomena independently of the unit of measurement, in our case it allows to compare the variances that come from items with different averages. Low variability indices and scores clustered around the mean are distinctive of a homogeneous sample (Dörnyei, 2007).

It should be noted that this analysis was made with all the available questionnaires, before matching the pre- and post- tests, therefore the number of respondents to each macro-component varies slightly, for example in the pre-test for K $n = 78$, for O $n = 83$, etc. The analysis of the mean values of K, O and A made with all the available questionnaires produced results consistent with the analysis of the matched tests, i.e. the averages calculated on the questionnaires of the 58 respondents who performed the pre- and post-tests were very similar to the averages calculated on all the available questionnaires, so this choice to use all the available questionnaires does not significantly influence the result of the analysis.

The relevant scenarios (English version only) are shown along with the description of the macro-components to make the text more easily understandable. A qualitative analysis of the open-ended questions is then presented in order to highlight peculiar features in both tests (pre- and post-) and to identify possible effects of the treatment in the post- test.

5.4.1 Intercultural Scenarios in the Pre- test

Knowledge.

In the pre- test Knowledge is assessed by Scenario 1 (i39) and scenario 4 (i43).

SCENARIO 1: ACCOMMODATION

*Given the fact that one of the stated aims of your work placement/study abroad is that you would be able to find out more about another country and its way of life, please study the options for your accommodation. Rank the options in the order in which you yourself would choose, and then write a section in which you explain why you chose your **first** option.*

There is no one correct answer, as each option would offer some advantages and some disadvantages.

Options	Order
<i>A place in a young workers'/ students' hostel, together with some of your fellow nationals.</i>	
<i>Living with a local family, half board.</i>	
<i>A small flat where you would cater for yourself.</i>	

39) *The reasons for my choice are as follows (15 words min.)*

SCENARIO 4: *FEELING CONFUSED*

You have been working for six months among people from a different country. In the workplace you do not have language difficulties as such, but you notice that people often seem to say things they don't really mean and that they exaggerate the way in which they speak. For example when somebody is working too slowly, a supervisor might say 'you take all the time you need' instead of 'hurry up'. In your culture people are very straightforward and say only what they mean.

43) *Imagine that you are writing or e-mailing to a friend in your own country. Write down the thoughts you might have on this situation. Imagine what your reactions might be and how you would deal with the situation. (20 words min.)*

The descriptive analysis for this macro-component is on Table 5.30. As for the means, there are fairly low values, both the average of the individual items and the final average for this component are around 1.70, on a scale of 1 to 5. Therefore, respondents are starting the experimentation with a low competence (between basic and lower intermediate) regarding Knowledge. With regard to the variance, that is the variability of the scores with respect to the mean, in this case too, very low values are noted in each item, demonstrating that the sample is homogeneous. Furthermore, the mean of the variances ($K = .38$) is lower than the variances of the individual items ($k1 = .53$ and $k4 = .63$): this means that the average K reduces the variability of the results and therefore proves to be more acceptable as an indicator summary. The CV is also very low (less than .50 in all cases), further confirming the low variability of the scores and the homogeneity of the sample.

K Pre-	k1	k4	K
Mean	1.68	1.73	1.71
Variance	.53	.63	.38
CV	.43	.46	.36

Table 5.30: descriptive analysis of Knowledge in the pre- test

Below are some examples of answers to Scenario 1 - Accommodation - of the pre-test, some that denote a basic competence, and others that denote a greater competence (lower intermediate or intermediate). It should be noted that the original text of the answers is reported, including linguistic errors. Table 5.31 shows answers that denote a basic competence for both K and A: we can see how the respondents are focused on themselves and their needs. There is no curiosity or desire to know the new culture (typical elements of a good K), nor desire or willingness to change one's habits (typical elements of a good A).

cod stud	Risposta a scenario 1
882710 exp. (spagnola) 1K 1A	1. small flat 2 hostel, 3 local family Preferisco un appartamento perché s'assomiglia di più a quello che io faccio al mio paese. Puoi fare quello che tu vuoi (21 parole)
882712 exp. (spagnola) 1K 1A	1 small flat, 2 hostel, 3 local family io preferisco un appartamento perché ho più indipendenza con i miei orari e posso cucinare quando ho bisogno (18 parole)
882715 exp. (tedesca) 1K 1A	1 small flat, 2 local family, 3 hostel I would like to live in a small flat because I really like to cook and therefore need my own kitchen. I feel more comfortable if I know which kind of people surround me and I like to have some time for myself in my own room. Living with a family would maybe involve too many rules

Table 5.31: answers to Scenario 1 pre- test: examples of basic competence in K and A

Table 5.32 reports responses that denote a lower intermediate or intermediate competence for K and A. There is a greater awareness of the role of the language to get to know a new culture, the curiosity and the desire to know the different culture. There is a desire to 'mix with the other culture', and the answers are not only focused on their habits and needs.

cod stud	Risposta a scenario 1
882722 exp. (tedesca) 3K 2A	1 famiglia, 2 ostello, 3 appartamento Ho vissuto un anno in una famiglia in Spagna e un anno in una famiglia in Cina. E' il modo migliore e più facile da imparare la lingua perché di solito non parlano inglese e non lo farebbero nella vita quotidiana solo per lo straniero. Non hai altra scelta che imparare la lingua e ti insegnano la cultura senza essere consapevole.
88721 exp. (tedesca) 3K 2A	1 famiglia 2 appartamento, 3 ostello quando sono all'estero cerco di miscelare con l'altra cultura, quindi evito di collegarmi solo con colleghi della stessa nazionalità. Poi, per me è importante aver spazio privato. La soluzione ottima sarà vivere con persone della stessa età, ma di altra nazionalità
882719 exp. (francese)	1 famiglia, 2 appartamento, 3 ostello

3K 3A	Ho scelto la mezza pensione in famiglia perché secondo me, la cosa più importante quando vivo all'estero è d'apprendere la lingua, la cucina, il modo di vita di queste persone. Ho scelto il posto letto alla terza posizione perché non vuole parlare la mia lingua: conosco già la mia cultura!
882717 exp. (tedesca)	1 famiglia, 2 ostello, 3 appartamento I have lived with host families in different countries several times and I would always do it again because it is the best way of improving language and getting to know the people's and countries tradition, culture and habit
3K 3A	

Table 5.32: answers to Scenario 1 pre- test: examples of lower int./ intermediate competence in K and A

Table 5.33 shows a response to scenario 4 with basic competence in K and A. There is no mention of cultural differences as a possible explanation for the different behaviour, there is no effort to understand the reason for the behaviour: just a simple question how one would feel in someone else's shoes, which is not developed.

cod stud	Risposta a scenario 4
882715 Exp (tedesca)	I think I would be a bit upset because of the other person, who works slowly, maybe I have to do mor of her work. But on the other side I would think about how I would feel in this situation and that the work can be too much. But in the end I wouldn't say anything and be OK with it.
1A 1K	

Table 5.33: answer to Scenario 4 pre- test: examples of basic competence in K and A

Openness

In the pre-test Openness is assessed by Scenario 2 (i40) and Scenario 3 (i41).

SCENARIO 2: INVITARE O NON INVITARE – *TO INVITE OR NOT*

A young person from country x comes to work at your firm for 6 months. You are aware that he is rather isolated and you consider the idea of inviting him to join you and your friends. The problem is that your group of friends have known each other for a long time and a stranger would find it difficult to fit in.

40) Write down in a few lines what you think you would do in this situation (and why). **(20 words min.)**

SCENARIO 3: A SOCIAL OCCASION

Your supervisor at work has asked you to socialise with a young foreign worker of the same age and gender as yourself, who speaks your language quite well.

41) Write what topics of conversation you would choose. (10 words min.)

The descriptive analysis for this macro-component is on Table 5.34. As for the means, there are rather low values, around 1.60, on a scale of 1 to 5. Therefore, respondents are starting the experimentation with a low competence (between basic and lower intermediate) also with regard to Openness. With regard to the variance, that is the variability of the scores with respect to the mean, we can see even lower values than for K, demonstrating that the sample is very homogeneous with respect to this macro-component. Moreover, the mean of the variances ($O = .25$) is lower than the variances of the individual items ($o_2 = .44$ and $o_3 = .32$): this means that the average O reduces the variability of the results and therefore proves to be more acceptable as an indicator synthesis of O. The CV is also very low (equal to or less than .40 in all cases), further confirmation of the low variability of the scores and the homogeneity of the sample.

O Pre-	o_2	o_3	O
Mean	1.66	1.47	1.57
Variance	.44	.32	.25
CV	.40	0.39	.32

Table 5.34: descriptive analysis of Openness in the pre- test

Here are some examples of answers to Scenario 2 that denote a basic competence (Table 5.35): the newcomer is a person from a different country, but this aspect seems irrelevant and it is not taken into consideration. The proposed activities could be used with any new person arriving in a group.

cod stud	Risposta a scenario 2
881110 Exp (spagnola) 1A 10	Proverei di trovare la forma di che tutti i miei amici e il giovane straniero parliamo di qualcosa conosciuto per tutti.
881113 Exp (tedesca) 1A 10	Vorrei invitare questo giovane a una cena con vino e i miei amici più importante. Dopo una sera come questa il giovane ha fatto conoscenza con tre, forse quattro persone. Poi invito questo giovane con tutti amici al una festa per esempio.

Table 5.35: answers to Scenario 2 pre- test: examples of basic competence in A and O

On Table 5.36 there are examples of responses that denote greater intercultural awareness: the awareness of the need to 'integrate him / her as much as possible' and the

mastery of a limited repertoire of strategies, such as clarification and simplification can be noted.

cod stud	Risposta a scenario 2
882717 Exp (tedesca) 3A 30	Most of my friends speak several languages and have lived overseas, so they would be open-minded and try to integrate the person. I would this person to our activities and try to integrate him/her as much as possible.
882714 Exp (francese) 3A 30	Proverò di spiegargli le nostre abitudine, come e perché facciamo le cose, gli presenterò i miei amici, proverò di parlare chiaramente e non veloce, così può seguire quello che siamo dicendo

Table 5.36: answers to Scenario 2 pre- test: examples of intermediate competence in A and O

Very often the characteristics of the personality seem to be the only aspects taken into consideration to address the situations presented in the intercultural scenarios, especially in the pre- test phase. See the example of response to scenario 3 (Table 5.37): there is no trace of reference to different cultures; this answer could be given about any new young colleague. For this reason, it resulted appropriate that the first session of treatment addresses the layers of culture as well as the relationship between differences due to personality and differences due to culture.

cod stud	Risposta a scenario 3
881918 Con (cinese) 1 A 10	How she finds the new job; if she likes the weather/ food/ accommodation / ... what she does in her free time/ Her favourite places in this city/ if she missed home/ her plans for holiday.... <i>What type of activities would you choose?</i> That really depends on what type of person she is. The activities would range from getting coffee, watching films, going for a walk, having dinners, to going to social events, traveling together, etc.

Table 5.37: answer to Scenario 3 pre- test: examples of basic competence in A and O

Adaptability

In the pre- test Adaptability is assessed by all of the four scenarios.

The descriptive analysis for this macro-component is on Table 5.38. As for the means, there are fairly low values, both the average of the individual items and the final average for this component are between 1.50 and 1.90, on a scale from 1 to 5. Therefore respondents start the experimentation with a low competence (between basic and lower

intermediate) also with regard to Adaptability. With regard to the variance, that is the variability of the scores with respect to the mean, very low values (.54 or less) are also noted in this case, demonstrating that the sample is homogeneous. Furthermore, the mean of the variances ($A = .19$) is lower than the variances of the individual items (values between .35 and .54): this means that the average A reduces the variability of the results and therefore proves to be more acceptable as an indicator of synthesis. The CV is also very low (less than .50 in all cases), further confirming the low variability of the scores and the homogeneity of the sample.

A Pre-	a1	a2	a3	a4	A
Mean	1.51	1.59	1.65	1.91	1.67
Variance	.45	.47	.35	.54	.19
CV	.45	.43	.36	.39	.26

Table 5.38: descriptive analysis of Adaptability in the pre- test

Table 5.39 shows an example of lower intermediate competence in A. We note the attempt to address problems due to cultural differences, but the respondent lacks the ability to identify them clearly, after a timid attempt to use appropriate strategies, such as clarification ('ask them what you think of the country'), in the end he/she tends to stay on his/her positions, offering to give him advice for leisure time to the new colleague.

cod stud	Risposta a scenario 3
881917 Con (spagnolo) 2 A 2 O	Credo che i primi argomenti di conversazione sarebbero domandarli cosa <u>pensa del paese</u> , <u>parlare del suo</u> e aconsegiarli luoghi dove andare nel suo tempo libero. (...)

Table 5.39: answers to Scenario 3 pre- test: example of lower intermediate competence in A

The overall data relating to the macro-components in the pre- test are summarized in Table 5.40, which shows the mean, variance and coefficient of variation of K, O and A. Taking into account that these summary indicators have proved more acceptable, it can be said that the incoming CCI of the sample stands at low values (between 1.57 and 1.71 in a scale from 1 to 5), that is, the respondents have a competence between basic and lower intermediate, and therefore an educational intervention aimed at favouring the development of the ICC is very appropriate. Furthermore, very low measures of

variability show that the sample is homogeneous, an ideal situation, which makes the design of the treatment and its submission to the experimental group easier.

Pre- Test	K	O	A
Mean	1.71	1.57	1.67
Variance	.38	.25	.19
CV	.36	.32	.26

Table 5.40: descriptive analysis of K, O, and A in the pre- test

5.4.2 Intercultural Scenarios in the Post- test

Knowledge.

In the post- test Knowledge is assessed by Scenario 1 (i44-i48) and Scenario 4 (i52-i53).

SCENARIO 1: FINDING INFORMATION

You have been selected to take part in an international work project with an associate European company. This will involve you spending 3-4 months in a country which you have not visited before (although it is possible that you learnt some of the language at school). Answers to the following questions will help us to judge how quickly you might come to understand your new environment, its culture and its people.

- 44) *What kind of information do you think you would need before departure? (10 words min.)*
- 45) *How would you obtain that information?*
- 46) *During the placement what would you do to find out information about the workplace?*
- 47) *During your spare time, if you wanted to find out more about the country, what would you do?*
- 48) *Any other comments*

SCENARIO 4: FEELING CONFUSED

You have been working in a foreign country for six months and you speak the language well enough for everyday needs. At work, difficult procedures are explained to you in your own language, so there are no problems here. However, it is almost impossible to understand your colleagues when they talk to each other as they talk quickly about situations you do not understand. It is also difficult to understand jokes and casual remarks where people seem to speak in a local dialect. Therefore you often feel out of your depth and confused.

52) *Say whether you would find such a situation particularly difficult and why. (min. 15 words)*

53) *Suggest what you might do in order to feel more comfortable in this situation. (min. 15 words)*

The descriptive analysis for this macro-component is on Table 5.41. As for the K averages in the post- test, it is evident that quite low values remain (around 2.5 on a scale of 1 to 5), i.e. lower the intermediate and intermediate levels of competence, although higher than the pre- test. This seems to suggest that at the end of the experimentation there was an increase in overall K (i.e. not divided into control and experimental groups), but still far from reaching full competence. The variance of each item remains quite low; with K resulting as an acceptable synthesis value since it has the variance lower than that of the single items (.59 against .72 and 1.14). Even the CV, low and with K lower than that of individual items, confirms the low variability of scores and the homogeneity of the sample. The analysis of K in the post-test shows interesting differences with respect to the pre- test. First of all, we see an increase in the average (K has gone from 1.70 to 2.48), demonstrating greater competence achieved by the sample. At the same time the variance has also increased (from .38 to .59), demonstrating that the sample is no longer as homogeneous as in the beginning, it can therefore be assumed that the experimental group has increased K more than the group of control (for control – experimental groups comparison, see section 4.5).

K Post-	k1	k4	K
Mean	2.79	2.17	2.48
Variance	.72	1.14	.59
CV	.30	.49	.31

Table 5.41: descriptive analysis of Knowledge in the post- test

At the end of the experimentation, higher level responses are detected in both groups (Table 5.42, last three answers): more research-like activities are noted, one begins to recognize the other as a coherent individual to whom questions can be asked about culture (keywords underlined in the answers). However, there is still the presence of level 1 responses. The first answer of Table 5.42 in fact mentions the fact that one is in a different country only in the fourth answer, in the others the respondent is very focused on

himself/herself and his/her work, not only the intercultural perspective but also intercultural awareness are absent.

cod stud	Risposta a scenario
882553 Con 1K	<p>i44: Penso che avrei bisogno e voglia di sapere un po' di più su che tipo di progetto di lavoro si tratta. Magari vorrei sapere anche se ci sono altre persone come io. E più di tipo pratiche: dove abitare, ecc.</p> <p>i45: Chiedendole direttamente all' direttore dell'azienda, o semplicemente cercando su internet.</p> <p>i46: Penso che potrò chiedere se posso avere la mail di altri colleghi che lavorano già per più tempo in questa azienda.</p> <p>i47: Prima di tutto penso che andrei a camminare per la strada per scoprire un po' il mio nuovo ambiente. Poi cercherei viaggi organizzati (con pulman o treno per esempio) dove potrei visitare città del paese e incontrare nuove persone nello stesso tempo.</p>
881951 Con 4K	<p>i44: Their culture taboo, social etiquette, dinning culture, their demographics and history, their holidays.</p> <p>i45: Mainly from <u>internet</u>, or, if it possible, I will ask someone from the country.</p> <p>i46: I will first socialize with others (colleagues) just to enquire some basic information if there isn't any online.</p> <p>i47: I will visit the local museum, restaurant, shops, with a local if I made any local friends, and I will travel to other cities, try to <u>read books</u> and <u>watch film in their language</u> if I can.</p>
881952 Con 4K	<p>i44: La situazione <u>geopolitica</u> del paese, le cose (comportamenti sociali) da evitare assolutamente</p> <p>i45: Cercando su <u>internet</u>, in <u>libri</u> che riguardano il <u>turismo</u> (Lonely Planet ad es.)</p> <p>i46: Chiederei ai miei responsabili (superiori nella gerarchia) oppure a colleghi</p> <p>i47: Cercerei di <u>incontrare</u> la gente (uscendo in bars, andando ad eventi culturali ...) poi <u>farei cose turistiche</u> (viaggerei, assaggierei specialità)</p>
881151 Exp 4K	<p>i44: Avrei bisogno di <u>conoscere la cultura generale</u> e l'abitudine di questo paese.</p> <p>i45: Domanderei ai miei superiori su quella e cercerei informazione sul internet</p> <p>i46: Lo stesso que nella domanda anteriore, chiederei ai miei superiori</p> <p>i47: Se io avessi tempo farei un viaggio per tutto il paese, e andrei ai bari</p>

Table 5.42: answers to Scenario 1 post- test: examples of basic and of upper intermediate competence in K

Openness

In the post- test Openness is assessed by Scenario 2 (i49) and Scenario 3 (i50-i51).

SCENARIO 2: FINDING YOUR PLACE IN THE TEAM

You have been appointed to a placement in another country for training purposes. Early in your placement, you discover that the system of hierarchy is totally different from that practised in your own country. For example, you are used to people dressing informally, using first names, eating in the

same canteen. Here there is much more formality, rules and regulations, and people don't even speak the same way to each other. It is very strange and you cannot help feeling that your own way is much better.

49) Write a few lines, which could be part of a letter/email, explaining this, and your reaction to it, to a colleague at home. **(min. 20 words)**

SCENARIO 3: UNDERSTANDING UNEXPECTED BEHAVIOUR

One disadvantage of your work placement is that the weekends are rather lonely. You normally spend time with friends and family and you miss this social side of your life. At work you become friendly with a colleague who can speak your language. This colleague says that he will telephone to invite you to the house during the weekend. The telephone does not ring. There could be a number of explanations for this.

50) On the Monday morning you decide to talk to a local colleague about this. How would you explain what had happened and how would you find out from the colleague what the explanation could be? **(min. 15 words)**

Later in the morning you meet the colleague who did not phone. He/she tells you he/she could not phone because 'My mother asked me to go shopping for her'.

51) Write a few lines as part of a letter/email to your family telling them about this incident and explaining why it happened. **(min. 20 words)**

The descriptive analysis for this macro-component is on Table 5.43. As for the means of O in the post- test, it is noted that quite low values remain (around 2.5 on a scale from 1 to 5), i.e. lower the intermediate and intermediate levels of competence, although higher than the pre- test. This seems to suggest that at the end of the experimentation there was an increase in the total O (i.e. not divided into control and experimental groups), but still far from the achievement of full competence. The variance remains quite low, with O resulting as an acceptable synthesis value as it has less variance than that of the individual items (.83 against 1.12 and .94). Also the CV, low and for O less than that of single items, confirms the low variability of the scores and the homogeneity of the sample. The analysis of O in the post- test shows interesting differences from the pre- test. First of all, we see an increase in the means (O has gone from 1.57 to 2.50), demonstrating greater

competence achieved by the sample. At the same time the variance has also increased (from .25 to .83), demonstrating that the sample is no longer as homogeneous as at the beginning of the experimentation, it can therefore be assumed that after the treatment the experimental group has increased the O more than the control group (for control – experimental groups comparison, see Section 4.5).

O Post-	o2	o3	O
Mean	2.57	2.43	2.50
Variance	1.12	.94	.83
CV	.41	.40	.36

Table 5.43: descriptive analysis of Openness in the post- test.

In the experimental group at the end of the experimentation we can see examples of upper-intermediate e full competence (Table 5.44). Respondents seem capable to cope tactfully with ethical problems, they have found strategies to adapt and compensate.

cod stud	Risposta a scenario 2 post-
882755 Exp 4 A 4 O	... poi c'è tanta gerarchia che non aspettavo prima di venire. Non è male avere rispetto di altre persone, infatti è davvero importante! Da noi il rispetto si ha anche con meno gerarchia, qui invece la gerarchia mostra anche il rispetto. Mi devo davvero abituare a questa cosa perché non voglio dare l'impressione che non avrò rispetto dei miei colleghi.
882759 Exp 5 O 5 A	... quando sono in ufficio sempre devo adattarmi, io ero abituata a parlare con tutti di qualcosa ma qui devo pensare prima di parlare ma non è sgradevole perché dopo, si andiamo a bere qualcosa insieme, si se può parlare di tutto semplicemente c'è più formalità.

Table 5.44: answers to Scenario 2 post- test: examples of upper intermediate and of full competence in A and O

Still, post- test examples of basic competence (Table 5.45) remain even more frequent in the control group, rarer in the experimental group (see section 4.5 for detailed data). In the answer we see again they are self-centred on themselves and their own needs, and a rather passive attitude (one needs just a little 'time because the situation is changed').

cod stud	Risposta a scenario 3 post-
882553 Con 1 A 1O	i50: Non so che cosa posso fare del mio weekend per il momento perché non conosco ancora tanta gente qui. Conosco una collega ma alla fine non mi ha contattata per uscire, magari non aveva tempo. Te cosa hai fatto invece?

	i51: Qui è diverso per quanto riguarda le mie abitudini del week-end. Ho provato di uscire con una collega che ho incontrato qui però aveva delle cose da fare quindi alla fine ho passato il week end da sola ma penso che basta un po' di tempo perché la situazione si cambia.
--	---

Table 5.45: answers to Scenario 3 post- test: example of basic competence in A and O

Adaptability

In the post- test Adaptability is assessed by Scenarios 2-4.

The descriptive analysis for this macro-component is on Table 5.46. As for the A averages in the post-test, it is clear that quite low values remain (around 2.5 on a scale from 1 to 5), i.e. lower the intermediate and intermediate levels of competence, although higher than the pre- test. This seems to suggest that at the end of the experimentation there was an increase in overall A (i.e. not divided into control and experimental groups), but still far from reaching full competence. The variance remains quite low: with O resulting as an acceptable synthesis value since it has a variance lower than that of the single items (.45 against values between .60 and .87). Even the CV, low and for A lower than that of individual items, confirms the low variability of scores. The analysis of A in the post-test shows interesting differences from the pre-test. First of all, an increase in the averages (A has gone from 1.67 to 2.53) can be noted, demonstrating greater competence achieved by the sample at the end of the experimentation. At the same time also the variance has increased (from .19 to .45), demonstrating that the sample is no longer as homogeneous as at the beginning of the experimentation, it can therefore be assumed that the experimental group following the treatment has increased the A more than the control group (for control – experimental groups comparison, see section 5.5).

A Post-	a2	a3	a4	A
Mean	2.60	2.33	2.67	2.53
Variance	.60	.87	.69	.45
CV	.30	.40	.31	.26

Table 5.46: descriptive analysis of Adaptability in the post- test

In the post- test it was possible to find full competence in A in the experimental group (Table 5.47), with interpretation of the scenarios from an intercultural perspective. The

respondent seems to be able to relate interpersonal problems to intercultural differences and is aware of their effects.

cod stud	Risposta a scenario 3 post-
882754 Exp 5 A 4 O	i50: Spiego alla mia collega che io non voglio essere petulante, per questo non ho chiamato all'altra collega. Decido di chiederla pure, cosa ha fatto il fine settimana. i51: Ho già scoperto che la famiglia ha un valore molto alto in Italia, soprattutto la madre è rispettata dai suoi figli.

Table 5.47: answer to Scenario 3 post- test: example of basic competence in A and O

Moreover, it was possible to identify in some responses the effects of the treatment, in particular of some strategies presented and used in the Sections, such as the separation of the observation of a fact or event from its interpretation, and the possibility to ask for explicit explanations to resolve misunderstanding or embarrassment. In Table 5.48 the first answer seems to use the key concept of separation of observation from interpretation, which during the treatment was both presented theoretically and used in the cross-cultural journal (see Section 4.2). In the second answer add the strategy of asking explicit questions was also added ('lo chiederei di aiutarmi a spiegarmelo' *I would ask him to help me explain it to me*).

cod stud	Risposta a scenario 3 post-
882755 Exp 4 A 4 O	i50: Racconterei tutto come è successo però <u>senza mettere qualche emozione</u> , non sarei delusa neanche arrabbiata, <u>mi interesserebbe solo cosa potrebbe stato lo spiegazione</u> . (...)
882756 5 A 5 O	i50: Gli direi che è successo qualcosa che forse ho capito male e che ho <u>bisogno del suo aiuto</u> . Gli direi <u>esattamente cosa è successo e anche le possibili spiegazioni che ho pensato io</u> . Dopo gli direi che queste spiegazioni sarebbero quelle <u>della mia cultura</u> e gli direi che forse non capisco la sua cultura perché è diversa e <u>lo chiederei di aiutarmi a spiegarmelo</u> . (...)

Table 5.48: answers to Scenario 3 post- test: example of treatment effects

The overall data related to the macro-components in the post- test are summarized in Table 5.49, which shows the mean, the variance and the coefficient of variation of K, O and A. Taking into account that these synthesis indicators have proved more acceptable, it can be said that at the end of the experimentation the overall ICC of the sample has improved compared to the initial phase, while remaining at rather low values (between 2.48 and 2.53 in a scale from 1 to 5), i.e. between lower and intermediate level of

competence. These results therefore seem to confirm the low CCI of incoming students and the effectiveness of specific teaching activities based on Hofstede's Cultural Dimension Model. At the same time these results suggest the need to plan further interventions aimed at developing the ICC. Further, measures of variability slightly increased in comparison with pre- test, although still remaining low (<1), probably demonstrating that the experimental group has improved more than the control group, but not to a very marked extent.

Post- Test	K	O	A
Mean	2.48	2.50	2.53
Variance	.59	.83	.45
CV	.31	.36	.26

Table 5.49: descriptive analysis of K, O, and A in the post- test

In the next section the ICC is compared between the experimental and control group, in order to determine whether the carrying out of the treatment by the experimental group has encouraged a greater development of the ICC compared to the control group.

5.5. The Assessment of Intercultural Communicative Competence

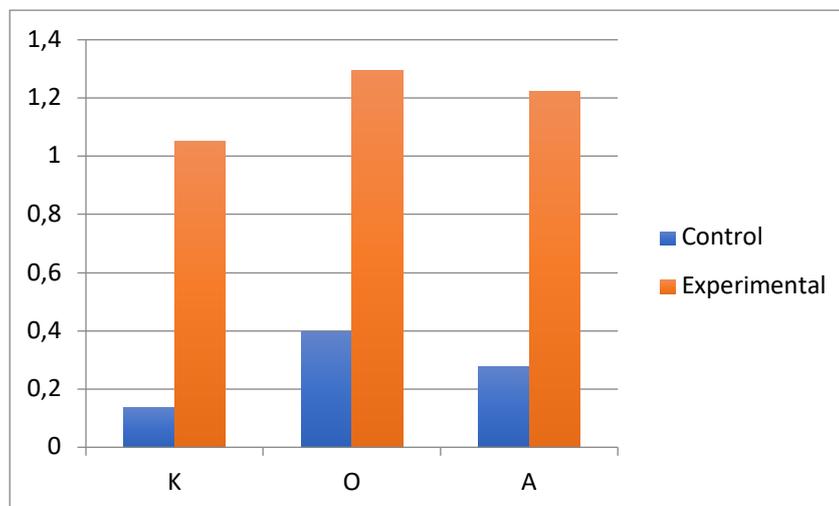
The questionnaire conceives the ICC's assessment of items related to four intercultural scenarios, i.e. descriptions of intercultural-relevant situations to which the respondents should react and explain their responses with open answers. Each scenario covers one or two macro-components of the ICC (see Section 4.4). In each scenario, each assessable ICC component is assigned a score from 1 (basic competence) to 5 (full competence). The final score of each competence comes from the average of the scores received in the relevant scenarios. In Table 5.50 the averages of both groups in pre- and post- tests are compared. This analysis was made with the complete data ($n = 58$), i.e. respondents who answered pre- and post- questionnaires. Slight differences with mean values of K, O and A in Section 4.4 might be noticed, because there all the available questionnaires were analysed. However, results of both analyses were consistent and therefore the slight differences not significant.

	Control			Experimental			Increase
	pre-	post-	difference	pre-	post-	difference	
<i>Knowledge</i>	2.017	2.155	0.138	1.603	2.655	1.052	0.914
<i>Openness</i>	1.655	2.052	0.397	1.603	2.897	1.294	0.897
<i>Adaptability</i>	1.802	2.081	0.279	1.681	2.902	1.221	0.942

Table 5.50. Average values of ICC components

First of all, the low values can be noted in all components, ranging from 1.6 to 2.9, both in pre- and post- test phases. This evidence demonstrates the need to undertake actions aimed at the development of the ICC among students with international mobility grants, and confirms that participation in study abroad experience alone does not guarantee the development of the ICC (Deardorff 2006; Pedersen 2010). It is also noted that the experimental group significantly improves more than the control group (Figure 5.35), because the experimental group's averages increased by

Figure 5.35: ICC increase in Control and Experimental groups



more than 1 point per each component and had an increase of about 0.9 in each component. Consequently, the didactic activities carried out by the experimental group are considered effective in developing the ICC. There is also a slight increase in the control group, confirming that the Erasmus study abroad experience increases the ICC, albeit slightly.

In addition to comparing the averages of the scenarios scoring, a T-test was used to evaluate the scoring distributions and to identify possible differences between the Control and Experimental groups in pre- and post- test (Table 5.51). There must be

some differences between the two groups to confirm that the experiment has worked. The p -value is the result of the T-test, it can range between 0 and +1, when it is 1 there is total homogeneity, when it is 0 there is no homogeneity. Since it is not a regular curve but rather flattened downwards, from .20 onwards is believed to be a good homogeneity (Agresti & Finlay, 2009)

p -value	PRE- CON/EXP	POST- CON/EXP
K	.01262	.01421
O	.36023	5.98E-06
A	.34960	.0001335

Table 5.51: T-test on Control and Experimental groups

Data show that in the pre- test the Control and Experimental groups (Pre- Con/Exp column) are homogeneous. In fact the p -value for two components over three is greater than 0.3 specifically 0.36 for O and 0.35 for A. K seems to be fairly homogeneous, but we should remember that the rather small size of the sample might interfere with the result of homogeneity. In this way there was also a confirmation of homogeneity of the sample, which had been verified through the analysis of context variables (Sections 4.2 and 4.3).

The scores distributions in the post- test (Post- Con/Exp column) were then analysed. In this case we expect the averages not to be homogeneous any longer and therefore the p -value to be close to 0, or in any case less than .20. We see that the p -value is very low, always lower than .20, thus confirming that the post- test results are not homogeneous between Control and Experimental groups.

In order to understand in which of the two groups (Control or Experimental) there were changes in post- test, T-tests were performed on pre- and post- tests of the Control group and on pre- and post- test of the Experimental Group (Table 5.52).

p -value	CON PRE/POST	EXP PRE/POST
K	0.471	6.89E-08
O	0.01726	1.32E-08
A	0.02955	1.11E-09

Table 5.52: T-test on pre- and post- tests

The control group (Con Pre/Post column), with low *p*-values, but still significantly higher than the experimental group (Exp Pre/Post column) for each component, is more homogeneous in pre- and post- tests than the Experimental group. Therefore, it is the Experimental Group that underwent variations.

Based on the comparison of the averages of Knowledge, Openness, and Adaptability and on the T-test results for control and experimental groups, it can be said that the treatment favoured ICC development in the experimental group.

In the next sections the relationship between relevant variables and the Intercultural Communicative Competence is investigated.

5.5.1 Partial correlation between the Intercultural Communicative Competence indices

The analysis of the data shows a strong relationship between Intercultural Communicative Competence indices -Knowledge, Openness and Adaptability -, all higher than 0.3 (Table 5.53). This means that the three indices are dependent on each other; in particular there is a strong correlation between Knowledge and Adaptability.

	<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Openness</i>	<i>Adaptability</i>
<i>Knowledge</i>	1	.398	.684
<i>Openness</i>	.398	1	.595
<i>Adaptability</i>	.684	.595	1

Table 5.53. Partial correlation indices between the ICC components

5.5.2 Language used to answer the questionnaire and Intercultural Communicative Competence

Since this experimentation was carried out within an Italian L2 course, and provided that the INCA questionnaire was made bilingual (Italian and English) to prevent a poor proficiency in the language of the test (Italian) to negatively impact on the test results,

the researcher thought it relevant to investigate the relationship between the language used to answer the questionnaire and the ICC results.

The questionnaire is bilingual, Italian - English, that is to say, the items are presented in Italian and English. The instructions provide the opportunity for respondents in Italian or English. The fact that the questionnaire was anonymous made this option really free, even though it was submitted in an Italian L2 course. 57% of the sample responded in Italian, 43% in English. Table 5.54 shows percentages for ICC indexes based on the language of the questionnaire response. \geq

Language	<i>Knowledge</i>		<i>Openness</i>		<i>Adaptability</i>	
	< 2	≥ 2	< 2	≥ 2	< 2	≥ 2
ENG	76%	24%	84%	16%	80%	20%
ITA	85%	15%	97%	3%	91%	9%
ENG-ITA	+9% ENG		+13% ENG		+11% ENG	

Table 5.54. Percentage scores for ICC indexes based on the language of questionnaire response

It can be noted that respondents in English obtained higher scores than respondents in Italian, e.g. 24% of respondents in English took ≥ 2 on K against 15% of respondents in Italian. On average, 11% of English respondents scored more than 2 in Knowledge, Openness and Adaptability.

Probably the B1 / B2 level (language courses still in progress) does not allow respondents to fully express their thoughts and their reactions. Therefore scores are lower than those of the respondents who chose to answer in English. Presumably the respondents who chose to respond in English felt more competent in that language, foreign to most of them, that is, they felt they had a level higher than intermediate in Italian.

This result can be seen as an evidence of the fact that Italian language is the third language for these respondents, being the first one their L1, and the second one English (see also Figure 5.3 in Section. 5.1).

5.5.3 Partial correlation between the number of "well-spoken languages" and Intercultural Communicative Competence

Table 5.55 shows that these two variables are not very correlated (values close to zero), almost independent, that is, it is not certain that who speaks several languages 'well' is able to communicate better with people of different cultures. On the one hand, this data is surprising because the knowledge of multiple languages is commonly associated with a good intercultural communicative competence, on the other hand it confirms the belief that such competence does not develop automatically and unknowingly, but through targeted interventions (Deardorff, 2006; Borgioli & Manuelli, 2013).

5.5.4 Partial correlation between how many times they have been abroad and Intercultural Communicative Competence

In light of the independence between the number of "well-spoken languages" and the incoming ICC, the correlation between the number of times you have been abroad and the intercultural communicative competence at the beginning of the study abroad experience becomes interesting. On the basis of the questionnaire data (Table 5.55), in fact, having been several times abroad is correlated with Adaptability (0.215) but not with Knowledge (0.152) and Openness (0.038). For the purposes of the development of the ICC it can therefore be said that it is useful to have direct experience in the field, such as going abroad, even if the correlation does not allow to say that the two variables are closely related (the value should have been equal to or greater than 0.3).

	<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Openness</i>	<i>Adaptability</i>
Well spoken languages	.075	.169	.146
Number of times abroad	.152	.038	.215

Table 5.55. Indices of partial correlation between two context variables and ICC components

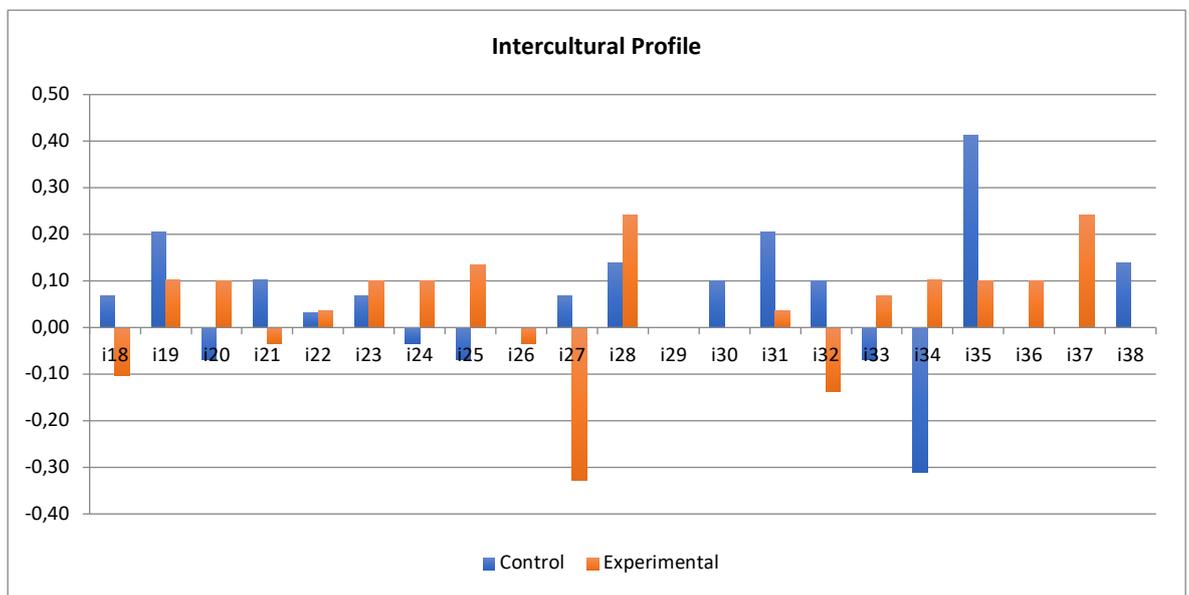
5.6. Intercultural Profile in the post- test

The second part of the INCA test includes a series of items aimed at delineating an intercultural profile of respondents. In particular, some intercultural situations are presented and the respondent must express his/her reaction on a Likert scale with scores between 1 (not applicable) and 3 (fully applicable). Even if this part does not assess the ICC, and therefore its results in the post- test are not relevant to determine if the

treatment carried out by the experimental group significantly favoured its ICC, it is interesting to note if there are variations in behaviour between the pre- and post- tests of both groups. In particular, if at the end of the experimentation the answers of the experimental group show a more open attitude to the encounter with different cultures than the responses of the control group.

Figure 5.36 shows the result of this analysis: for each item the difference between pre- and post- tests is shown.

Figure 5.36: average differences in pre- and post- tests for i18-i38

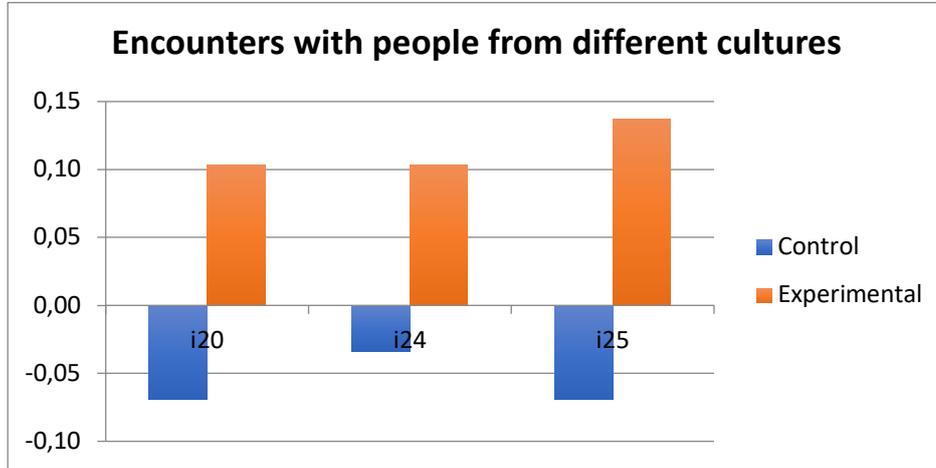


The analysis of the data highlighted some items in which the average of the experimental group's answers increased in the post- test, against a decrease in the control group (Figure 5.37). Figure 5.38 shows the items in which the average of the experimental group's answers increased in the post-test, versus no change in the control group. Finally, the averages of three items with unexpected outcomes are reported (Figure 5.39).

The experimental group reported in the post- test an increase in the mean of the responses in item 20 (“When other people don’t feel comfortable in my presence I notice it”), in item 24 (“When I am a newcomer in the group with people from a different country, I try to find out the rules in this group by observing their behaviour), and in item 25 (“When a conversation with people from different countries fails, I ask

all persons involved to explain their positions.”). In these items the control group reported a decrease in the average of the answers (Table 5.56).

Figure 5.37: average differences of responses to items 20, 24, and 25

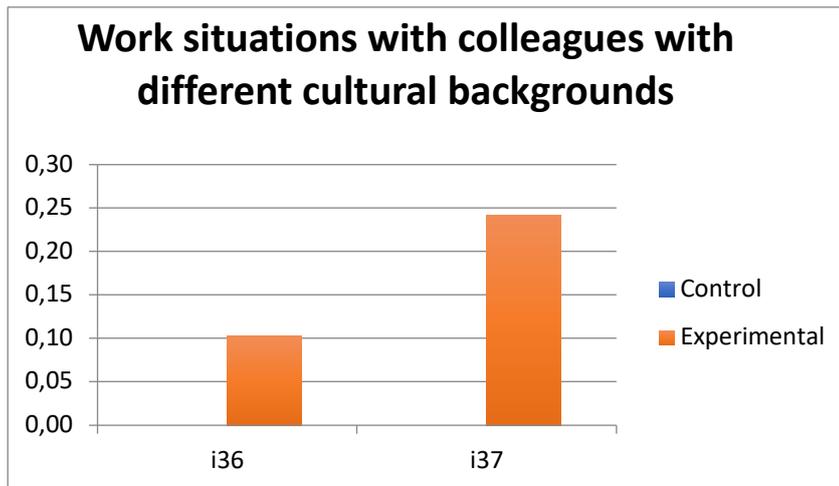


	Control			Experimental			Increase
	pre	post	DIFF	pre	post	DIFF	
i20	2.72	2.66	-0.07	2.69	2.79	.10	.17
i24	2.72	2.69	-0.03	2.69	2.79	.10	.14
i25	1.90	1.83	-0.07	1.97	2.10	.14	.21

Table 5.56: average of responses to i20, i24, and i25

The experimental group reported in the post- test an increase in the average answers in item 36 ("If I have behaved inappropriately towards a colleague from another culture"), and in item 37 ("When we are colleagues in my work area, I try to involve them in the majority group."). In these items, the control group did not report changes in the response averages in the pre- and post- tests (Figure 38 and Table 5.57).

Figure 5.38: average of responses to items 36 and 37



	Control			Experimental			
How?	pre	post	DIFF	pre	post	DIFF	Increase
i36	2.83	2.83	.00	2.69	2.79	.10	.10
i37	2.55	2.55	.00	2.66	2.90	.24	.24

Table 5.57: average of responses to items i36 and i37

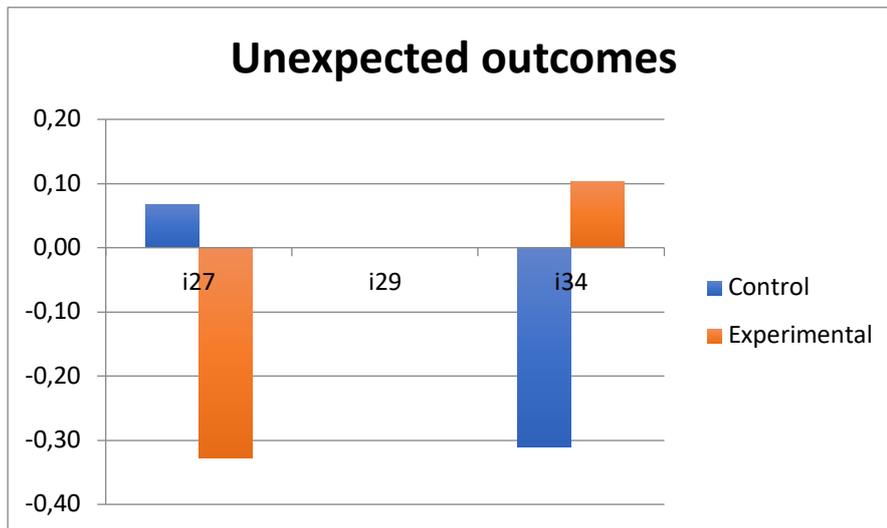
The greatest increase in the average of the answers to these 5 items of the experimental group can be explained by the fact that the behaviour during meetings with people of different cultures was object of observation and reflection during the treatment, e.g. performance of specific activities focused on real situations, such as the intercultural journal and the in-class discussions. The possible different behaviours in intercultural situations were then subject to reflection in the classroom. The control group, by contrast, had not been 'trained' for this.

Finally, the analysis of the data highlighted three items with unexpected outcomes (Figure 5.39 and Table 5.58). The average of the responses of the control group to item 27 ("When talking to other people I always watch their body language") in the post- test has slightly increased, in contrast to that of the experimental group which has instead decreased. Body language is very important in intercultural communication (Balboni 1999 & 2007), but it could not be specifically addressed in the treatment due to the time limits imposed on experimentation. Perhaps this is why the experimental group has neglected it in favour of the other aspects specifically dealt with in the classroom, such

as learning to separate observation from interpretation, or being aware of our own values and of cultural values.

It is interesting to note that there are no variations between pre- and post- tests in both groups for i29 ("I get confused when there are no reliable transport timetables in the country where I spend my holiday"), with very similar averages between the two groups: 2.07 for the control group and 2.10 for the experimental group Table 5.58). This factor seems to mean that the punctuality of means of transport is not universally acknowledged as so important as to influence intercultural communication. However, there is also the possibility that this item might be culturally constrained, i.e. the test designers were influenced by their own culture.

Figure 5.39: average of items 27, 29, and 34



	Control			Experimental			Increase
	pre	post	DIFF	pre	post	DIFF	
i27	2.55	2.62	.07	2.59	2.26	-.33	-.40
i29	2.07	2.07	.00	2.10	2.10	.00	.00
i34	2.48	2.17	-.31	2.10	2.21	.10	.42

Table 5.58: average of responses to i27, i29, and i34

From the analysis of the data the behaviour of the i34 ("I always follow the rules of my own culture if I am not sure of how to behave properly when dealing with people from other cultures"), shows an unexpected result: in this item the answer most oriented to interculturality appears to be 'not applicable', i.e. 1. The control group tends therefore to

improve, going from 2.48 to 2.17. On the contrary, the experimental group tends to worsen, going from 2.10 to 2.21 (Table 5.56). In this case the experimental group does not seem to have become more open to intercultural encounters at the end of the experimentation.

Even if the intercultural profile as per i18-38 of the questionnaire is not relevant for intercultural communicative competence assessment, it was decided to analyse the differences in pre- and post- tests between control and experimental groups. In some cases, the experimental group increased more than the control group, as expected, but also unexpected outcomes emerged.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

*You may say I'm a dreamer/ But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us/ And the world will live as one
(John Lennon, 1971)*

This research project explored the relationship between Intercultural Communication Competence and study abroad experience in higher education. In particular, the purpose of this study was to assess whether a study abroad experience fosters the Intercultural Communicative Competence and to measure the impact of targeted educational activities on the development of the Intercultural Communicative Competence of study abroad students in higher education. Two research questions were generated and investigated:

- Does a study abroad experience in higher education foster the Intercultural Communicative Competence?
- What is the impact of targeted educational activities on the Intercultural Communicative Competence of study abroad students in higher education?

6.1. Summary of the study

The idea for this research project was prompted by the researcher's interest in the relationship between intercultural competence and foreign language learning and teaching, and by her extensive experience in the field of study abroad in higher education institutions, both for outgoing and incoming students. Having taught Italian courses for study abroad students, specifically for incoming students to Italy, and having coordinated the volunteering and internship activities in local institutions, allowed this researcher to appreciate the great potential of the study abroad experience for the development of intercultural communication skills.

Furthermore, in the process of making an academic case in my institution for the support of language courses with a community service component I became aware of the need to have an objective tool to compare different cultures and of the lack of quantitative data to validate the link between study abroad experience and the development of ICC. Models of intercultural competence were investigated (Byram, 1997; Bennett 1986 and 2013; Deardorff 2011; Balboni & Caon, 2014) and methodological approaches considered with regards to appropriateness to the scope of

the study. The experience abroad, with the needs of daily living and interacting, arouses and stimulates constant, conscious or subconscious comparison of beliefs, values, behaviours and inform the quality of the study abroad experience.

This research project therefore had four fundamental theoretical pillars: firstly, the principles of intercultural competence and, in particular, of Intercultural Communicative Competence, defined as the ability to communicate in a foreign language with people from different cultures (Byram, 1997); secondly, the principles of cross-cultural analysis and, in particular, the model of National Cultural Dimensions (Hofstede et al. 2010), seen as an objective tool for observing, analysing and comparing cultures. In this research project, the model was used to understand some cultural manifestations and to try to interpret possible intercultural misunderstandings. Thirdly, the notion of learning as an experiential cycle as developed by Kolb (1984), who defines the process of learning as a cyclical process where stages of Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization and Active Experimentation come in succession. In this context, the study abroad experience, or rather many single parts of this experience, was seen as the first stage of the experiential learning cycle. The targeted educational activities promoted Reflective Observation, while Abstract Conceptualization was stimulated by the class work and the assigned readings. Fourthly, to frame the context of this study, the characteristics of study abroad in higher education were analysed.

A quasi-experimental investigation was conducted with two convenience samples, one of which was identified as a control group and the other as the experimental group. The convenience samples consisted of Italian language courses for Erasmus students organized by an Italian university. Initially, based on the number of students enrolled in the courses, two courses of Italian for Erasmus students at levels B1 / B2 of the CEFR had been included in the research. Following a marked attrition, which had significantly reduced the sample size, a second data collection was carried out which involved a further four Italian courses for Erasmus students, at levels B1 / B2 of the CEFR. It was thus possible to reach a sample of 58 respondents to both the pre- and post- tests, a satisfactory size according to the results of the scientific literature concerning the research of correlations and the control-experimental procedure (Fraenkel and Wallen 2003; Dörnyei 2007).

The research design consisted of three steps: the assessment of the intercultural communicative competence of all the participants at the beginning of their Italian language course; the delivery of the targeted educational activities to the experimental group; and the assessment of the intercultural communicative competence of all the participants at the end of their Italian language course.

The targeted educational activities for the experimental group consisted of five sessions of 30 minutes each, distributed in the ten weeks of the course duration, which is about 10% of the whole course duration. They aimed at developing the first two steps identified by Hofstede et al. (2002) to reach intercultural competence: awareness and knowledge. In particular, the activities aimed at: Developing the awareness (of the individual values, of one's culture, of the other culture); Developing the ability to separate observation (of an event, a situation) from its interpretation; Learning to observe cultures objectively. A detailed description of the educational activities was presented in Chapter 4.

An evaluation tool based on the Byram model was selected to evaluate intercultural communication skills at the beginning and at the end of the Italian language courses: the INtercultural Competence Assessment (INCA) portfolio developed by the Intercultural Competence Assessment Project (INCA Project, 2004). The INCA portfolio included three different types of tests: Questionnaires, Scenarios, and Role-plays. Compared to the original portfolio developed by the INCA project, some changes had to be made to adapt to the characteristics of this research project: it was made bilingual (Italian and English) in order to prevent the limited knowledge of the Italian language to adversely affect the test results. It was made anonymous: the pseudonym indication of the first phase of data collection was replaced by the QR Code in the second phase. It was also necessary to reduce the portfolio: it was too long and the role play part could not be administered nor assessed with the resources available to the researcher within the timescale of the project. Similar changes to the original assessment tool had already been made by other scholars, and results of such modifications had been published validating the positive use of the assessment tool (Antonenko, 2010). Furthermore, to improve the assessment of Intercultural Scenarios, a minimum word limit was inserted to the open answer items. This latter change improved also the reliability of the results, because longer responses provided a more reliable assessment (Dörnyei, 2007).

Quality criteria of research were addressed, and the construct validity was tested through the analysis of the linear correlations between the single items and the average values used a synthesis (Knowledge, Openness and Adaptability). This analysis confirmed the construct validity of the results to the INCA questionnaire used to assess the Intercultural Communicative Competence of the research participants. The detailed testing of construct validity has been examined at length in Chapter 3.

The survey was conducted on a final sample of 58 respondents enrolled in Italian language courses for Erasmus level B1 or B2 at an Italian university, subdivided into a control group and the experimental group. Since there were two phases of the data collection (Alpha and Beta phases), in two different academic semesters, data analysis initially focused on the homogeneity of the sample: the context variables (age, nationality, number of 'well-spoken' languages, time spent on site before the test, and the study time estimate) were analysed to verify the homogeneity and comparability of respondents. The respondents proved to be homogeneous and therefore it was possible to consider the data collected as belonging to one single, larger and more significant sample, composed by Alpha and Beta phase respondents.

In order to measure the impact of the educational activities on the Intercultural Communicative Competence of study abroad students of higher education, this research applied a quantitative approach. In the INCA questionnaire the Intercultural Communicative Competence is assessed by mean of open-ended answers to four Intercultural Scenarios, i.e. descriptions of intercultural-relevant situations to which the respondents should react and explain their responses with open answers. In this study the researcher assessed the answers to the Intercultural Scenarios, according to the evaluation grid attached to the INCA portfolio suitably adapted. The macro-components of the Intercultural Communicative Competence - Knowledge, Adaptability, and Openness - were evaluated with a score of 1 to 5. The average values of the responses for each macro-component of the experimental and control groups were then compared, as well as any variations between pre- and post- tests. This is how this study assessed whether study abroad in higher education fosters Intercultural Communicative Competence and measured the impact of targeted educational activities on the development of intercultural communicative competence of study abroad students in higher education.

6.2. The research journey

The process of undertaking a research study is like a journey. The metaphor of the journey is particularly powerful because it entails the concepts of exploring new territories, of discovery and of change, both of the traveller (the researcher) and the context, of taking risks and making choices.

While looking back to reflect and create meaning on the journey started in 2014, the researcher sees it has not been linear; rather it presented some unexpected slowdowns and detours as well as pleasant discoveries.

Before the journey could begin, some decisions needed to be made in regard to timing, choice and availability of the research site: the research site was identified based upon reputation and willingness to explore the intercultural competence of Erasmus students, a rather small but significant part of the site's enrolment. Due to time constraints, the qualitative part, which was originally planned, involving interviews with some research participants and two language instructors on the participating courses, could not be approved by the institution engaged in the ICC project. Furthermore, the pre- and post-tests had to be paper-and-pencil rather than online (see par. 6.5.2), therefore the time-consuming digitalization of the questionnaires had to be added to the project. The treatment for the experimental group had to consist of only five 30-minute sessions, therefore the original idea of studying the model of national cultures (Hofstede et al., 2010) had to be reduced to the study of only two out of six dimensions.

This researcher already had a clear concept of the research design and of the potential research method given the awareness of the limitations imposed by the research site, however, a careful review of research methodologies utilized in applied linguistics, social sciences and education helped this researcher realize the depth required for the analysis of the intended ICC data collection. This was particularly relevant because the research was informed by the real need of an experienced teacher (the researcher) developed over an extended period of time: to observe and address how to integrate meaningful ICC activities in a language programme for non-specialists and measure the impact of such integration. The breadth and depth of the literature review resulted in refining and narrowing the scope this work. The engagement with the supervisor as well as the academic research community including presentation of her research at

conferences and engagement with established ICC experts such as Byram was crucial to develop her confidence as researcher and the clarity of the research direction of this specific study.

The journey began with the literature review: bibliographic research was sometimes exciting and interesting, sometimes boring. This researcher had to deal with her 'green soul' and find an efficient way to file piles of articles and books she could find on electronic databases without printing them all out. She learnt how to use citation management tools and how to store files on the cloud, so that they could be accessed from her various workplaces in Europe. The use of such data storage and management tools was an unexpected but useful tool which ensured the resourceful and effective completion of the research. These tools allowed her to access, consult and retrieve easily, and over time, her data and sources. These are skills which this researcher intends to adopt for other elements of her teaching job.

Once the data gathering had begun, this researcher was thrilled to finally have the data and to deliver the learning activities to the experimental group. She was pleasantly surprised by the positive reactions of both instructors and research participants in the experimental group. The activities proved to be challenging and prompted lively discussions, which in turn highlighted new insights into the process of intercultural communicative competence development. When this researcher realized that the noticeable attrition could negatively impact the research, she had to find a timely solution to an unexpected stumbling block which might have affected the validity and rigour of the study. She therefore asked the research site for a second round of data collection so that a good sample size could be achieved. This was accepted and the research journey soon became overwhelming, as it shifted the timescale of the data gathering and ended up overlapping with 'work and family journeys': the challenges of reading for a PhD part-time whilst working full-time, attending to family commitments and being based in a different country can be easily underestimated at the start of the journey. It was the clarity of the rigour of the research process, the innovation of the approach to measuring ICC and its applicability to language teaching, and the constant interaction with supervisor and the wider ICC academic community which kept this researcher focused.

A distinctive component emerging from this perceived 'setback' was the rigour with which the two samples had to be compared to ensure comparability. This scientific mindset in the approach to the evaluation of the quality of the data introduced a new unexpected set of considerations into the research and the exploration of more reliable and ethics-proof anonymity. The adoption of the QR code was one such tool.

Looking back, these slowdowns and detours made this researcher more confident of its data and competent in its methodological approach to the data and her quantitative analysis of the data. This approach made the results accessible to non-experts in the field, which is precisely one of the reasons which prompted this research: making the importance of intercultural competence, and of foreign language learning in general, clear and relevant to non-linguists and data meaningful not only to teachers and academics but also to administrators who, in this researcher's academic context, influence validation and viability of courses.

This research journey had been a challenging, and rewarding life-changing human and intellectual adventure which not only added scholarly knowledge and depth to her understanding of ICC but has enriched her competence and confidence of arguing a case through the rigour of data and the process of reviewing arguments and assumptions and acknowledging and accepting limitations due to unexpected barriers.

This research journey has taught this researcher how to dissect a problem, and its arising questions, and address with rigour. She has learnt to challenge her assumptions, critically evaluate the context, breadth and depth of her sources, and confidently explore and adjust methodological approaches and tools to rigorously support a study.

She has learnt to accept that along the way the uncertainties of the discovery nurture a mind open to new unexpected outcomes. The certainty of initial assumptions and expectations, often informed by a practitioner's real need for tangible solutions also became enriched by this journey.

Finally, this researcher's moments of frustration and setbacks gave way to a grounded self-disciplined, confident competence in exploring ranges of quantitative tools and data management resources; a competence she intends to transfer in future's pedagogic research in ICC for non- specialists.

6.3. *The research outcomes*

In general, the results support the hypotheses that targeted educational activities have a positive impact on the Intercultural Communicative Competence of study abroad students in higher education and that study abroad in higher education might foster the informal acquisition of Intercultural Communicative Competence.

Analysis of the data showed that the Intercultural Communicative Competence of the experimental group significantly improved more than the control group, because the Experimental group's averages increased by more than 1 point per each component (Knowledge, Openness, and Adaptability) and had an increase of about 0.9 in each component as compared to the control group. A T-test was used to evaluate the scoring distribution and to identify possible differences between experimental and control groups in pre- and post- test. The T-test results showed that the treatment fostered Intercultural Communicative Competence in the experimental group. Consequently, the targeted educational activities carried out by the experimental group were considered effective in developing the Intercultural Communicative Competence. The results confirmed that the design and content of the learning activities was appropriate to fostering Intercultural Communicative Competence. Particularly, they confirmed that the sequence 'Awareness – Knowledge -Skills' proposed by Hofstede et al. (2002) was effective, as well as the reflection on values as the first step in the development of this competence (Hofstede et al., 2002; Kohls & Knight, 1994; Sweitzer & King, 2009). The learning activities are consistent with this approach: their focus is on raising awareness on the concept of culture and on values, both individual and cultural, and they promote knowledge through the acquisition of a model for observation and comparison of cultures (Balboni & Caon, 2015). The use of the cross-cultural journal proved to be an effective learning tool (Menegale, 2018). The results confirmed also the potential of the model of Dimensions of National Cultures (Hofstede et al., 2010) as a learning tool to observe and compare cultures in an educational setting.

Data analysis also showed a slight increase in the control group, confirming that the Erasmus study abroad experience vaguely fostered the informal acquisition of Intercultural Communicative Competence. This result confirmed that participation in study abroad experience alone does not guarantee the acquisition of the Intercultural

Communicative Competence (Deardorff 2006; Hunter et al., 2006; Pedersen 2010). It also confirmed that such competence is scarcely acquired informally (Barrett, 2012).

Data analysis showed low values in all components (Knowledge, Adaptability and Openness), ranging from 1.6 to 2.9 out of 5, both in pre- and post- tests in experimental and control groups. This result showed that the intercultural communicative competence of respondents at the beginning of their study abroad experience is low and that it is therefore appropriate and necessary to implement educational interventions aimed at developing such competence. This evidence encourages study abroad directors or chief administrators to undertake specific actions aimed at the systematic development of the Intercultural Communicative Competence among students with international mobility grants.

The descriptive analysis of the sample provided useful information for the design of targeted educational activities. E.g. the fact that nearly 90% of the research participants had often been abroad two or more times suggested that learning activities or class discussions based on previous intercultural encounters while abroad were appropriate.

6.3.1 Unexpected outcomes

Managing the research and the analysis of the data also produced unexpected results. First of all, the interest generated by the specifically designed educational activities in the teachers and students of the experimental group was a positive, and pleasant, surprise. In this researcher's view this interest stemmed from having introduced an objective and effective way of dealing with important questions and doubts typical of study abroad and intercultural communication. This approach merits further research both targeting students to build capacity and further reliability of the tools adopted. Developing awareness of one's individual values and of the values of one's culture became for the research participants in this project the first step towards understanding the values of a different culture. Learning techniques and strategies for observing cultures were important to proceed in understanding some cultural events and to manage any intercultural misunderstandings or conflicts, as witnessed during class discussions.

The enthusiastic reaction of teachers who proceeded to integrate components of this research activities and tool within their assessment and in their teaching also should be

investigated further. This would ensure a more systematic applicability and adaptability of the tools and would contribute to build capacity too. Integrating ICC-specific activities and analytical tools within a language course made it possible to better connect language to culture and better understand the meaning of some idiomatic expressions and / or uses of the language, for example, “when do you use *Lei* in Italian?”, or the multiple reasons why "*ciao professoressa*" is wrong.

Another unexpected outcome that emerged from this study is how effortless the integration of the sessions with the syllabus of L2 courses was. Just as an example, in one of the courses of the experimental group of the Beta phase, after the session on ‘Power Distance in the family and at school’, the teacher took the initiative to work in class on a sequence of the film *Caro Diario* (Dear Diary, 2008) where the director Nanni Moretti represents the relationship parents-children in Italian culture: the learning activities included also reflection on values. The inclusion of the journal entries within the written assignments of the course, as one teacher decided to do, can be considered another example of how easy it was to integrate intercultural sessions within the language syllabus. It also identified a perceived gap which explains the enthusiasm with which teachers adopted the material and the approach. This has implications for future staff development for language teachers which is informed by Intercultural Communicative Competence.

Another significant unexpected outcome of the data analysis was the poor correlation between the knowledge of multiple languages and intercultural communicative competence; that is, it is not certain that those who speak several languages well are able to communicate better with people of different cultures. This aspect ought to be investigated further. The poor correlation may depend on an inaccurate formulation of item no. 8. “Quante lingue parli bene? *How many languages do you speak well?*” which was correlated with intercultural communication competence. Perhaps the question should have specified what was meant by 'speaking well', or asked to also specify which languages, in order to force the respondent to a more thoughtful answer.

6.4 Contribution to knowledge and distinctive features

This research project is innovative in five main areas.

Firstly, for its research design: a quasi-experimental investigation on the impact of targeted educational activities to the Intercultural Communicative Competence of study abroad students of higher education institutions. This work showed that such research design is feasible, since you can objectively evaluate the Intercultural Communication Competence provided that you have an accurate reference model and an evaluation tool based on this model, in this case the Byram's model (1997) and the Intercultural Competence Assessment Tool (INCA Project, 2004). The contribution of this project in relation to ICC methodology is significant because it attempts to measure a claim often taken for granted: study abroad generates more interculturally aware students. It does so through the use of a quantitative, quasi-experimental approach, rigorous in its careful selection of the comparative samples, in its validation of the results and in its reliability of the analytical process.

Secondly, to date there are no studies that have used such design with a sample of 58 respondents in the context of Italian language courses for students of higher education institutions. Such research design along with the sample size make the research results objective, more generalizable and therefore potentially usable in different sectors (Dörnyei, 2007). In the Intercultural Communicative Competence literature there are usually investigations on the experimentation of didactic activities carried out by very small samples (Borghetti, 2013), very often it is Action Research (Pedersen, 2010).

Thirdly, another original contribution of this research project is the use of Hofstede's model of cultural dimensions as a tool to develop intercultural communicative competence within foreign language courses, thus shifting it out of its traditional (business) context. Usually the model of cultural dimensions is proposed within staff training of multinational companies. The use in an educational context and an academic context other than anglophone adds to its distinctiveness. Over this first decade of the 21st century we have been witnessing the progressive shift of education institutions from a local to an international scope (UNESCO, 2015). This, with the inevitable distinctions of context and time, could be seen as mirroring the same shift that characterized the world of businesses in the second half of the 20th century thus creating such a strong need for intercultural communication. In light of this global approach to education, this researcher decided to draw from Hofstede's research and experience in the social sciences (1980, 1986, 1991, 2001; Hofstede et al., 2002; Hofstede et al., 2010), which she considers a constructive integration to the studies on intercultural competence

learning. These (Byram, 1997 & 2008; Balboni, 1999, 2006 & 2012; Balboni & Caon, 2015) tend to be considered canonical, and therefore mainstream, since they were initiated within a purely educational context. Byram's (1997, 2008) and Balboni's (1999, 2006, 2012; Balboni & Caon, 2015) have been equally important and crucial in establishing the foundations and practice of this research.

Fourthly, the use of QR coding to manage anonymity is an innovative research management tool (see Chapter 3). QR code proved to be more user-friendly than the use of pseudonyms: the research participants do not need to remember the pseudonym they used in the pre- test, which proved to be a hard task for some of them. QR code is an innovative technology generally used in domains other than academia, it addressed effectively ethical issues of anonymity and practical issues of safe data management

Lastly, this project showed that didactic activities based on the sequence 'Awareness - Knowledge – Skills' proposed by Hofstede et al. (2002) can be well and easily integrated into Italian language courses.

6.5 Limitations

The research has been limited by three main factors, in particular:

6.5.1 Time-related challenges

Time was a significant limitation, in many different ways. The time constraints imposed by the research site influenced many aspects of the research. In general terms, the fact that only 5 sessions of 30 minutes were approved for the treatment has led the researcher to reduce the number of cultural dimensions addressed and analysed. Remarkably, the Hofstede cultural dimensions model consists of six dimensions, however in the treatment it was possible to study and use only two cultural dimensions, Power Distance and Individualism vs Collectivism. Furthermore, the sessions of the treatment were placed at the end of class, so it was never possible to slightly increase the time, for example during a lively debate. Indeed occasionally, precious time was wasted and lost to us if the teacher was not very punctual in completing previous activities. Moreover, a time limit was also set for the two meetings for the administration of the INCA test. The researcher was therefore compelled to reduce the length of the INCA test, which originally also included viewing a video, providing

answers to open questions, and carrying out a role-play. 40 minutes were spent for the presentation of the research and the pre- (accordingly modified) test, as well as for the final meeting with the administration of the post- test, as required by the research site.

Finally, once again for reasons of time restrictions, it was not possible to add a collection of qualitative data to complement the quantitative data collected with the INCA test. For instance, it would have been interesting and useful to be given access to interviews with the teachers of the courses involved in the treatment, as well as organise focus groups with some students from the experimental group, in order to better understand the results of the experimentation.

Interviews with the teachers would have made it possible to obtain information about how easy, or not, it was to integrate the targeted activities into the syllabus, and to ask more specifically for their feedback on the linguistic repercussions deriving from the performance of these IC-focused activities. Interviews would have also allowed to verify if the intercultural journal could be a useful resource to be utilized both for the linguistic and the intercultural components of the course. Interviews would have provided additional information on their preparation to the integration of the development of intercultural communication competence in Italian L2 courses.

The interviews with the students would have allowed the researcher to investigate their reactions to the issues addressed in the didactic activities as well as those towards the model of cultural dimensions as a tool for understanding cultural differences. They would have provided the opportunity to track the impact of this approach beyond the classroom and therefore have an insight on the sustainability of the approach and the tools.

6.5.2 Technology-related constraints

The characteristics of the technological equipment of the research site have also conditioned the conduct of the research. For various bureaucratic reasons, it was not possible to administer the pre- and post- tests online via software commonly used and available to the researcher, such as Online Surveys www.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/ (formerly Bristol Online Survey). It was not possible to use the research site's computer labs, which are located in a part of the city far from the classrooms of some of the courses involved in the project. It was not even possible to resort to the 'bring your own device'

model, that is, to ask students to perform tests on their devices (laptop, or maybe even smartphone). In fact, the research site did not provide a reliable wi-fi network, that is, it did not guarantee that the network would have supported the data traffic in the case of online administration of the pre- and post- tests. Or perhaps, more simply, it can be said that the research site was unable to provide technical assistance for the online administration of the pre- and post- tests.

Whatever the reason, paper-and-pencil questionnaires had to be administered. This meant that the researcher had to digitize the data, manually entering them into the database. In order to better perform the data analysis, the researcher digitized the data of all the questionnaires carried out, not only those of the complete set (i.e. of the students who carried out the pre- and post-test): hence the data of 154 questionnaires were digitized (96 pre- and 58 post- questionnaires) adding an extra challenge to the data management.

Another limitation of this research derives from the fact that the researcher had to rely only on her own resources to record the round tables of the last session of the treatment, which could have provided interesting information both about the conduct of the targeted educational activities and about the type of student response to the performance of these activities. Not being able to have a microphone to connect to your laptop, and therefore using the microphone integrated in the laptop, the quality of the recording resulted unusable: only the voices of those who were close to the laptop can be heard well, while the others are distant and indistinct. Therefore, the feedback on the final treatment activity, as well as the description of the reactions to the activities carried out, could only be based on the researcher's personal recollection rather than on objective data

6.5.3. Material design reviews

In the first phase (Alpha phase) of data collection, a minimum number of words was not placed for the open answers to the intercultural scenarios of the pre- and post- tests, since, following the original INCA test, it was considered that the lines available for each answer were a sufficient indication of the length of the answer itself. Actually, there were some very short answers, so much so that it was difficult to evaluate them according to the evaluation grid. In the second phase of data collection (Beta phase) a

minimum number of words (15) was inserted to overcome this drawback. The minimum number of words was set taking into account the time constraint imposed by the research site. The evaluation of the Intercultural Scenarios and the analysis of the post-test responses to investigate the possible effects of the treatment were therefore easier to analyse within the Beta phase questionnaires.

6.6 *Future research*

The potential for further, valuable research has emerged from this research project.

6.6.1 *Evaluation tools for intercultural communication skills.*

Despite the proliferation of tools for assessing intercultural communicative competence (Fantini, 2009), there is still a lack of an assessment tool consistent with Byram's model of intercultural communicative competence (1997) that is manageable and also easily usable, in terms of both administration and evaluation methods. In this research project it was necessary to reduce the length of the INCA test (INCA Project, 2004), selected for this project as appropriate and consistent with the Byram model, because the various types of tests used require extensive resources that were not available to the researcher. Evaluating a competence is different from evaluating a knowledge (Byram 1997; Bachmann, 2004), and therefore some tools currently commonly popular, such as closed-ended tests, have important limitations in the case of evaluation of a competence. On the other hand, proposing complex and time-consuming assessment tools (such as the performance of role-plays that provide for the simultaneous presence of multiple assessors) risks precluding the possibility of regularly carrying out such assessments.

6.6.2 *Language Proficiency and Intercultural communication skills*

The need to further investigate the relationship between language proficiency and intercultural communication skills also emerged, given that the analysis of the data seems to indicate that the two phenomena are almost independent. Measuring their interdependence could contribute to refine the type of Intercultural Competence-focused, language-based activities and create a more integrated assessment toolkit.

6.6.3 Integrated Quantitative and Qualitative methodology

As for the research in language learning, especially in Italian, measuring the learning outcomes with both quantitative and qualitative methods should be encouraged so that it becomes common practice. In second language research in Italy, quantitative data about the learning outcomes of a specific teaching intervention are often lacking. From a language practice experience, there is a tendency to see language learning, and its related foreign language proficiency, as complex phenomena that cannot be measured or summarized with an arid numerical analysis. This complexity instead of constituting a strong challenge, becomes a weakness that prevents teachers and researchers from objectively observing the phenomenon and comparing it with others, that are commonly quantitatively measured. Most recent research (Baiutti, 2017; Borghetti, 2016; Holmes et al., 2016) continues to favour a predominantly qualitative approach or theoretical studies. The use of a quantitative approach such as the one adopted in this study can also offer useful and accessible data to academic managers and administrators who have limited time to understand a subject's pedagogy but require 'hard evidence' that the approach works or is impactful and sustainable.

6.7 Recommendations for potential future developments

The results of this research project endorse the future implementation of some strategies and procedures to foster the development of intercultural communication skills in the study abroad programs of higher education institutions. They demonstrate that even a small intervention involving about 10% of the language course's duration can produce significant results.

6.7.1 In-service training for language instructors

Teacher training is recommended in order to carry out targeted teaching activities in class. The training should include the use of Byram's Intercultural Communicative Competence model, which provides an interesting framework for implementation across the whole L2 teaching curriculum. This is particularly relevant following a shift in the objective of language learning, from speaking like a native to performing like an intercultural speaker (Coperias Aguilar, 2010; Woodin, 2018). Furthermore, teacher training should include the cultural dimension model (Hofstede et al., 2010) as an objective tool for comparing cultures and for reflecting on cultural manifestations. In

this way, teachers would operate in a facilitating role and would offer students an objective tool to examine intercultural incidents and experiences through the use of rigorous scientific research in cross-cultural analysis. This approach will remove them from the role of cultural informants and provides them with the objective tools to suspend judgment and facilitate instead the practice of skills of observation, deconstruction of fact and interpretation and active comparative reflection.

Finally, teacher training should present the potential of using the study abroad experience as a learning experience and possibly also allow teachers to get familiar with experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) as an integrated tool to develop reflection on intercultural communicative competence (Mariani, 2009). Experiential learning lends itself very well to being carried out in study abroad, and using the study abroad experience as a learning tool would indeed add academic value and meaning to that experience. Research using Kolb in Intercultural Communicative Competence remains limited (Holmes et al., 2016).

6.7.2. Creation of learning materials

Another direction of further research is the focus on the impact of IC-targeted materials and the study of integrative curriculum design for the development of educational materials aimed at fostering Intercultural Communicative Competence. Research in this field remains limited in the teaching of Italian as L2 (Borghetti, 2016). Most language textbooks now include a section relating to culture, however, they are deficient with regards to activities related to the development of the Intercultural Communicative Competence. In this respect, the flipped classroom approach can exploit its full potential (Longo, 2016). As stated in Chapter 2, claim, whilst Intercultural Communicative Competence cannot be taught as such, a process is teachable, and it is a lifelong endeavour (Balboni & Caon, 2014; Hofstede et al. 2010).

6.7.3. Guidelines to develop practice patterns in Intercultural Communicative Competence research

Good practices should include both an appropriate tool for assessing intercultural communication competence, and the best and desirable methods of research administration of such tools to allow for rapid and effective data collection, and

techniques and methods of data analysis, with software or platforms also accessible to non-experts in computer science and statistics.

Good practice could also provide for interdisciplinary teamwork between experts in language teaching, computer science and statistics. Indeed, the INCA project (INCA, 2004) provided for the possibility of carrying out the online test and providing the client with the raw data, but this project, financed with European funds, has expired and this online platform is no longer available. Other bodies have developed tools to evaluate the intercultural competence of workers for multinational companies (e.g. elc-consult.com), but these tools are not currently well-known and applied in the academic field. An ICC portal for researchers and practitioners might be another useful future development.

6.8 Dissemination plans

The positive contribution of this study, which has already been published in several publications (Tarabusi, 2017, 2018a, 2018b), is the objective observation of intercultural communicative competence, and the demonstration that this competence can and must be assessed, and the targeted didactic interventions allowed for the development of Intercultural Communicative Competence. In her current position as instructor of Italian as foreign language this researcher has now the opportunity to influence through the data of this research the future direction of Intercultural Competence teaching in our language courses. Equipped with the encouraging data emerging from this study this researcher intends to make fostering intercultural communicative competence as one of the explicit, and assessed, goals of study abroad in higher education programme. This provided this researcher with the rigorous validation which is necessary to convince administrators and managers who are number driven. The researcher is convinced this change will add great value and distinctiveness to study abroad programmes and to foreign language learning. Parallel to this integration, it will be necessary to create a portal with resources and information for teachers and establish a researched informed teacher programme to ensure positive uptake.

Bibliography

- Academic ranking of world universities 2014. (2014). Retrieved May 07, 2015, from <http://www.shanghairanking.com/>
- Agresti, A., Finlay, B. (2009) *Statistica per le scienze sociali*. Milano: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Antonenko, T. A. (2010). *Stimulating intercultural intellectual capabilities in intercultural communication: Testing an innovative course design* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Amsterdam.
retrieved from hdl.handle.net/11245/1.344987 on 24 June 2015
- Arasaratnam, L. A. (2006). Further Testing of a New Model of Intercultural Communication Competence. *Communication Research Reports*, 23(2), 93-99. doi:10.1080/08824090600668923
- Arasaratnam, L. A. (2014, July). Ten Years of Research in Intercultural Communication Competence (2003 - 2013): A Retrospective. *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, (35), 5-5. Retrieved November 27, 2014.
- Arasaratnam, L. A., & Banerjee, S. C. (2011). Sensation seeking and intercultural communication competence: A model test. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 35(2), 226-233.
- Arasaratnam, L. A., & Doerfel, M. L. (2005). Intercultural communication competence: Identifying key components from multicultural perspectives. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 29(2), 137-163.
- Bachman, L. F. (2004). *Statistical analyses for language assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Baiutti, M. (2017). *Competenza interculturale e mobilità studentesca. Riflessioni pedagogiche per la valutazione*. Pisa: ETS.
- Baiutti, M. & Paolone, A. R. (2018) Il valore pedagogico interculturale del diario di bordo durante la mobilità studentesca internazionale individuale: La prospettiva degli insegnanti. *Encyclopaideia*, 22 (52).
- Balboni, P. E. (1999). *Parole comuni, culture diverse: Guida alla comunicazione interculturale*. Venezia: Marsilio.
- Balboni, P. E. (2006). *Intercultural communicative competence: A model*. Perugia, I: Guerra.
- Balboni, P. E. (2007). *La comunicazione interculturale*. Venezia: Marsilio.
- Balboni, P. E. (2012). *Le sfide di Babele: Insegnare le lingue nelle società complesse* (3rd ed.). Novara: UTET università.

- Balboni, P. E., & Caon, F. (2014). A Performance-oriented Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence. *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, (35), 1-12.
- Balboni, P. E., & Caon, F. (2015). *La comunicazione interculturale*. Venezia: Marsilio.
- Baldassarri, D. (2012). La competenza interculturale e i suoi presupposti teorici. *Italiano a Stranieri*, (13), 3-10.
- Barni, M. (2010). L'italiano L2 nel mondo: Considerazioni a dieci anni da "Italiano 2000". *Italiano L2 in Classe*, (2-3), 40-43.
- Barrett, M. D. (2011) Intercultural competence. *EWC Statement Series*, 2 23-27.
- Barrett, M. D., Huber, J. & Reynolds, C. (2014) *Developing intercultural competence through education* Council of Europe Publishing Strasbourg.
<https://rm.coe.int/developing-intercultural-enfr/16808ce258>
- Bennett, J. M., & Bennett, M. J. (2004). *Developing intercultural competence: A reader*. Portland, OR: Intercultural Communication Institute.
- Bennett, M. J. (1986). A developmental approach to training for intercultural sensitivity. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 10(2), 179-196.
- Bennett, M. J. (1993). Toward ethnorelativism: A developmental model of intercultural sensitivity. In R. M. Paige (Ed.), *Education for the intercultural experience* (pp. 21-71). Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.
- Bennett, M. J. (1997) How not to be a fluent fool: Understanding the cultural dimension of language. *New Ways in Teaching Culture*, 16-21.
- Bennett, M. J. (2013). *Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication. Paradigms, Principles and Practices*. Boston (MA): Intercultural Press.
- Beugelsdijk, S. & Welzel, C. (2018) Dimensions and dynamics of national culture: Synthesizing hofstede with inglehart. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 49 (10), 1469-1505.
- Bevilacqua, A. & Campión, R. S. (2019) The flipped learning approach: Quantitative research on the perception of italian teachers. *Form@ Re-Open Journal Per La Formazione in Rete*, 19 (2), 405-422
- Borghetti, C. (2008). *Un modello metodologico per l'insegnamento interculturale della lingua straniera. Dalla pratica didattica alla generazione teorica*. (Unpublished master's thesis). National University of Ireland, Galway.
- Borghetti, C. (2011). How to teach it? Proposal for a methodological model of intercultural competence (T. Harden, Ed.). In A. Witte (Ed.), *Intercultural competence: Concepts, challenges, evaluations* (pp. 141-160). Oxford: Peter Lang.

- Borghetti, C. (2013). Integrating intercultural and communicative objectives in the foreign language class: A proposal for the integration of two models. *The Language Learning Journal*, 41(3), 254-267.
doi:10.1080/09571736.2013.836344
- Borghetti, C. (2016). *Educazione linguistica interculturale. Origini, modelli, sviluppi recenti*. Cesena Bologna: Caissa.
- Borgioli, A., & Manuelli, A. (2013). *Educating in paradise: Il valore dei programmi universitari nord americani in Italia - caratteristiche, impatto e prospettive*. (P. Prebys, Ed.; J. Zarr, Trans.). Rome: Association of American College and University Programs in Italy.
- Borra, S. & Di Ciaccio, A. (2014) *Statistica: Metodologie per le scienze economiche e sociali* McGraw-Hill.
- Brilli, A. (2006). *Il viaggio in Italia. Storia di una grande tradizione culturale*. Bologna, I: Il Mulino.
- Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Clevedon ; Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters.
- Byram, M. (2008). *From foreign language education to education for intercultural citizenship: Essays and reflections*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Byram, M., & Zarate, G. (1996). Defining and assessing intercultural competence: Some principles and proposals for the European context. *Language Teaching*, 29(04), 239-243.
- Candelier, M., Daryai-Hansen, P. & Schröder-Sura, A. (2012) The framework of reference for pluralistic approaches to languages and cultures – a complement to the CEFR to develop plurilingual and intercultural competences. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 6 (3), 243-257.
- Caon, F. (2012) Competenza comunicativa interculturale e dimensione gestemica. *Perché E Come Realizzare Un Dizionario Dei Gestì Degli Italiani*, 35-45.
- Chen, G. M., & Starosta, W. J. (1996). Intercultural communication competence: A synthesis. *Communication Yearbook*, 19, 353-383.
- Chen, G. M., & Starosta, W. J. (1999). A review of the concept of intercultural awareness. *Human Communication*, 2, 27-54.
- Chen, G. M., & Starosta, W. J. (2000). *The Development and Validation of the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale*. (Rep.). Retrieved September 30, 2015, from <http://ezproxy.library.nyu.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=ED447525&site=eds-live>
- Chinese Culture Connection. (1987). Chinese Values and the Search for Culture-Free Dimensions of Culture. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 18(2), 143-164.
doi:10.1177/0022002187018002002

- Ciacci, M. (2005). Paideia, grand tour, campus. In *Connecting cultures. Valori e lingue a confronto* (pp. 51-64). Firenze, I: New York University in Florence.
- Ciliberti, A. (2012). La nozione di 'competenza' nella pedagogia linguistica: Dalla 'competenza linguistica' alla 'competenza comunicativa interculturale'. *Italiano LinguaDue*, 2, 1-10.
- Ciliberti, A. (2012). La nozione di 'competenza' nella pedagogia linguistica: Dalla 'competenza linguistica' alla 'competenza comunicativa interculturale'. *Italiano LinguaDue*, 2, 1-10.
- Coleman, J. A. (2009). Study abroad and second language acquisition: Defining goals and variables. In K. Kleppin & A. Berndt (Eds.), *Sprachlehrforschung: Theorie und Empirie, Festschrift für Rüdiger Grotjahn* (pp. 181-196). Frankfurt, D: Peter Lang.
- Coleman, J. A. (2013). Researching whole people and whole lives. In C. Kinginger (Ed.), *Social and cultural aspects of language learning in study abroad* (pp. 17-44). Amsterdam, NL: John Benjamins Publ.
- Consiglio d'Europa, Modern Languages Division. (2002). *Quadro comune europeo di riferimento per le lingue: Apprendimento insegnamento valutazione*. Milano: La Nuova Italia-Oxford.
- Coperías Aguilar, M. (2009). Intercultural communicative competence in the context of the European higher education area. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 9(4), 242-255. doi:10.1080/14708470902785642
- Coperías Aguilar, M. J. (2010) Intercultural communicative competence as a tool for autonomous learning. *Revista Canaria De Estudios Ingleses*, (61), 87-98.
- Council of Europe (2010) *White paper on intercultural dialogue: "Living together as equals in dignity": Launched by the Council of Europe Ministers of Foreign Affairs at their 118th ministerial session (Strasbourg, 7 may 2008)* Council of Europe Publishing.
- Council of Europe (2016) *Competences for democratic culture. Living together as equals in culturally diverse democratic societies*, Retrieved 20 May 2019 from <https://rm.coe.int/16806ccc07> .
- Council of Europe (2018) *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume with New Descriptors*. Retrieved 20 February 2020 from <https://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989>.
- Crocker, R. A. (2009) An introduction to qualitative research. In Anonymous *Qualitative research in applied linguistics*. Springer, 3-24.
- De Mauro, T. (2002). *Italiano 2000: I pubblici e le motivazioni dell'italiano diffuso fra stranieri*. Roma: Bulzoni.
- Deardorff, D. K. (2004). The identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalization at institutions of higher education in

the United States (Master's thesis, North Carolina State University). *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses*, 337-337 p. Retrieved December 12, 2014, from <http://ezproxy.library.nyu.edu:2048/login?url=...?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/305165880?accountid=12768>

Deardorff, D. K. (2006). Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 10(3), 241-266.

Deardorff, D. K. (2011). Assessing intercultural competence. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, 2011(149), 65-79.

Deardorff, D. K., & Arasaratnam-Smith, L. A. (2017). *Intercultural competence in higher education: International approaches, assessment and application*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methodologies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Duff, P. (2018) *Case study research in applied linguistics* Routledge.

Engle, L. & Engle, J. (2004) Assessing language acquisition and intercultural sensitivity development in relation to study abroad program design. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 10 219-236

Epstein, A. (2000) *As the romans do: An american family's italian odyssey* Perennial.

Fantini, A. (2009). Assessing intercultural competence: Issues and tools. In D. K. Deardorff (Ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of Intercultural Competence* (pp. 456-476). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Fraenkel, J. R., & Wallen, N. E. (2003). *How to design and evaluate research in education*. New York: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

Fratte, I. (2004). Il profilo dello studente Erasmus, destinatario delle attività di lingua italiana presso il CLA di Padova. In C. Taylor Torsello, A. Pasinato, & N. Whitteridge (Eds.), *CLA di Padova: Esperienze innovative e riflessioni per il futuro* (pp. 25-41). Padova: CLEUP.

Freddi, G. (1975). *Metodologia e didattica delle lingue straniere*. Bergamo, I: Minerva Italica.

Galilei, G. (1792). *Considerazioni al Tasso di Galileo Galilei. E discorso di Giuseepe Iseo sopra il poema di M. Torquato Tasso: per dimostrazione di alcuni luoghi in diversi autori da lui felicemente emulati*. Pagliarini Retrieved from <https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=CJFRAAAAcAAJ&rdid=book-CJFRAAAAcAAJ&rdot=1>

Garrett-Rucks, P. (2012). Byram versus Bennett: Discrepancies in the Assessment of Learners' IC Development. *Proceedings of Intercultural Competence Conference*, 2, 11-33. Retrieved from <http://cercll.arizona.edu>

- Ghezzi, C., Piantoni M., Bozzone Costa R. (2015). *Nuovo Contatto B1*. Torino: Loescher Ed.
- Giaccardi, C. (2005). *La comunicazione interculturale*. Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Gruppo Italiaidea, (2018). *New Italian Espresso Intermediate & Advanced*. Firenze: Alma Edizioni.
- Gutierrez Almarza, G., Duran Martinez, R., & Beltran Llavador, F. (2015). Profiling the intercultural communicative competence of university students at the beginning of their Erasmus placements. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 173, 43-47.
- Hammer, M. R. (2007). *The intercultural development inventory (IDI) manual (v.3)*. Ocean Pines, MD: IDI, LLC.
- Hammer, M. R., & Bennett, M. J. (1998). *The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) manual*. Portland, Or.: Intercultural Communication Institute.
- Hammer, M. R., Bennett, M. J., & Wiseman, R. (2003). Measuring intercultural sensitivity: The intercultural development inventory. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 27(4), 421-443. doi:10.1016/s0147-1767(03)00032-4
- Hofstede, G. (1980). *Culture's consequences: International differences in work-related values*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.
- Hofstede, G. (1986). Cultural differences in teaching and learning. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 10(3), 301-320.
- Hofstede, G. (1991). *Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind*. London: McGraw-Hill.
- Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organizations across nations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Hofstede, G. J., Pedersen, P., & Hofstede, G. H. (2002). *Exploring culture. Exercises, stories, and synthetic cultures*. Yarmouth, Me.: Intercultural Press.
- Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010). *Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind: Intercultural cooperation and its importance for survival*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Holmes, P., Bavieri, L., Ganassin, S. & Murphy, J. (2016) Interculturality and the study abroad experience: Students' learning from the IEREST materials. *Language and Intercultural Communication* 16.3 (2016): 452-469.
- Holmes, P., & O'Neill, G. (2012). Developing and evaluating intercultural competence: Ethnographies of intercultural encounters. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 36(5), 707-718.

- Hopkins, J. R. (1999). Studying abroad as a form of experiential education. *Liberal Education*, (85), 36-41.
- House, R. J., & Hanges, P. J. (2004). Research design. In R. J. House, P. J. Hanges, M. Javidan, P. W. Dorfman, & V. Gupta (Eds.), *Culture, leadership, and organizations: The GLOBE study of 62 societies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- House, R. J., & Javidan, M. (2004). Overview of GLOBE. In R. J. House, P. J. Hanges, M. Javidan, P. W. Dorfman, & V. Gupta (Eds.), *Culture, leadership, and organizations: The GLOBE study of 62 societies* (pp. 9-28). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hu, A. (2008). Interkulturelle Kompetenz: Ansätze zur Dimensionierung und Evaluation einer Schlüsselkompetenz fremdsprachlichen Lernens. In V. Frederking (Ed.), *Schwer operationalisierbare Kompetenzen: Herausforderungen empirischer Fachdidaktik*. (pp. 11-35). Hohengehren, D: Schneider.
- Huber, J. (2012) *Intercultural competence for all: Preparation for living in a heterogeneous world* Council of Europe.
- Huff, D. (1993) *How to lie with statistics* WW Norton & Company.
- Hunter, B., White, G. P. & Godbey, G. C. (2006) What does it mean to be globally competent? *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 10 (3), 267-285.
- Hymes, D. (1972) On communicative competence. *Sociolinguistics*, 269-293.
- Hymes, D. (1972). On communicative competence. In J. B. Pride & J. Holmes (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- INCA Project. (2004). Retrieved November 21, 2014, from <http://www.incaproject.org>
- Inglehart, R., & Baker, W. E. (2000). Modernization, Cultural Change, and the Persistence of Traditional Values. *American Sociological Review*, 65(1), 19-51. doi:10.2307/2657288
- Inkeles, A., & Levinson, D. J. (1969). National character: The study of modal personality and sociocultural systems. In G. Lindzey & E. Aronson (Eds.), *The handbook of social psychology* (2nd ed., Vol. 4, pp. 418-506). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
(original work published in 1954)
- Italian Espresso 2*. (2007) Alma Edizioni
- Jackson, J. (2008) *Language, identity, and study abroad: Sociocultural perspectives*. London ; Oakville: Equinox Pub.
- Jackson, J. (2010). *Intercultural journeys: From study to residence abroad*. Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Jackson, J. (2015) Becoming interculturally competent: Theory to practice in international education. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 48 91-107
- Jafrancesco, E. (2004). Profilo socioculturale e bisogni linguistici di studenti con borse di studio internazionali. In E. Jafrancesco (Ed.), *Le tendenze innovative del Quadro Comune Europeo di Riferimento per le Lingue e del Portfolio* (pp. 135-173). Atene, GR: Edilingua.
- Jupp, V. & Sage Publications (2006) *The SAGE dictionary of social research methods*. London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE Publications.
- Kinginger, C. (2009). *Language learning and study abroad: A critical reading of research*. Basingstoke [England] ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kirkman, B. L., Lowe, K. B., & Gibson, C. B. (2006). A quarter century of Culture's Consequences: A review of empirical research incorporating Hofstede's cultural values framework. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 37(3), 285-320.
- Kohls, L. R., & Knight, J. M. (1994). *Developing intercultural awareness: A cross-cultural training handbook*. Yarmouth, Me., USA: Intercultural Press.
- Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Kolb, D. A., & Fry, R. (1975). Toward an applied theory of experiential learning. In C. Cooper (Ed.), *Theories of group process*. (pp. 33-57). New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Lage, M. J., Platt, G. J. & Treglia, M. (2000) Inverting the classroom: A gateway to creating an inclusive learning environment. *The Journal of Economic Education*, 31 (1), 30-43
- Lázár, I. (2007) *Developing and assessing intercultural communicative competence: A guide for language teachers and teacher educators* Council of Europe.
- Lazaraton, A. (2005) Quantitative research methods. In Anonymous *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning*. Routledge, 233-248.
- Lennon, J. (1971) *Imagine*. Apple/EMI.
- Lenz, P. & Berthele, R. (2012) La valutazione delle competenze plurilingui e interculturali. *Italiano LinguaDue*, 4 (1), 301-342
- Liberanome, H., & Liberanome, D. (2000). *I programmi universitari nord americani in Italia* (P. Prebys, Ed.). Rome: Association of American College and University Programs in Italy.
- Longo, L. (2016) *Insegnare con la flipped classroom. stili di apprendimento e "classe capovolta"*. Brescia: Editrice La Scuola.

- Mackey, A. & Gass, S. M. (2015) *Second language research: Methodology and design* Routledge.
- Mackey, A., & Gass, S. M. (2005). *Second language research: Methodology and design*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Mapp, S. C. (2012) Effect of short-term study abroad programs on students' cultural adaptability. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 48 (4), 727-737.
- Mariani, L. (2009). Documentare e autovalutare la competenza comunicativa interculturale: L'esempio del progetto CROMO. *Lingua E Nuova Didattica*, XXXVIII(3), 38-46.
- McKay, S. L. (2006) *Researching second language classrooms* Routledge.
- Méndez García, María del Carmen (2017) Intercultural reflection through the autobiography of intercultural encounters: Students' accounts of their images of alterity. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 17 (2), 90-117.
- Menegale, M. (2018). Logbook o Diario di bordo: Uno strumento per l'apprendimento dentro e fuori la classe di lingua. *EL.LE*, 7(1).
<https://doi.org/10.30687/ELLE/2280-6792/2018/01/003>
- Mezzadri, M., Balboni, P.E. (2012). *Nuovo Rete! B1*. Perugia: Guerra.
- Minkov, M. (2007). *What Makes Us Different and Similar: A New Interpretation of the World Value Survey and Other Cross-Cultural Data*. Bulgaria: Klasika Y Stil Publishing House.
- Minkov, M. (2011). *Cultural differences in a globalizing world*. Bingley, UK: Emerald.
- Minkov, M. (2013). *Cross-cultural analysis: The science and art of comparing the world's modern societies and their cultures*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Minkov, M., & Hofstede, G. (2012). Is National Culture a Meaningful Concept?: Cultural Values Delineate Homogeneous National Clusters of In-Country Regions. *Cross-Cultural Research*, 46(2), 133-159.
 doi:10.1177/1069397111427262
- Mizumoto, A. & Plonsky, L. (2016) R as a lingua franca: Advantages of using R for quantitative research in applied linguistics. *Applied Linguistics*, 37 (2), 284-291
- Moretti, N. (Director). (1993). *Caro diario* [Motion picture]. Sacher film.
- Morgan, L. H. (1877). *Ancient society*. New York: H. Holt and.
- Neuner, G. (2003) *Intercultural competence* Council of Europe.
- Nunan, D. (1992). *Research methods in language learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- OECD. (2011). Education at a glance 2011: OECD indicators. *OECD Publishing*. Retrieved from dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2011-en
- OECD. (2018). Education at a glance 2018: OECD indicators. *OECD Publishing*. Retrieved from <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/eag-2018-en/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/eag-2018-en>
- Parks, T. & Baldassarre, R. (1995) *Italiani*. Milano: Bompiani.
- Pedon, A., Gnisci, A. (2012) *Manuale di psicodiagnostica: aspetti teorici e applicativi dei test*. Firenze: Le Lettere.
- Pedersen, P. J. (2010). Assessing intercultural effectiveness outcomes in a year-long study abroad program. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 34(1), 70-80.
- Peterson, M. F., & Smith, P. B. (2008). Social structures and processes in cross-cultural management. In P. B. Smith, M. F. Peterson, & D. C. Thomas (Eds.), *The handbook of cross-cultural management research* (pp. 35-58). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Pmjat, Z., Guglielmi, L. (2008). La competenza comunicativa interculturale e l'insegnamento delle lingue straniere. In: ITALS, Anno VI n. 26.
- Precht, E., & Davidson Lund, A. (2007). Intercultural Competence and Assessment: Perspectives from the INCA Project. In *Handbook of Intercultural Communication* (pp. 467-490). Berlin, D: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Schulz, R. A. (2007). The Challenge of Assessing Cultural Understanding in the Context of Foreign Language Instruction. *Foreign Language Annals*, 40(1), 9-26.
- Severgnini, B. (1996) *Confronti* Rizzoli.
- Severgnini, B. (2008) *La bella figura: A field guide to the italian mind* Broadway Books.
- Severgnini, B. (2012) *An italian in America* Bur.
- Smith, P. B. (2004). Nations, Cultures, and Individuals: New Perspectives and Old Dilemmas. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 35(1), 6-12. doi:10.1177/0022022103260460
- Soares, A. M., Farhangmehr, M. & Shoham, A. (2007) Hofstede's dimensions of culture in international marketing studies. *Journal of Business Research*, 60 (3), 277-284.
- Sweitzer, H. F., & King, M. A. (2009). *The successful internship: Personal, professional, and civic development (3rd edition)*. Belmont (CA): Brooks/Cole Cengage Learning.
- Tarabusi, L. (1996). L'italiano al Centro Linguistico di Ateneo: Realtà e prospettive. In S. Semplici (Ed.), *Proposte per l'autoapprendimento. Atti del III Seminario*

Permanente dei Centri Linguistici (pp. 25-41). Siena: Università per Stranieri di Siena.

- Tarabusi, L. (2012). Developing intercultural competence using Hofstede's cultural dimensions. In E. J. Nash, N. Brown, & L. Bracci (Eds.), *Intercultural Horizons: Best practices in intercultural competence development* (pp. 94-108). Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing/Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Tarabusi, L. (2017). Learning to Be Interculturally Competent: New Frontiers for Italian L2 Courses for Students with International Mobility Grants. In *Conference Proceedings ICT for Language Learning. 10 Edition*, Padova: Libreria Universitaria Edizioni, p. 427-432
- Tarabusi, L. (2018a). Consapevolezza, conoscenza, abilità: strategie per lo sviluppo della competenza comunicativa interculturale. I primi dati.” In E. Jafrancesco (a cura di), *Le competenze trasversali dello studente universitario di Italiano L2*, Siena, Becarelli Editore, pp. 181-209.
- Tarabusi, L. (2018b) Mobilità internazionale e competenza comunicativa interculturale: un profilo degli studenti in entrata”. In *La didattica delle lingue nel nuovo millennio: le sfide dell'internazionalizzazione. Atti del IV Congresso della società di Didattica delle Lingue e Linguistica Educativa DILLE (Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, 2-4 febbraio 2017)*, a cura di Carmel Mary Coonan, Ada Bier, Elena Ballarin. Venezia, Edizioni Ca' Foscari Digital Publishing, p. 441-464.
- Tashakkori, A., Teddlie, C. & Teddlie, C. B. (1998) *Mixed methodology: Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches* Sage.
- Taylor, E. B. (1871). *Primitive culture: Researches into the development of mythology, philosophy, religion, language, art and custom*. London: John Murray.
- Trompenaars, F. (1993). *Riding the waves of culture*. London: Economist Books.
- UNESCO (2015). *Rethinking Education. Towards a global common good?*. Paris: UNESCO. Retrieved March 6, 2020 from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002325/232555e.pdf>
- Utley, D. (2004). *Intercultural resource pack: Intercultural communication resources for language teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Van Ek, J. A. (1986). *Objectives for foreign language learning. Vol.1: Scope*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Vedovelli, M. (2002). *Guida all'italiano per stranieri: La prospettiva del Quadro comune europeo per le lingue*. Roma: Carocci.
- Vedovelli, M. (2016) *Guida all'italiano per stranieri: Dal quadro comune europeo per le lingue alla sfida salutare* Carocci editore.

Williams, T. R. (2005). Exploring the Impact of Study Abroad on Students' Intercultural Communication Skills: Adaptability and Sensitivity. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 9(4), 356-371.

Woodin, J. (2018) *Interculturality, interaction and language learning : Insights from tandem partnerships*. Milton: Taylor & Francis Group.

World Values Survey. (2006). On-line data analysis. Retrieved November, 2006, from www.worldvaluessurvey.com

Yu, H. (2012). Intercultural Competence in Technical Communication: A Working Definition and Review of Assessment Methods. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 21(2), 168-186.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Parameters for study abroad classification

Appendix 1. Twenty parameters for study abroad research (Coleman, 2009: 183).

Parameter or category	Parameter settings (or variables within the category)					
	Within-program(me)			Whole-program(me)		
1 Academic context	Academic	Cultural	Intercultural	Linguistic	Personal	Professional
2 Learning outcomes	Secondary education (teenagers)		Higher education (young adults)	Adults (all ages)		
3 Age	Specialist language degree		Other specialism or modular degree	Postgraduate		
4 Program(me) at home institution	Continuum from very little to ten years or more		Teacher training			
5 Previous language learning	Continuum from very little to ten years or more					
6 Proficiency prior to departure	Continuum from beginner through elementary, intermediate, advanced; CEFR A1 to C1					
7 Preparation	Integrated to previous study for a year or more		Program(me)	Briefing(s)		None
8 Duration	Two to six weeks	Below one semester	One semester (including summer semester)	One year or two semesters	Full degree program(me)	
9 Outgoing/incoming group	Large and coherent		Small, informal	Individual		
10 L1	X shared by all participants					
11 L2	English in L1-English host country		English in non-L1-English host country	Other international lingua franca		Other language
12 Accommodation	Homestay	University residence with other foreign students	University residence (integrated)	School (for assistants)	Individually arranged	
13 Accommodation shared by	Only locals		Only other L1-speakers	Other L1-speakers but in a local family		Other foreigners

(Continued)

Appendix 1. Twenty parameters for study abroad research (Coleman, 2009: 183). (Continued)

	Parameter or category	Parameter settings (or variables within the category)					
		For the group alone	For foreigners only	Principally for locals (options selected by home institution)	Principally for locals and foreigners (e.g. student)	None	None
14	Program(me) of non-language courses followed	For the group alone	For foreigners only	Principally for locals (options selected by home institution)	Principally for locals and foreigners (e.g. student)	None	None
15	Program(me) of language courses followed	For the group alone	For foreigners only	For both locals and foreigners (translation)	None	None	None
16	Program(me) taught by	Home institution staff	Host institution staff		Mixture		
17	Program(me) taught in	L2	Lingua franca (usually English)		Mixture		
18	Professional content	Work placement	Teaching / assistantship	Volunteering	None		
19	Institutional support	Bilateral	International office	Home institution only (island model)	None (free mover, 'spontaneous mobility')		
20	Assessment	By home institution	By host institution	By host institution	By host but 'interpreted'		

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH⁸

Project title: Developing Intercultural Communicative Competence in Study Abroad

Researchers

Name: Laura TARABUSI, PhD student at the University of Hull (UK)

Email Address: laura.tarabusi@nyu.edu

Telephone address: + 39 055 500700

Office Address: Room no. 316 Villa Ulivi, New York University, Via Bolognese 120, 50139 Firenze (Italy)

The University **School Ethics Committee** has given approval for this research project.

For information on your rights as a research subject, call the School Ethics Committee at this number: +44 01482 465900 .

Introduction

We are currently undertaking a study to explore the impact of some specifically designed instructional material on the development of the Intercultural Communicative Competence in study abroad students of higher education institutions. This form will describe the purpose and nature of the study. Please take whatever time you need to discuss the study with the researcher. The decision to participate or not is yours. If you decide to participate, please sign and date the last line of this form.

Background and purpose of the study

We are particularly interested in the relationship among instructional material designed for developing Intercultural Communicative Competence for use in the second language classroom and the amount and nature of students' learning. We hope to use what we learn to improve the quality of second language learning and teaching, and contribute to the growing body of knowledge in the area of second language learning as well as intercultural competence research.

Total number of participants

About 40 people will take part in this study

General plan

During the study, participants will use some specifically designed instructional material,

⁸ Consent form adapted from Mackey, A., & Gass, S. M. (2005). *Second language research: Methodology and design*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

both in class and as homework. Participants' Intercultural Communicative Competence will be assessed twice (at the beginning and at the end of the academic semester). Instructional material completed in class and as homework may be used as part of the data. The course will follow the New York University Italian Department curriculum and be no different from other courses of the same level.

Length of study

This study will last one semester

Confidentiality

Every effort will be made to keep the data collected confidential. We will disclose personal information about you only if required to do so by the law. However we cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Whatever data from this study are published, your name will not be used. Pseudonyms will be used, the researcher will not know who are the student participants.

Data security

If information about your participation is stored in a computer, the computer will not be part of a network. The computer will be password-protected and only the researcher and her supervisors will have access to the data.

New findings

If you would like to be kept informed on the results of the study, we will contact you to explain the results of our study after the study has been concluded. Please tick the box below and leave a contact email address.

.....

Payment

You will not be paid for participating in this study.

Your rights as a participant

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You have the right to leave the study at any time. Leaving the study will not result in any penalty or affect your relations with your professor or New York University. Should you decide to leave the study, tell your professor or a researcher. You will still participate in class activities, but nothing you say or do in class, and nothing you submit to your professor, will be used as part of the data.

Problems and questions

Email laura.tarabusi@nyu.edu or call + 39 055 5007300 if you have any questions or problems.

Call the School Ethics Committee Office at number +44 01482 465900 with any questions about your rights as a research subject.

Withdrawal by researcher

The researchers may stop the study or take you out of the study at any time should they judge that you are no longer at the appropriate level for the study or for any other reason.

Researcher's Statement

I have fully explained this study to the participant. I have discussed the procedures and treatments and have answered all of the questions that the participant has asked.

Signature of the researcher Date

Participant's consent

I have read the information provided in this Informed Consent Form. All my questions were answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Your name

Your signature Date

Appendix 3 – Test pre-

Valutazione della competenza interculturale

INtercultural Competence Assessment

© INCA, LdVII, 2004

QRCode

1. Informazioni biografiche – *Biographical Information*

1) Et  – *Age* (p.es.: 20 – e.g.: 20) _____

2) Nazionalit  – *Nationality* _____

3) Anno di iscrizione alla tua universit  – *Academic Standing*

- 1 anno – *year* 2 anno – *year* 3 anno – *year*
 4 anno – *year* altro – *other*

4) Livello del corso di italiano attuale – *Italian language course currently enrolled in*

- B1.1 B1.2 B2.1
 B2.2 C1 altro (specificare) – *other (please specify)*

5) Da quanto tempo sei qui a Firenze? – *How long have you been here in Florence?*

- meno di 1 settimana – *less than 1 week* 1 settimana – *week*
 2 settimane – *weeks* 3 settimane – *weeks*
 1 mese – *month* pi  di 1 mese – *more than 1 month*

6) Per quanto tempo studierai all'Universit  di Firenze in tutto? – *How long will you be studying at the Universit  di Firenze overall?*

- 3 mesi – *months* 4 mesi – *months* 5 mesi – *months*
 6 mesi – *months* più di 6 mesi – *more than 6 months*

Le seguenti informazioni daranno una prima panoramica dei tuoi contatti e delle tue esperienze interculturali.

The rest of this information will provide a first overview of your intercultural contacts and experiences.

7) Quanti amici hai che vengono dall'estero? – *How many friends from abroad do you have?*

- 0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7 o più – *or more*

8) Quante lingue parli bene? – *How many languages do you speak well?*

9) Dove e come hai imparato queste lingue? – *Where and how did you learn these languages?*

10) Quante volte hai incontrato persone di altri paesi nella tua vita accademica o professionale? – *How often have you dealt with people from other countries in your academic or professional life?*

- mai – *never* un paio di volte – *a couple of times*
 abbastanza spesso – *quite often* spesso – *often*
 molto spesso – *very often*

11) Hai mai studiato o lavorato in gruppi di lavoro con membri di diverse culture? – *Have you ever studied or worked in a work group with members from various cultures?*

- mai – *never* un paio di volte – *a couple of times*
 abbastanza spesso – *quite often* spesso – *often*

12) Quante volte leggi libri in lingua straniera? – *How often do you read books that are written in foreign languages?*

- mai – *never* raramente – *rarely*
 abbastanza spesso – *quite often* spesso – *often*

molto spesso – *very often*

13) Quante volte sei stato all'estero? – *How often have you been abroad?*

questa è la prima volta – *this is my first time* 2 volte – *times* 3-5
volte – *times* 6-10 volte – *times* più di 10 volte – *more than 10*
times

14) In quali paesi sei stato? – *Which countries have you been to?*

15) Quante volte sei stato all'estero per motivi di studio o di lavoro? – *How often have you been abroad while studying or carrying out your job?*

mai – *never* un paio di volte – *a couple of times*
 abbastanza spesso – *quite often* spesso – *often*
 molto spesso – *very often*

16) Quanto tempo è durato il tuo più lungo soggiorno all'estero? – *How long did your longest stay abroad last?*

1 - 2 giorni – *1 - 2 days* 3 giorni - 1 settimana – *3 days - 1 week*
 8 giorni - 1 mese – *8 days - 1 month* 1 - 6 mesi – *1 - 6 months*
 più di 6 mesi – *more than 6 months*

17) Quanti paesi hai già visitato? – *How many different countries have you visited already?*

0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7 o più – *or more*

2. Profilo interculturale – *Intercultural profile*

Sicuramente hai vissuto situazioni in cui hai avuto contatti con persone di culture diverse, per esempio al lavoro, nel tuo paese o in altri paesi. Qui di seguito troverai delle affermazioni relative a tali situazioni. Spunta le affermazioni che sono valide per te e che meglio descrivono le tue esperienze. – *It is certain that you will have experienced many situations where you have had contact with people from other cultures, for example at your workplace, in your country, or in other countries. You will find below some statements*

that are related to such situations. Please tick those statements that are valid for you and that best describe your experiences.

Può darsi che queste affermazioni siano relative a situazioni che non hai ancora vissuto. Cerca allora di immaginarle e spunta la risposta che meglio corrisponde al tuo possibile comportamento e alla tua possibile reazione. – *Maybe these statements are related to situations that you have not yet experienced. Please try to imagine such a situation and tick those situations that correspond best to your possible behaviour and reaction.*

Con questo questionario puoi conservare traccia del tuo comportamento e della tua esperienza passata. Il questionario intende darti un feedback sui tuoi punti forti e sui tuoi punti deboli nel campo della competenza interculturale. – *Through this questionnaire you can record your own behaviour and past experience. The questionnaire is supposed to give you feedback on your strengths and weaknesses in this area of intercultural competence.*

Esempio – Example	Non applicabile	Forse	Completamente applicabile
	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Maybe</i>	<i>Fully applicable</i>
Al supermercato preferisco comprare prodotti esteri. <i>In the supermarket I prefer to buy products from abroad.</i>			✓

Questa parte è su incontri con persone diverse nel tuo paese di origine.

This section is about encounters with other people in your home country.

	Non applicabile	Forse	Completamente applicabile
	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Maybe</i>	<i>Fully applicable</i>
18) Al ristorante mangio spesso piatti con ingredienti che non conosco. <i>In restaurants I often eat dishes with ingredients that I don't know.</i>			
19) Cerco spesso il contatto con persone diverse per imparare il più possibile la loro cultura. <i>I often seek contact with other people in order to learn as much as possible about their culture.</i>			

- 20) Quando gli altri non si sentono a proprio agio in mia presenza io me ne accorgo.

When other people don't feel comfortable in my presence, I notice it.

- 21) Per me è difficile adattarsi a persone di origini diverse.

I find it difficult to adapt to people from diverse origins.

- 22) Quando le persone diverse si comportano in un modo che non capisco, io chiedo loro perché fanno così.

When other people behave in a way that I don't understand, I ask them why they are doing this.

- 23) Quando sento di una catastrofe in un altro paese penso a quel popolo e al suo destino.

When I hear about a catastrophe happening in another country I think about the people there and their fate.

- 24) Quando sono un nuovo arrivato in un gruppo di persone di un altro paese, cerco di scoprire le regole di questo gruppo osservando il loro comportamento.

When I am a newcomer in a group with people from a different country, I try to find out the rules in this group by observing their behaviour.

- 25) Quando una conversazione con persone di paesi diversi fallisce, chiedo a tutte le persone coinvolte di spiegare la propria posizione.

When a conversation with people from different countries fails, I ask all persons involved to explain their positions.

- 26) Quando le persone che parlano con me usano gesti ed espressioni che non conosco io le ignoro.

When conversation partners use gestures and expressions that are unknown to me, I ignore them.

- 27) Quando parlo con gli altri guardo sempre il loro linguaggio del corpo.

When talking to other people I always watch their body language.

- 28) Nelle conversazioni con persone di altre lingue io evito parole ambigue o non chiare.

In conversations with speakers of other languages I avoid unclear or ambiguous words.

Ora ci occupiamo di situazioni in cui tu incontri persone nel loro paese di origine (per esempio in vacanza in altri paesi e culture).

Now we deal with situations where you meet people in their home country (e.g. when on holiday in other countries and cultures)

	Non applicabile	Forse	Completamente applicabile
	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Maybe</i>	<i>Fully applicable</i>
29) Sono a disagio quando gli orari dei mezzi di trasporto del paese in cui sono in vacanza non sono affidabili. <i>I get confused when there are no reliable transport timetables in the country where I spend my holiday.</i>			
30) Quando osservo le persone in altri paesi spesso indovino come si sentono. <i>When I observe people in other countries, I often guess how they are feeling.</i>			
31) Spesso cambio programma quando sono in vacanza all'estero. <i>I often change my plans when I am on holiday abroad.</i>			
32) Quando il comportamento delle persone di culture diverse mi estranea, evito di avere contatti con loro. <i>When the behaviour of people from other cultures alienates me, I avoid making contact with them.</i>			

Le seguenti affermazioni sono relative a situazioni di lavoro con colleghi con un diverso background culturale.

The following statements are related to work situations with colleagues from different cultural backgrounds.

	Non applicabile	Forse	Completamente applicabile
	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Maybe</i>	<i>Fully applicable</i>
33) Non ho problemi a passare velocemente a un'altra lingua che conosco durante una conversazione. <i>I don't have problems in suddenly changing to one of my other languages during a conversation.</i>			
34) Io seguo sempre le regole della mia cultura se non sono sicuro di come comportarmi correttamente con persone di altre culture.			

I always follow the rules of my own culture if I am not sure of how to behave properly when dealing with people from other cultures.

- 35) Quando colleghi di altre culture arrivano tardi al lavoro e/o fanno pause lunghe, io mi adeguo alle loro abitudini lavorative.

When colleagues from other cultures in my work group come to work later and/or take longer breaks, I adopt their work habits.

- 36) Se mi sono comportato in modo inappropriato con un collega di un'altra cultura, penso subito a come rimediare senza continuare ad offenderlo.

If I have behaved inappropriately towards a colleague from another culture, I think of how to compensate for it without further hurting him.

- 37) Quando nel mio ambiente di lavoro ci sono colleghi di una minoranza etnica, cerco di integrarli nel gruppo di maggioranza.

When there are colleagues in my work area who constitute an ethnic minority, I try to involve them in the majority group.

- 38) Quando colleghi o superiori stranieri criticano il mio lavoro, valuto se cambiare il mio modo di lavorare di conseguenza.

When colleagues or superiors from abroad criticise my work, I consider changing my work habits accordingly.

3. Incontri interculturali – Intercultural encounters

Leggi gli scenari e rispondi alle domande seguenti.

Read the scenarios and then answer the following questions.

SCENARIO 1: LA SISTEMAZIONE – ACCOMMODATION

Tenendo conto del fatto che uno degli obiettivi espliciti della tua esperienza di lavoro/studio all'estero è conoscere meglio un altro paese e il suo stile di vita, leggi con attenzione le seguenti opzioni per la tua sistemazione. Metti le opzioni in ordine di preferenza, poi scrivi un paragrafo in cui spieghi il motivo della scelta della tua **prima** opzione.

Non c'è una risposta corretta, perché tutte le opzioni offrono vantaggi e svantaggi

*Given the fact that one of the stated aims of your work placement/study abroad is that you would be able to find out more about another country and its way of life, please study the options for your accommodation. Rank the options in the order in which you yourself would choose, and then write a paragraph in which you explain why you chose your **first** option.*

There is no one correct answer, as each option would offer some advantages and some disadvantages.

Opzioni – Options

Ordine – Order

Un posto letto in un ostello per giovani lavoratori/ studenti, insieme a colleghi del tuo paese.

A place in a young workers'/ students' hostel, together with some of your fellow nationals.

Sistemazione mezza pensione in famiglia.

Living with a local family, half board.

Un piccolo appartamento dove puoi cucinare e lavare.

A small flat where you would cater for yourself.

39) Queste le ragioni della mia scelta (**min. 15 parole**) – *The reasons for my choice are as follows (15 words min.)*

SCENARIO 2: INVITARE O NON INVITARE – *TO INVITE OR NOT*

Un giovane del paese X viene a lavorare nella tua azienda per 6 mesi. Sei consapevole che lui sia abbastanza isolato e prendi in considerazione l'idea di invitarlo ad uscire con te e i tuoi amici. Il problema è che il tuo gruppo di amici si conosce da tanto tempo e un estraneo avrebbe difficoltà ad inserirsi.

A young person from country x comes to work at your firm for 6 months. You are aware that he is rather isolated and you consider the idea of inviting him to join you and your friends. The problem is that your group of friends have known each other for a long time and a stranger would find it difficult to fit in.

40) Scrivi in un breve paragrafo cosa pensi che faresti in questa situazione (e perché). **(min. 20 parole)** –
Write down in a few lines what you think you would do in this situation (and why). (20 words min.)

SCENARIO 3: UN'OCCASIONE SOCIALE – A SOCIAL OCCASION

Il tuo supervisore al lavoro ti ha chiesto di socializzare con un giovane collega straniero della tua stessa età e sesso, che parla la tua lingua abbastanza bene.

Your supervisor at work has asked you to socialise with a young foreign worker of the same age and gender as yourself, who speaks your language quite well.

41) Scrivi quali argomenti di conversazione sceglieresti. (**min. 10 parole**) – *Write what topics of conversation you would choose. (10 words min.)*

42) Scrivi che cosa sceglieresti di fare e perché. (**min. 10 parole**) – *Write what kind of activities you would choose to do and why. (10 words min.)*

SCENARIO 4: SENTIRSI CONFUSI – *FEELING CONFUSED*

Lavori da 6 mesi con persone di un altro paese. Sul posto di lavoro non hai problemi di lingua, ma noti che le persone spesso sembrano dire cose che non intendono veramente e che esagerano nel modo in cui parlano. Per esempio quando qualcuno lavora troppo lentamente, un supervisore può dire 'vedo che ti prendi tutto il tempo di cui hai bisogno' invece di 'più veloce'. Nella tua cultura le persone sono molto dirette e dicono solo quello che intendono.

You have been working for six months among people from a different country. In the workplace you do not have language difficulties as such, but you notice that people often seem to say things they don't really mean and that they exaggerate the way in which they speak. For example when

somebody is working too slowly, a supervisor might say 'you take all the time you need' instead of 'hurry up'. In your culture people are very straightforward and say only what they mean.

43) Immagina di scrivere a un amico nel tuo paese. Scrivi quello che pensi di questa situazione. Immagina quali potrebbero essere le tue reazioni e come affronteresti la situazione. **(min. 20 parole)** – *Imagine that you are writing or e-mailing to a friend in your own country. Write down the thoughts you might have on this situation. Imagine what your reactions might be and how you would deal with the situation. (20 words min.)*

Riservato al valutatore. Non scrivere nei campi sottostanti.

For assessor's use only. Do not write in the boxes below.

K

O

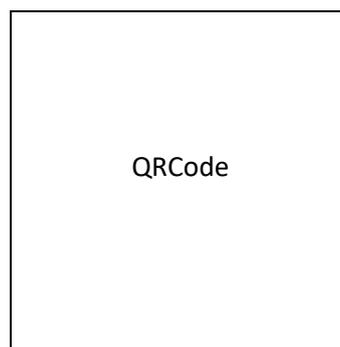
A

Appendix 4 – Test post-

Valutazione della competenza interculturale

INtercultural Competence Assessment

© INCA, LdVII, 2004



2. Profilo interculturale – *Intercultural profile*

Sicuramente hai vissuto situazioni in cui hai avuto contatti con persone di culture diverse, per esempio al lavoro, nel tuo paese o in altri paesi. Qui di seguito troverai delle affermazioni relative a tali situazioni. Spunta le affermazioni che sono valide per te e che meglio descrivono le tue esperienze. – *It is certain that you will have experienced many situations where you have had contact with people from other cultures, for example at your workplace, in your country, or in other countries. You will find below some statements that are related to such situations. Please tick those statements that are valid for you and that best describe your experiences.*

Può darsi che queste affermazioni siano relative a situazioni che non hai ancora vissuto. Cerca allora di immaginarle e spunta la risposta che meglio corrisponde al tuo possibile comportamento e alla tua possibile reazione. – *Maybe these statements are related to situations that you have not yet experienced. Please try to imagine such a situation and tick those situations that correspond best to your possible behaviour and reaction.*

Con questo questionario puoi conservare traccia del tuo comportamento e della tua esperienza passata. Il questionario intende darti un feedback sui tuoi punti forti e sui tuoi punti deboli nel campo della competenza interculturale. – *Through this questionnaire you can record your own behaviour and past experience. The questionnaire is supposed to give you feedback on your strengths and weaknesses in this area of intercultural competence.*

Esempio – Example	Non applicabile	Forse	Completamente applicabile
	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Maybe</i>	<i>Fully applicable</i>
Al supermercato preferisco comprare prodotti esteri. <i>In the supermarket I prefer to buy products from abroad.</i>			

Questa parte è su incontri con persone diverse nel tuo paese di origine.

This section is about encounters with other people in your home country.

		Non applicabile	Forse	Completamente applicabile
		Not applicable	Maybe	Fully applicable
18)	Al ristorante mangio spesso piatti con ingredienti che non conosco. <i>In restaurants I often eat dishes with ingredients that I don't know.</i>			
19)	Cerco spesso il contatto con persone diverse per imparare il più possibile la loro cultura. <i>I often seek contact with other people in order to learn as much as possible about their culture.</i>			
20)	Quando gli altri non si sentono a proprio agio in mia presenza io me ne accorgo. <i>When other people don't feel comfortable in my presence, I notice it.</i>			
21)	Per me è difficile adattarsi a persone di origini diverse. <i>I find it difficult to adapt to people from diverse origins.</i>			
22)	Quando le persone diverse si comportano in un modo che non capisco, io chiedo loro perché fanno così. <i>When other people behave in a way that I don't understand, I ask them why they are doing this.</i>			
23)	Quando sento di una catastrofe in un altro paese penso a quel popolo e al suo destino. <i>When I hear about a catastrophe happening in another country I think about the people there and their fate.</i>			
24)	Quando sono un nuovo arrivato in un gruppo di persone di un altro paese, cerco di scoprire le regole di questo gruppo osservando il loro comportamento. <i>When I am a newcomer in a group with people from a different country, I try to find out the rules in this group by observing their behaviour.</i>			

- 25) Quando una conversazione con persone di paesi diversi fallisce, chiedo a tutte le persone coinvolte di spiegare la propria posizione.

When a conversation with people from different countries fails, I ask all persons involved to explain their positions.

- 26) Quando le persone che parlano con me usano gesti ed espressioni che non conosco io le ignoro.

When conversation partners use gestures and expressions that are unknown to me, I ignore them.

- 27) Quando parlo con gli altri guardo sempre il loro linguaggio del corpo.

When talking to other people I always watch their body language.

- 28) Nelle conversazioni con persone di altre lingue io evito parole ambigue o non chiare.

In conversations with speakers of other languages I avoid unclear or ambiguous words.

Ora ci occupiamo di situazioni in cui tu incontri persone nel loro paese di origine (per esempio in vacanza in altri paesi e culture).

Now we deal with situations where you meet people in their home country (e.g. when on holiday in other countries and cultures)

Non applicabile	Forse	Completamente applicabile
<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Maybe</i>	<i>Fully applicable</i>

- 29) Sono a disagio quando gli orari dei mezzi di trasporto del paese in cui sono in vacanza non sono affidabili.

I get confused when there are no reliable transport timetables in the country where I spend my holiday.

- 30) Quando osservo le persone in altri paesi spesso indovino come si sentono.

When I observe people in other countries, I often guess how they are feeling.

- 31) Spesso cambio programma quando sono in vacanza all'estero.

I often change my plans when I am on holiday abroad.

- 32) Quando il comportamento delle persone di culture diverse mi estranea, evito di avere contatti con loro.

When the behaviour of people from other cultures alienates me, I avoid making contact with them.

Le seguenti affermazioni sono relative a situazioni di lavoro con colleghi con un diverso background culturale.

The following statements are related to work situations with colleagues from different cultural backgrounds.

	Non applicabile <i>Not applicable</i>	Forse <i>Maybe</i>	Completamente applicabile <i>Fully applicable</i>
33) Non ho problemi a passare velocemente a un'altra lingua che conosco durante una conversazione. <i>I don't have problems in suddenly changing to one of my other languages during a conversation.</i>			
34) Io seguo sempre le regole della mia cultura se non sono sicuro di come comportarmi correttamente con persone di altre culture. <i>I always follow the rules of my own culture if I am not sure of how to behave properly when dealing with people from other cultures.</i>			
35) Quando colleghi di altre culture arrivano tardi al lavoro e/o fanno pause lunghe, io mi adeguo alle loro abitudini lavorative. <i>When colleagues from other cultures in my work group come to work later and/or take longer breaks, I adopt their work habits.</i>			
36) Se mi sono comportato in modo inappropriato con un collega di un'altra cultura, penso subito a come rimediare senza continuare ad offenderlo. <i>If I have behaved inappropriately towards a colleague from another culture, I think of how to compensate for it without further hurting him.</i>			
37) Quando nel mio ambiente di lavoro ci sono colleghi di una minoranza etnica, cerco di integrarli nel gruppo di maggioranza. <i>When there are colleagues in my work area who constitute an ethnic minority, I try to involve them in the majority group.</i>			
38) Quando colleghi o superiori stranieri criticano il mio lavoro, valuto se cambiare il mio modo di lavorare di conseguenza. <i>When colleagues or superiors from abroad criticise my work, I consider changing my work habits accordingly.</i>			

3. Incontri interculturali – *Intercultural encounters*

Leggi gli scenari e rispondi alle domande seguenti.

Read the scenarios and then answer the following questions.

SCENARIO 1: PRENDERE INFORMAZIONI – *FINDING INFORMATION*

Sei stato selezionato per partecipare a un progetto di lavoro internazionale con una azienda europea collegata. Per questo trascorrerai 3-4 mesi in un paese in cui non sei mai stato (anche se forse ne hai studiato un po' la lingua a scuola). Le risposte alle seguenti domande ci aiuteranno a stimare quanto tempo impiegherai a capire il nuovo ambiente, la sua cultura e la sua gente.

You have been selected to take part in an international work project with an associate European company. This will involve you spending 3-4 months in a country which you have not visited before (although it is possible that you learnt some of the language at school). Answers to the following questions will help us to judge how quickly you might come to understand your new environment, its culture and its people.

44) Di quali informazioni pensi di aver bisogno prima di partire? (**min. 10 parole**) – *What kind of information do you think you would need before departure? (10 words min.)*

45) Come otterrai queste informazioni? – *How would you obtain that information?*

46) Mentre lavori al progetto, cosa farai per avere informazioni sul posto di lavoro? – *During the placement what would you do to find out information about the workplace?*

47) Nel tuo tempo libero, cosa faresti se tu volessi conoscere meglio il paese? – *During your spare time, if you wanted to find out more about the country, what would you do?*

48) Qualsiasi altro comment – *Any other comments*

SCENARIO 2: TROVARE IL TUO POSTO NEL TEAM – *FINDING YOUR PLACE IN THE TEAM*

Sei stato incaricato di andare a lavorare in un altro paese per scopi di formazione. All'inizio del tuo incarico là scopri che la gerarchia è totalmente diversa da quella in uso nel tuo paese. Ad esempio, sei abituato a persone che vestono in modo informale, che usano i nomi di battesimo, che mangiano nella stessa mensa. Qui c'è molta più formalità, ci sono norme e regolamenti, e le persone tra loro non si rivolgono nemmeno allo stesso modo. E 'molto strano e non puoi fare a meno di pensare che il tuo modo è molto migliore.

You have been appointed to a placement in another country for training purposes. Early in your placement, you discover that the system of hierarchy is totally different from that practised in your own country. For example, you are used to people dressing informally, using first names, eating in the same canteen. Here there is much more formality, rules and regulations, and people don't even speak the same way to each other. It is very strange and you cannot help feeling that your own way is much better.

49) Scrivi un breve paragrafo, che potrebbe essere parte di una lettera/e-mail a un collega a casa, in cui spieghi questo e anche la tua reazione. **(20 parole min.)** – *Write a few lines, which could be part of a letter/email, explaining this, and your reaction to it, to a colleague at home. (min. 20 words)*

SCENARIO 3: COMPRENDERE COMPORAMENTI INASPETTATI – *UNDERSTANDING UNEXPECTED BEHAVIOUR*

Uno svantaggio del tuo *stage* è che i fine settimana sono piuttosto solitari. Normalmente trascorri del tempo con gli amici e la famiglia e ti manca questo aspetto sociale della tua vita. Al lavoro hai fatto amicizia con un collega che parla la tua lingua. Questo collega dice che telefonerà per invitarti a casa durante il fine settimana. Il telefono non squilla. Ci potrebbe essere un certo numero di spiegazioni per questo.

One disadvantage of your work placement is that the weekends are rather lonely. You normally spend time with friends and family and you miss this social side of your life. At work you become friendly with a colleague who can speak your language. This colleague says that he will telephone to invite you to the house during the weekend. The telephone does not ring. There could be a number of explanations for this.

50) Il lunedì mattina decidi di parlarne con un collega del posto. Come gli spiegheresti che cosa è successo e come cercheresti di scoprire dal collega qual è la possibile spiegazione? **(15 parole min.)** – *On the Monday morning you decide to talk to a local colleague about this. How would you explain what had happened and how would you find out from the colleague what the explanation could be? (min. 15 words)*

Più tardi nella mattina incontri il collega che non ti ha telefonato. Lui/lei ti dice che non ha potuto chiamarti perché “mia madre mi ha chiesto di comprarle delle cose”.
Later in the morning you meet the colleague who did not phone. He/she tells you he/she could not phone because 'My mother asked me to go shopping for her'.

51) Scrivi un breve paragrafo, che potrebbe essere parte di una lettera / e-mail alla tua famiglia, in cui racconti questo incidente e spieghi perché è successo. **(20 parole min.)** / *Write a few lines as part of a letter/email to your family telling them about this incident and explaining why it happened. (min. 20 words)*

SCENARIO 4: SENTIRSI CONFUSO – *FEELING CONFUSED*

Lavori in un paese straniero da sei mesi e parli la lingua abbastanza bene per le esigenze di tutti i giorni. Al lavoro, le procedure difficili ti vengono spiegate nella tua lingua, quindi non ci sono problemi. Tuttavia, è quasi impossibile capire i tuoi colleghi quando parlano tra di loro dato che parlano in fretta di situazioni che non capisci. E' anche difficile capire gli scherzi e osservazioni fatte incidentalmente dove le persone sembrano parlare un dialetto locale. Quindi spesso ti senti inadeguato e confuso.

You have been working in a foreign country for six months and you speak the language well enough for everyday needs. At work, difficult procedures are explained to you in your own language, so there are no problems here. However, it is almost impossible to understand your colleagues when they talk to each other as they talk quickly about situations you do not understand. It is also difficult to understand jokes and casual remarks where people seem to speak in a local dialect. Therefore you often feel out of your depth and confused.

52) Scrivi se troveresti questa situazione particolarmente difficile e perché. **(15 parole min.)** – Say whether you would find such a situation particularly difficult and why. **(min. 15 words)**

53) Suggestisci che cosa faresti per sentirti più a tuo agio in questa situazione. **(15 parole min.)** – Suggest what you might do in order to feel more comfortable in this situation. **(min. 15 words)**

Riservato al valutatore. Non scrivere nei campi sottostanti.

For assessor's use only. Do not write in the boxes below.

K	O	A
L		

Appendix 5 - INCA Framework in the Assessor Manual of the INCA project adapted

Level → Competence ↓	1 'Basic'	2	3 'Intermediate'	4	5 'Full'
General profile	The candidate at this level is on the ladder of progression. They will be disposed to deal positively with the situation. Their responses to it will be piecemeal and improvised rather than principled, even though mostly successful in avoiding short term difficulties. These will be based on		The candidate at this level has begun to induce simple principles to apply to the situation, rather than improvise reactively in response to isolated features of it. There will be evidence of a basic strategy and some coherent knowledge for dealing with situations.		The candidate at this level will combine a strategic and principled approach to a situation to take the role of a mediator seeking to bring about the most favourable outcome. Knowledge of their own culture and that of others, including work parameters, will be both coherent and sophisticated.
i) Tolerance of ambiguity OPENNESS	1T Deals with ambiguity on a one-off basis, responding to items as they arise. May be overwhelmed by ambiguous situations which imply high involvement.		2T Has begun to acquire a repertoire of approaches to cope with ambiguities in low- involvement situations. Begins to accept ambiguity as a challenge.		3T Is constantly aware of the possibility of ambiguity. When it occurs, he/she tolerates and manages it.
ii) Behavioural flexibility ADAPTABILITY	1B Adopts a reactive/defensive approach to situations. Learns from isolated experiences in a rather unsystematic way.		2B Previous experience of required behaviour begins to influence behaviour in everyday parallel situations. Sometimes takes the initiative in adopting/conforming to other cultures' behaviour patterns.		3B Is ready and able to adopt appropriate behaviour in job-specific situations from a broad and well- understood repertoire.
iii) Communicative awareness ADAPTABILITY	1C Attempts to relate problems of intercultural interaction to different communicative conventions, but lacks the necessary knowledge for identifying differences; tends to hold on to his own conventions and expects adaptation from others; is aware of difficulties in interaction with non-native-speakers, but has not yet evolved principles to guide the choice of strategies (metacommunication, clarification or simplification).		2C Begins to relate problems of intercultural interaction to conflicting communicative conventions and attempts to clarify his own or to adapt to the conventions of others. Uses a limited repertoire of strategies (metacommunication, clarification, simplification) to solve and prevent problems when interacting with a non-native-speaker.		3C Is able to relate problems of intercultural interaction to conflicting communicative conventions and is aware of their effects on the communication process; is able to identify and ready to adapt to different communicative conventions, or to negotiate new discourse rules in order to prevent or clarify misunderstandings; uses a variety of strategies (metacommunication, clarification, simplification) to prevent, to solve, and to mediate problems when interacting with a non-native- speaker.

iv) Knowledge discovery KNOWLEDGE	1K Draws on random general knowledge and minimal factual research about other cultures. Learns by discovery and is willing to modify perceptions but not yet systematic.	2K Has recourse to some information sources in anticipation of everyday encounters with the other cultures, and modifies and builds on information so acquired, in the light of actual experience. Is motivated by curiosity to develop his knowledge of his own culture as perceived by others.	3K Has a deep knowledge of other cultures. Develops his knowledge through systematic research-like activities and direct questioning and can, where this is sought, offer advice and support to others in work situations.
v) Respect for otherness OPENNESS	1R Is not always aware of difference and, when it is recognised, may not be able to defer evaluative judgement as good or bad. Where it is fully appreciated, adopts a tolerant	2R Accepts the other's values, norms and behaviours in everyday situations as neither good nor bad, provided that basic assumptions of his own culture have not been violated. Is motivated to put others at ease and avoid giving offence.	3R Out of respect for diversity in value systems, applies critical knowledge of such systems to ensure equal treatment of people in the workplace. Is able to cope tactfully with the ethical problems raised by
vi) Empathy KNOWLEDGE	1E Tends to see the cultural foreigner's differences as curious, and remains confused about the seemingly strange behaviours and their antecedents. Nonetheless tries to 'make	2E Has the beginnings of a mental checklist of how others may perceive, feel and respond differently to, a range of routine circumstances. Tends increasingly to see things intuitively from the other's point of view.	3E Accepts the other as a coherent individual. Enlists role-taking and de-centring skills, and awareness of different perspectives, in optimising job-related communication/interaction with the

General: when reference at all to the *other* culture is made it is 1; when there is in some reference to the *other* culture it is 2 or more than 2.

Pre- test:

- Scenario 2: if you try to put your new friend at ease: O = 2
- Scenario 3: if there is never reference to cultural topics: 1

Post- test

- Scenario 1: if it mentions art, literature, research-like activities, K = 4 or 5
- Scenario 2: if the new situation is assessed negatively, O = 1; if it seems strange (therefore he/she makes not comment) and tries to understand it
- Scenario 3: if there is no intercultural awareness, but the 'judgment is suspended' and seeks dialogue to clarify, A = 3, O = 3
- Scenario 4: If he says he wants to learn the language more, K = 4.

punto di vista dei linguaggi, dei contenuti, delle circostanze, dei riti, delle relazioni tra gli interlocutori) e cultura, intesa in senso antropologico come l'insieme degli elementi materiali e immateriali che caratterizzano la vita quotidiana di un gruppo. Tutta la comunicazione è culturale, tutto comunica. L'antropologa Mary Douglas [Douglas e Isherwood 1979], per esempio, ha messo in luce come il mondo dei beni sia un codice di comunicazione che esprime la gerarchie dei valori e le forme della relazione di un gruppo sociale (sull'antropologia del linguaggio si veda Duranti [2000]). Gli sviluppi più recenti dell'antropologia mettono l'accento sull'importanza dell'interpretazione: come scrive Geertz in un brano molto citato

L'uomo è un animale impigliato nelle reti di significati che egli stesso ha tessuto; credo che la cultura consista in queste reti e che perciò la loro analisi non sia anzitutto una scienza sperimentale in cerca di leggi, ma una scienza interpretativa in cerca di significato [Geertz 1973; trad. it. 1987, 41].

5. IL CONCETTO DI CULTURA

Se si guarda all'etimologia del termine, *cultura* rimanda al latino *colere*, che significa coltivare. Nel suo senso letterale *colere* significa coltivare la terra; il significato viene poi esteso, in senso metaforico, alla coltivazione dello spirito e al processo di formazione dell'individuo, nell'ambito di quella che è stata definita la concezione «classica» o «umanistica» del concetto di cultura [Sciolla 2002]. In questa accezione, prevalente fino al '700, si intende per cultura, secondo la celebre definizione del letterato e pedagogo dell'età vittoriana Matthew Arnold, «quanto di meglio è stato pensato e conosciuto» nei diversi ambiti dell'espressione umana: arte, letteratura, poesia, musica, ecc. Tale definizione sintetizza i caratteri fondamentali della cultura, in Occidente, fino a questo periodo: il suo valore universale, il suo potenziale formativo per l'individuo, la sua eccezionalità. Le opere d'arte sono universali, aiutano lo spirito a elevarsi e si collocano fuori dall'ambito dell'ordinarietà.

Già nell'800 in Europa, soprattutto per l'influenza del Romanticismo, questa concezione viene messa in discussione, soprattutto per il suo univer-

salismo astratto, cui è contrapposta la varietà e la concretezza delle manifestazioni culturali che caratterizzano lo «spirito di un popolo». Iniziano a delinearsi le specificità culturali nazionali come patrimonio comune che fonda la formazione degli stati nazione.

Si deve però all'antropologia la formulazione di un concetto «scientifico» di cultura, oltre che il superamento della concezione umanistica [Cuche 1996]. Se la concezione classica insisteva sul rapporto individuale con la cultura, sul suo carattere universale e sulla sua eccezionalità (intesa come eccezionalità), quella antropologica sottolinea il carattere condiviso, particolare e ordinario della cultura.

La sociologia deve molto all'antropologia, sia rispetto alla definizione del concetto di cultura, sia rispetto ai metodi utilizzati per l'analisi empirica (in particolare il **metodo etnografico**). Le specificità dell'approccio sociologico alla cultura possono essere rintracciate nella separabilità, almeno a livello analitico, di cultura e società (separabilità che gli antropologi negano, come si può vedere per esempio in Goody [1994]), nell'accento sulla differenziazione culturale (mentre gli antropologi tendono a sottolineare l'omogeneità culturale dei gruppi osservati), sull'innovazione e sul cambiamento (anziché sulla tradizione e la stabilità) e sull'importanza dell'interazione (piuttosto che sul condizionamento) per la trasmissione della cultura [Sciolla 2002, 48].

Hofstede ha definito la cultura come il *software* della mente umana, che fornisce un ambiente operativo per il comportamento [Hofstede 1980]. In termini meno deterministici, si può dire che la cultura consente di operare un'elaborazione tra lo stimolo e la risposta (a differenza di quanto accade negli animali), costituisce il prerequisito per essere membri di un gruppo, fornisce stabilità e coesione, è soggetta a mutamento e consiste in idee, pratiche, esperienze trasmesse in forma simbolica attraverso processi di apprendimento. La cultura include anche valori, norme, atteggiamenti usati come guida per i comportamenti e per risolvere i problemi.

La cultura è l'insieme delle cornici condivise. Come scrive Scavi,

ognuno di noi è parte di una cultura in senso antropologico, e la cultura è parte di noi. Crescendo in una certa comunità, imparando una certa lingua, facciamo nostre complesse gerarchie di premesse implicite che in

Giaccaudi, C. (2005) La comunicazione interculturale.
Bologna, Il Mulino.

quell'ambiente sono date per scontate e che costituiscono il terreno sicuro che consente di capirci (Sclavi 2000, 37).

La cultura costituisce quindi sia una prospettiva performativa (fornisce i criteri per l'azione, definisce i criteri e le modalità delle pratiche) sia una prospettiva interpretativa (consente di associare significati ai comportamenti, nostri e altrui). L'insieme degli elementi che costituiscono la cultura, e che armonizzano il comportamento individuale con quello degli altri membri del gruppo non costituisce un tutto uniforme e omogeneo, ma un terreno variegato sul quale si scontrano anche interessi e punti di vista contrastanti, un terreno di processi negoziali continui.

QUADRO 1.2.

Definizioni antropologiche di cultura

- **E. Tylor**, 1871: «La cultura, o civiltà, intesa nel suo ampio senso etnografico, è quell'insieme complesso che include la conoscenza, le credenze, l'arte, la morale, il diritto, il costume e qualsiasi altra capacità e abitudine acquisita dall'uomo come membro di una società».
- **B. Malinowski**, 1931: «La cultura comprende gli artefatti, i beni, i processi tecnici, le idee, le abitudini e i valori che vengono trasmessi socialmente. Non si può comprendere realmente l'organizzazione sociale se non come parte della cultura, e tutte le direzioni specifiche di indagine che hanno per oggetto le attività, i raggruppamenti, le idee e le credenze umane possono incontrarsi e fecondarsi reciprocamente nello studio comparativo delle culture».
- **F. Boas**, 1938: «La cultura può essere definita come la totalità delle reazioni e delle attività intellettuali e fisiche che caratterizzano il comportamento degli individui i quali compongono un gruppo sociale – considerati sia collettivamente sia singolarmente, in relazione al loro ambiente naturale, ad altri gruppi, ai membri del gruppo stesso, nonché quello di ogni individuo rispetto a se stesso».
- **C. Kluckhohn**, 1945: «Una cultura è composta di modi strutturati manifesti di comportarsi, di sentire e di reagire. Ma essa comprende anche una serie caratteristica di premesse o di ipotesi non dichiarate che variano grandemente da una società a un'altra».

• **A. Kroeber**, 1948: «La cultura è superorganica e superindividuale in quanto, benché prodotta e riprodotta da individui organici che ne partecipano, è però acquisita, ed è acquisita per apprendimento. Ciò che viene appreso è la cultura esistente. Il contenuto di questa viene trasmesso da un individuo all'altro e non è un patrimonio innato».

• **A. Kroeber e C. Kluckhohn**, 1963: «La cultura è composta di modelli, espliciti e impliciti, di e per il comportamento, acquisiti e trasmessi mediante simboli, costituenti il risultato distintivo di gruppi umani; il nucleo essenziale della cultura consiste di idee tradizionali [...] e specialmente in valori loro attribuiti; i sistemi culturali possono considerarsi da un lato prodotti dell'azione, e dall'altro punto di vista sono elementi condizionanti l'azione futura».

• **C. Geertz**, 1973: «La cultura è un insieme di significati trasmessi storicamente, incarnati in forme simboliche, incluse azioni, discorsi e oggetti di vario tipo, attraverso i quali gli individui comunicano l'un l'altro e condividono le loro esperienze, concezioni e credenze».

• **U. Hannerz**, 1998: «In quanto sistemi collettivi di significato, le culture appartengono innanzitutto alle relazioni sociali e ai network di tali relazioni. Appartengono ai luoghi solo indirettamente e senza una necessità logica».

• **S. Benhabib**, 2002: «La cultura è una costruzione narrativa condivisa, contestata e negoziata [...] *Cultura* è diventato sinonimo di *identità*, un marcatore e un differenziatore di identità. Naturalmente la cultura è sempre stata un marcatore della distinzione sociale. Quello che è di nuovo è che i gruppi che si formano ora intorno a questi marcatori di identità chiedono allo stato e alle sue agenzie riconoscimento legale e assegnazione di risorse per preservare e proteggere le loro specificità culturali. Le politiche dell'identità trascmano lo stato in guerre culturali».

Come si può osservare dalle definizioni riportate nel quadro 1.2, dopo la sistematica definizione di Kroeber e Kluckhohn del 1963, gli aspetti che sono stati messi in evidenza sono quello interpretativo-ermeneutico (Geertz), quello relazionale (Hannerz), quello negoziale, in relazione alla questione dell'identità (Benhabib).

La definizione di Kroeber e Kluckhohn è tratta dalla loro celebre raccolta [Kroeber e Kluckhohn 1952], diventata opera di riferimento negli studi culturali, di oltre 150 definizioni di cultura, raggruppabili in diverse sottocategorie. Per esempio:

1. Il modo di vivere di un popolo (tutte le usanze relative alla vita quotidiana: dalla conformazione e struttura delle abitazioni, alla preparazione e

al consumo dei cibi, all'abbigliamento, tutto ciò che riguarda i riti collettivi e il passaggio da una fase a un'altra del ciclo della vita: nascite, matrimoni, funerali; il tipo di istituzioni di cui ci si dota, l'organizzazione della struttura sociale; le forme di alfabetizzazione e trasmissione della tradizione, ecc.).

2. L'eredità sociale che un individuo acquisisce nel suo gruppo di appartenenza (per esempio, i valori di riferimento, come sono, per l'Occidente, la libertà e la democrazia).

3. Il modo di pensare, di sentire, di credere (per esempio, la gamma delle emozioni ritenute accettabili e appropriate rispetto alle diverse situazioni e le modalità legittime della loro espressione nei diversi contesti; la percezione dell'identità personale come qualcosa di individuale, dotato di valore in sé, o come dotata di valore in quanto parte di un insieme; la fiducia in qualcosa di trascendente, ecc.).

4. La generalizzazione derivata dall'osservazione dei comportamenti (ciò che antropologi, scienziati sociali, giornalisti riportano a partire dall'osservazione dei comportamenti di un gruppo e definiscono come caratteristici). Tra i rituali di saluto, per esempio, si può osservare che in alcuni paesi, dell'Africa centrale, per esempio, ci si bacia tre volte, mentre in Europa ci si bacia due volte).

5. Il deposito di sapere posseduto collettivamente (per esempio, i proverbi).

6. L'insieme dei comportamenti standardizzati nei riguardi di problemi ricorrenti (per esempio, la decisione di chiamare il medico, o lo stregone, o un anziano, o un sacerdote in caso di malattia).

7. L'insieme dei meccanismi per la regolazione normativa del comportamento (per esempio, tutte le regole che disciplinano il comportamento coniugale, come la monogamia o la poligamia, o le regole che disciplinano il comportamento del coniuge superstite in caso di vedovanza).

8. L'insieme delle tecniche per adeguarsi all'ambiente (il tipo di abitazioni, di alimentazione, di utensili costruiti; la capacità di modificare le condizioni ambientali rendendole più favorevoli alla vita quotidiana e allo sfruttamento delle risorse a fini economici, ecc.).

Le diverse definizioni mettono l'accento su **cinque dimensioni della cultura**, ovvero cinque estremi di un *continuum* rispetto al quale la cultura può essere analizzata:

1. La **dimensione oggettiva/sogettiva**; il primo aspetto si riferisce alle forme culturali in quanto collettivamente condivise, patrimonio di un gruppo (2, 5, 8); tali forme vengono però interiorizzate (1, 3, 6, 7) e declinate in modo soggettivo (per esempio, la bandiera italiana ha oggettivamente un valore di identità nazionale e patriottismo, ma soggettivamente questo valore sarà diverso per un reduce della seconda guerra mondiale e per un ragazzo di 14 anni).

Questa dimensione si collega alla dicotomia *pubblico/privato*: la cultura è pubblica perché «oggettivamente accessibile» [Sciolla 2002, 60], e privata perché interiorizzata, fatta propria e caricata di significati legati alle esperienze e alle strutture biografiche individuali.

2. La **dimensione concreta/astratta** della cultura: il primo aspetto riguarda le componenti materialmente osservabili (8), mentre il secondo richiede delle inferenze o delle interpretazioni da parte di un osservatore esterno (4).

3. La **dimensione descrittiva-cognitiva/prescrittiva** della cultura: da un lato la cultura è capace di fornire immagini del mondo, interpretazioni della realtà, rappresentazioni sociali (1, 3, 6, 8); dall'altro, in forza di questi immagini del mondo, prescrive o proscrive specifiche modalità di comportamento sia per l'individuo che per la collettività (norme, modelli di azione, definizione di ruoli, regole, principi morali, ecc. (7)).

4. La **dimensione esplicita/implicita** della cultura: secondo l'antropologo Edward T. Hall, convenzionalmente ritenuto l'iniziatore dello studio della comunicazione interculturale, c'è una cultura manifesta, che viene appresa attraverso la parola e la **socializzazione** ed è quella che può essere riconosciuta da un osservatore esterno, e una cultura tacita, non verbale ma fortemente situazionale, che opera secondo regole non consapevoli, che non vengono insegnate e apprese, ma acquisite nelle diverse circostanze e nei diversi ambienti, dall'esperienza nella vita quotidiana (il dato per scontato).

5. La **dimensione coerente/incoerente** della cultura: ogni sistema culturale presenta un certo grado di coerenza tra le sue componenti, altrimenti la cultura non sarebbe neppure riconoscibile come qualcosa di unitario, ma presenta anche un grado di pluralità, complessità e conflittualità interna che ne garantisce la varietà e il dinamismo. Alcune scuole di interpretazione culturale (l'approccio antropologico classico, o le teorie sociologiche che

enfaticamente la funzione che la cultura svolge rispetto all'integrazione, come quelle di Duhheim e Parsons) tendono a enfatizzare la dimensione della coerenza, mentre gli sviluppi più recenti dell'analisi culturale tendono a mettere in evidenza il **pluralismo** e l'eterogeneità delle manifestazioni culturali, oltre che i loro intrecci [Hannerz 2001].

Accanto alle dimensioni, ovvero ai criteri sulla base dei quali orientare l'analisi delle culture, gli scienziati sociali hanno identificato quelle che vengono comunemente definite **componenti della cultura** [Sciolla 2002, 63 ss.]. Si tratta di valori, norme, concetti e simboli.

- I **valori** sono ideali a cui un certo gruppo sociale aspira e a cui fa riferimento quando deve formulare giudizi, prendere decisioni, orientare l'azione (per esempio, la libertà, la dignità, l'onestà, l'uguaglianza, ecc.). In quanto parte della cultura, anche i valori presentano una pluralità di dimensioni. Intanto, una dimensione normativa: ci dicono cosa dovremmo volere, come dovremmo comportarci, quali sono le cornici dentro le quali orientare le nostre scelte e i nostri comportamenti. In secondo luogo i valori contengono una dimensione cognitiva, dal momento che ci consentono di formulare e argomentare giudizi (per esempio, l'affermazione «gli atti di razzismo sono condannabili perché negano i valori dell'uguaglianza e della dignità umana»). Ma i valori non servono solo a stabilire criteri di comportamento e di giudizio: essi presentano anche una dimensione che può essere definita affettiva, dal momento che diventano rilevanti per definire l'identità degli individui e le loro appartenenze: i valori «stanno a cuore», non sono solo oggettivamente ritenuti importanti, ma anche soggettivamente vissuti come significativi per la definizione di sé. Infine, i valori presentano una dimensione selettiva, dal momento che funzionano come criteri per scegliere come agire.

- Le **norme** derivano dai valori, poiché li specificano attraverso precise indicazioni di comportamento (prescrizioni e proscrizioni). Per esempio, il valore dell'onestà viene specificato dalla norma «non si deve rubare». Per rendere vincolanti le norme che traducono i valori di riferimento, i gruppi sociali stabiliscono sanzioni, ovvero punizioni o limitazioni per chi non si attiene alle norme (sanzioni negative), oppure, più raramente, rinforzi positivi rispetto a comportamenti ritenuti conformi alle norme (sanzioni positive). In alcune culture (in generale nel mondo occidentale) è tollerata una

non conformità alla norma nella dimensione privata della vita sociale, dimensione che in ogni caso è poco normata, pur essendo la norma vincolante rispetto alla dimensione pubblica. Più in generale, alcuni gruppi tendono a sanzionare in maniera rigida la trasgressione delle norme, mentre altri sono più flessibili e disposti a distinguere caso per caso.

- I **concetti** rappresentano gli strumenti per organizzare l'esperienza dal punto di vista cognitivo. Possono coincidere con le forme di **categorizzazione** della realtà di un determinato gruppo, o articolarsi in proposizioni descrittive della realtà e modelli di visione del mondo (rappresentazioni collettive, credenze).

- I **simboli**: simbolo è un termine che deriva dal greco *sunballlein*, che significa «mettere assieme»: nell'antica Grecia era infatti diffusa la consuetudine di tagliare in due un anello, una moneta o qualsiasi altro oggetto, e dargli una metà a un amico o a un ospite. Queste metà, conservate dall'una e dall'altra parte, a distanza di tempo e di generazioni consentivano ai discendenti dei due amici di riconoscersi. Il simbolo era appunto questo segno di riconoscimento.

Platone, nel *Convivio*, afferma che Zeus, volendo punire l'uomo senza distruggerlo, lo tagliò in due. Da allora ciascuno di noi è il «simbolo» di un altro uomo, come si rintraccia in alcune espressioni del linguaggio comune, (per esempio «trovare la propria metà», o «cercare l'anima gemella»).

Il simbolo è dunque caratterizzato dal *ritrivo*, dal momento che «sta per» qualcos'altro. Il linguaggio è il più importante e potente sistema di simboli. I simboli, in sintesi:

- ▶ hanno un significato pubblico, condiviso;
- ▶ possono essere impiegati in assenza delle cose che significano. Se si considera la funzione dei simboli, il loro impatto sulla vita sociale, si possono osservare almeno due cose.

La prima è che i simboli trasformano la natura dell'ambiente in cui vivono gli esseri umani, espandono l'ampiezza sia spaziale che temporale dell'ambiente. Poiché non sono legati alla presenza effettiva delle cose che rappresentano, possono essere invocati a distanza (come è evidente se si pensa ai mezzi di comunicazione). I simboli dilatano lo spazio, ma anche il tempo, rendendo accessibile ciò che non è più, e consentendo di prefigurare ciò che non è ancora.

Inoltre, i simboli trasformano l'ambiente, perché ne fanno un *ambiente denominato*. Gran parte del nostro pensare al mondo esterno passa attraverso la manipolazione di parole, o di immagini. I nomi trasformano la realtà concreta in un mondo relativamente astratto e generale. Un nome è una categoria dove situare cose simili tra loro (nominare è classificare, generalizzare, astrarre).

Attraverso la creazione di nomi, le cose possono essere inventate: oggetti che non hanno un'esistenza tangibile, come amore, libertà, responsabilità, rispetto, oppure oggetti immaginari, come l'ippogrifo. L'ambiente è quindi in buona misura un prodotto dei nomi che gli diamo.

Il secondo aspetto riguarda la capacità dei simboli di riprodurre in un individuo le disposizioni e gli atteggiamenti di un'altra persona (si pensi all'inno nazionale cantato prima di una partita dei Mondiali di calcio). I simboli, infatti, sono pubblici e hanno significato in quanto condivisi da una comunità di parlanti; consentono di condividere una risposta comune al simbolo, di ricercare l'atteggiamento mentale del parlante in chi ascolta. La comunicazione simbolica si caratterizza quindi per la sua capacità di stimolare risposte condivise tra due o più individui per mezzo di simboli. I simboli rendono possibili risposte condivise intersoggettivamente, ma naturalmente non le garantiscono.

Infine, e questo è un terzo aspetto, i simboli permettono all'individuo o ai gruppi di autodesignarsi dentro un ambiente. Come si vedrà il potere di autodefinizione è una delle poste in gioco nella lotta, culturale e politica, per il riconoscimento (si veda a questo riguardo la questione dell'orientalismo, cap. 4, par. 7).

6. COMUNICAZIONE E CULTURA

Tutti gli approcci allo studio della comunicazione e della cultura mettono l'accento sulla loro stretta interconnessione. E.T. Hall [1966; trad. it. 2001, 11] sostiene che «la comunicazione costituisce il cuore della vita e della cultura stessa». Più avanti, a proposito della funzione della cultura, Hall scrive che

nella comunicazione le persone non si limitano assolutamente a rilanciarsi l'un l'altro la palla della conversazione. Gli studi mitici e di altri ci

rivelano tutta una serie di servomeccanismi (che funzionano in maniera molto simile al pilota automatico degli aeroplani) delicatamente controllati e condizionati dall'ambiente culturale, che consentono alla vita una regolare navigazione (*ibidem*, 16).

L'intreccio tra comunicazione e cultura può essere spiegato in almeno due modi:

1. la cultura è un insieme di segni dotati di significati, che si esprime in pratiche comunicative. Le manifestazioni culturali sono per lo più atti di comunicazione (i riti, la creazione di simboli, le rappresentazioni collettive): la comunicazione dà quindi visibilità alla cultura, e così facendo contribuisce a definirla;

2. la cultura sopravvive se è comunicata, si trasmette attraverso pratiche comunicative tra gli attori sociali. Prima di tutto attraverso l'apprendimento della lingua, poi attraverso le modalità verbali e non verbali di esprimere l'approvazione e la disapprovazione, di categorizzare le percezioni e definire le situazioni sociali e i comportamenti appropriati e, più in generale, attraverso la trasmissione di modelli condivisi, tanto nell'interazione faccia a faccia quanto attraverso forme di comunicazione mediata, e la sanzione della loro trasgressione.

I principali canali della trasmissione culturale sono la comunicazione interpersonale (verbale, non verbale, mediata), la comunicazione pubblica, la comunicazione di massa (stampa, cinema, radio, televisione), la comunicazione mediata dal computer.

Gli ambiti entro i quali, attraverso questi canali, opera il processo di trasmissione culturale sono quelli legati alla socializzazione, primaria e secondaria, e alle istituzioni. Nel processo di trasmissione la cultura subisce interpretazioni e contaminazioni, e inevitabilmente si trasforma.

Se è stata soprattutto l'antropologia a contribuire alla concezione di cultura sottesa alla comunicazione interculturale e se oggi gli studi di comunicazione interculturale rappresentano una branca del più ampio filone di studi sulla comunicazione, non è stato così fin dall'inizio. Per comprendere cosa è oggi, e soprattutto verso quali direzioni si sviluppa la comunicazione interculturale, è necessario ripercorrere le origini e le principali tappe di questa disciplina.

APPENDIX 7 Distanza di potere: tabella e differenze in famiglia e a scuola

Tab. 3.1 - Indici dei valori di Distanza di potere (PDI) per 76 Paesi e Regioni

Rank	America C/S	Europa S/SE	Europa N/NO Paesi Anglofoni	Europa C/E Ex-Soviet.	M.do Islam M.E e Africa	Asia Est Asia SE	Indice
1-2						Malesia	104
1-2				Slovacchia			104
3-4	Guatemala						95
3-4	Panama						95
5						Filippine	94
6				Russia			93
7				Romania			90
8				Serbia			86
9	Suriname						85
10-11	Messico						81
10-11	Venezuela						81
12-14					P.sì Arabi		80
12-14						Bangladesh	80
12-14						Cina	80
15-16	Ecuador					Indonesia	78
15-16						India	77
17-18					Africa Occ.		77
17-18						Singapore	74
19							73
20				Croazia			71
21				Slovenia			70
22-25				Bulgaria			70
22-25					Marocco		70
22-25			Swizzera F.				70
22-25						Vietnam	70
26	Brasile						69
27-29		Francia					68
27-29						Hong Kong	68
27-29				Polonia			68
30-31			Belgio F.				67

Tab. 3.1 - segue

Rank	America C/S	Europa S/SE	Europa N/NO Paesi Anglofoni	Europa C/E Ex-Soviet.	M.do Islam M.E e Africa	Asia Est Asia SE	Indice
30-31	Colombia						67
32-33	El Salvador						66
32-33		Turchia					66
34-36					Africa Or.		64
34-36	Peru						64
34-36						Tailandia	64
37-38	Cile						63
37-38		Portogallo					63
39-40			Belgio OI.				61
39-40	Uruguay						61
41-42		Grecia					60
41-42						Corea S.	60
43-44					Iran		58
43-44						Taiwan	58
45-46				Rep. Ceca			57
45-46		Spagna					57
47		Malta					56
48					Pakistan		55
49-50			Canada F				54
49-50						Giappone	54
51		Italia					50
52-53	Argentina						49
52-53					South Africa		49
54	Trinidad						47
55				Ungheria			46
56	Giamaica						45
57				Lettonia			44
58				Lituania			42
59-61				Estonia			40
59-61			Lussemburgo				40

Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov (2014). *Culture e organizzazioni. Valori e strategie per operare efficacemente in contesti internazionali*. Franco Angeli' ed., Milano.

Tab. 3.1 - segue

Rank	America C/S	Europa S/SE	Europa N/NO Paesi Anglofoni	Europa C/E Ex-Soviet.	M.do Islam M.E e Africa	Asia Est Asia SE	Inc
59-61			USA				40
62			Canada totale				39
63			Olanda				38
64			Australia				38
65-67	Costa Rica						35
65-67			Germania				35
65-67			Gran Bretagna				35
68			Finlandia				33
69-70			Norvegia				31
69-70			Svezia				31
71			Irlanda				28
72			Svizzera Ted.				26
73			Nuova Zelanda				22
74			Danimarca				18
75					Israele		13
76			Austria				11

72

...CULTURE ASSOCIATE CON LA DISTANZA DI POTERE: LA STRUT- tura dei capitoli del libro

Nella parte seguente le differenze tra gli indici PD per i Paesi saranno associate con le differenze esistenti nei contesti familiari, scolastici, lavorativi, statali e nella mentalità prevalente di un Paese. I Capitoli dal 4 all'8, che trattano le altre dimensioni, saranno strutturati essenzialmente allo stesso modo. La maggior parte degli accostamenti descritti si basa sui risultati di analisi statistiche, in cui gli indici nazionali sono stati messi in correlazione con i risultati di altri studi quantitativi, come descritto nel Capitolo 2. Inoltre sono utilizzate informazioni qualitative su famiglia, scuola, ambiente di lavoro ecc. dei vari Paesi. In questo libro i dati statistici sono omessi: i lettori interessati sono rinviati alle relazioni scientifiche nel libro di Geert Hofstede *Culture's Consequences*.

Differenze nella Distanza di potere tra Paesi: le radici fami- liari

Con grande

Nel mondo la maggioranza delle persone nasce in una famiglia; immediatamente dopo la nascita ciascuno inizia ad acquisire il proprio software mentale dalle persone più grandi con cui cresce, modellando il proprio comportamento sul loro esempio.

Nei Paesi ad ~~alta~~ PD ci sia spetta che i bambini ubbidiscano ai genitori; in alcuni casi esiste anche una gerarchia tra i figli, per cui i più piccoli devono assecondare i fratelli maggiori. Nei bambini non s'incoraggiano comportamenti indipendenti e il rispetto per i genitori o altri anziani è visto come una dote fondamentale: i bambini vedono chi sta loro attorno comportarsi rispettosamente e molto presto imparano a fare altrettanto. Il modo in cui genitori e fratelli più grandi trattano e si prendono cura dei più piccoli è molto affettuoso, specialmente quando sono piccolissimi, ma i bambini sono sempre sorvegliati e non sono lasciati sperimentare autonomamente la realtà. Il rispetto per i genitori e i parenti più anziani continua anche in età adulta: l'autorità genitoriale riveste un ruolo importante nella vita di una persona finché i genitori sono vivi, e nonni e genitori sono trattati con formale deferenza anche dopo che i figli si sono emancipati. S'instaura un modello di dipendenza dai più anziani che tocca tutte le relazioni umane, e il software della mente che ciascuno porta in sé costituisce un forte bisogno di dipendenza. Quando i genitori invecchiano o sono infermi, ci si aspetta che i figli se ne prendano cura finanziariamente, e praticamente; spesso i nonni vivono con le famiglie dei figli.

78

piccola PD nella famiglia

Piccola

Nelle situazioni di ~~alta~~ PD, i bambini sono trattati più o meno da eguali: li non appena sono in grado di capire, lo si riscalda anche nel modo in cui un beche viene intrattenuto durante il bagnetto).

L'obiettivo dell'educazione familiare è lasciare che i bambini si gestiscano da soli non appena possibile; s'incoraggia la sperimentazione attiva dei bambini e si lascia che contraddicano i genitori, imparando a dire *no* molto presto. Il comportamento nei confronti degli altri non dipende dall'età o dallo status altrui: rispetto e deferenza formali sono manifestati di rado. Spesso persone di altre culture sono colpite dalla mancanza d'intensità nelle relazioni familiari di queste società. Quando i figli crescono, iniziano a trattare i genitori come fossero amici, o almeno come pari, e non è pensabile che un adulto debba chiedere il permesso o il consiglio dei genitori per una decisione importante. Nella famiglia ideale i membri adulti sono reciprocamente indipendenti e il bisogno di autodeterminazione è una componente importante del loro software mentale.

I genitori dovranno provvedere a se stessi quando saranno vecchi o infermi: non possono far conto sui propri figli o pensare di vivere con loro.

Le descrizioni nei due paragrafi precedenti sono deliberatamente portate all'estremo. La realtà in una data situazione si collocherà probabilmente tra i due poli opposti della scala PD poiché i Paesi si posizionano lungo un ideale continuum. Abbiamo visto che la classe sociale e il livello d'istruzione dei genitori giocano un ruolo importante, soprattutto nelle società a bassa PD; le famiglie sviluppano una propria cultura che può variare rispetto alle norme della società, e le personalità di genitori e figli possono portare a comportamenti atipici.

La famiglia è la fonte del nostro primissimo software mentale sociale: il suo influsso è molto forte e i programmi mentali fissati a questo stadio sono molto difficili da cambiare. Psicologi e psicologi conoscono bene l'importanza della storia familiare, ma non sempre del contesto culturale. Gli psichiatri cercano di aiutare individui con comportamenti devianti rispetto alle norme sociali, che possono però variare da una società all'altra, come illustrato in questo libro. Norme diverse implicano che l'aiuto psichiatrico dato a una persona appartenente a un'altra società, o persino a uno strato diverso della medesima società, possa essere rischioso. Il medico dovrebbe aver consapevolezza delle differenze tra sé e il paziente ed

14. Il film "Quattro famiglie", prodotto nel 1959 dal National Film Board of Canada, con la consulenza dell'antropologa Margaret Mead, mostra le relazioni tra genitori e figli piccoli in famiglie di agricoltori, più o meno assimilabili, in India, Francia, Giappone e Canada. I pubblici cui mostrammo il film, prima di conoscere gli indici PD, furono in grado di valutare il corretto posizionamento dei quattro Paesi su questa dimensione, solo basandosi sulle relazioni genitori-figli viste nel filmato.

79

alta PD nella famiglia

essere coscienti dei propri pregiudizi culturali nei confronti del suo assistito».

Distanza di potere e scuola

Oggi, nella maggior parte delle società, i bambini frequentano la scuola per diversi anni e nelle società più affluenti il periodo scolastico può protrarsi per più di vent'anni. A scuola il bambino sviluppa ancor di più la sua programmazione mentale. Insegnanti e compagni, tutti membri della stessa società, trasferiscono ulteriori valori culturalmente condivisi. Quanto un sistema scolastico possa contribuire a cambiare la società resta una domanda senza risposta. Può la scuola creare valori che non esistevano prima, o è solo in grado, senza volerlo, di rinforzare valori che già esistono nella società? Confrontando il sistema scolastico nelle diverse società, riappare lo stesso schema di differenze incontrato nelle famiglie.

La coppia di ruoli genitore-figlio è sostituita da quella insegnante-allievo, ma i valori fondamentali e i relativi comportamenti passano da una sfera all'altra. Inoltre, com'è ovvio, la maggioranza dei bambini in età scolare continua a passare gran parte del tempo in famiglia.

Nelle situazioni ad alta PD, la disparità genitore-figlio si ripresenta nella disparità insegnante-allievo, rispondendo al bisogno di dipendenza ben radicato nella mente dell'allievo. Gli insegnanti sono rispettati o addirittura temuti (e i docenti anziani ancor più di quelli giovani), gli studenti devono alzare in piedi quando gli insegnanti entrano in classe. Il processo didattico è centrato sull'insegnante; è il docente che traccia il percorso intellettuale da seguire. Nelle classi la disciplina è rigida e sta all'insegnante prendere l'iniziativa di tutte le comunicazioni. In classe gli studenti parlano solo se invitati a farlo; gli insegnanti non vengono mai contraddetti o criticati in pubblico e sono trattati con rispetto anche fuori dalla scuola. Se un allievo si comporta male, l'insegnante coinvolge i genitori e si aspetta che questi l'aiutino a correggere il ragazzino. Il percorso didattico è altamente personalizzato: soprattutto nei corsi universitari più avanzati, quanto insegnato non è visto come un'anonima verità, ma come il sapere personale del docente, che è un *guru*. La parola, derivata dal sanscrito, significa importante e onorabile, termine con cui in India e Indocina si indica l'insegnante. In francese il termine è *maître à penser*, maestro per pensare. In un sistema di questo tipo la qualità dell'apprendimento dipende molto dall'eccezionalità del docente.

15. La psichiatria transculturale è diventata una speciale sub-disciplina per gli psichiatri che trattano immigrati.

bassa PD nella scuola

Nelle situazioni a bassa PD, si presuppone che gli insegnanti trattino gli studenti essenzialmente da pari e che gli insegnanti ricevano lo stesso trattamento dagli allievi. Gli insegnanti più giovani sono più vicini agli studenti e per questo più amati degli anziani. Il processo didattico è centrato sugli studenti, con un particolare apprezzamento per l'iniziativa degli allievi: sono gli studenti a dover individuare il proprio percorso intellettuale. Gli studenti in classe prendono la parola senza permesso e ci si aspetta che pongano domande quando non capiscono. Discutono con l'insegnante, esprimono il loro disaccordo e le loro critiche apertamente e non dimostrano particolare rispetto per gli insegnanti al di fuori della scuola. Quando un allievo si comporta male, i genitori prendono spesso le sue parti contro l'insegnante. Il percorso didattico è piuttosto impersonale: quanto s'insegna è costituito da verità e fatti oggettivi, indipendenti da un particolare docente. L'efficacia di tale sistema didattico dipende da quanto si stabilisca realmente l'auspicato dialogo tra insegnante e allievo. Tutto il sistema s'impenna sul bisogno d'indipendenza profondamente radicato negli allievi, e la qualità dell'apprendimento dipende in misura notevole dall'eccellenza degli studenti.

In precedenza si è visto che gli indici PD sono inferiori per le professioni che richiedono un maggior livello d'istruzione, almeno nei Paesi che globalmente hanno bassi indici di PD. Questo significa che nei Paesi appena descritti gli studenti, progredendo negli studi, diverranno ancor più indipendenti dai loro insegnanti. Nei Paesi ad alta PD, gli studenti continuano a dipendere dai loro docenti anche dopo aver raggiunto un alto grado d'istruzione.

I Paesi a bassa PD investono nella scuola secondaria obbligatoria la maggior parte del budget per l'istruzione, contribuendo ad accrescere i livelli della classe media. I Paesi a più alta PD spendono relativamente di più per l'istruzione universitaria e meno per la scuola secondaria, mantenendo una polarizzazione tra le élite e le classi meno istruite.

Come nel caso della famiglia descritto nella sezione precedente, la realtà sta in una posizione intermedia tra i due estremi. Un importante fattore condizionante sono le capacità degli studenti: bambini meno dotati o handicappati in situazioni a bassa PD non svilupperanno l'atteso scudo d'indipendenza e saranno trattati come nelle culture ad alta PD. Nelle società a bassa PD i bambini dotati di famiglie operarie saranno svantaggiati in istituzioni come le università, ove i comportamenti attesi sono da bassa PD: come già detto, spesso le famiglie della classe operaia generano una sub-cultura ad alta PD.

Alta PD nella scuola

Distanza di potere e sanità

Studi comparativi sul funzionamento dei sistemi sanitari nei Paesi membri dell'Unione Europea hanno dimostrato, come prevedibile, che il livello di PD di una società si riflette anche nel rapporto medico-paziente. In Paesi a maggior PD, le consultazioni sono più brevi e con minor scambio d'informazioni non essenziali¹⁶.

Questa differenza influenza anche l'uso dei medicinali: in Paesi con culture a maggior PD i medici prescrivono più frequentemente gli antibiotici come veloce rimedio generale, e gli antibiotici sono più spesso usati per

l'auto-medicazione¹⁷. Queste rilevazioni sono importanti per valutare l'automata resistenza dei germi agli antibiotici, causata da un uso troppo frequente di questi farmaci.

In 25 Paesi europei è stato condotto un altro studio comparativo sulle pratiche di trasfusione del sangue. Le prassi relative alle trasfusioni hanno tendenzialmente carattere nazionale a causa dello scarso commercio internazionale di emoderivati. Nei Paesi con culture a minor PD vi sono più donatori, più raccolte e più quantità di sangue fornito agli ospedali: negli ultimi due casi entra in gioco anche il livello medio d'istruzione nazionale. Le differenze sono notevoli: tra i Paesi analizzati, il numero di donatori per 1.000 abitanti, nel 2004, variava da 2 a 51¹⁸. Poiché in tutti i casi la donazione era volontaria, la correlazione negativa con la PD dimostra che donare sangue è un'azione più frequente nelle culture in cui la dipendenza dall'autorità è minore e il livello d'istruzione maggiore.

Tab. 3.3 - *Principali differenze tra società a bassa e alta Distanza di potere: norme generali, famiglia, scuola, sanità*

Ricorda	Bassa Distanza di potere	Grande	Alta Distanza di potere
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Le disuguaglianze dovrebbero essere mitigate. Le istituzioni sociali dovrebbero essere gestite con attenzione. Le persone meno potenti e quelle più potenti dovrebbero essere interdipendenti. Le persone con minor potere sono a loro agio nell'interdipendenza. I genitori trattano i figli alla pari. I figli trattano i genitori e i parenti più anziani alla pari. I figli non sono fonte di sicurezza per i genitori quando invochiano. Gli studenti trattano i docenti alla pari. Gli insegnanti si aspettano che gli studenti prendano l'iniziativa in classe. Gli insegnanti sono esperti che trasferiscono il sapere personale. Le politiche legate all'istruzione si focalizzano sulla scuola secondaria. La qualità dell'apprendimento dipende dalla comunicazione, due vie e dall'interazione. Le persone meno istruite detengono valori più autoritari di quelle più istruite. I pazienti trattano i medici alla pari, fornendo attivamente molte informazioni. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Le disuguaglianze sono attese e desiderate. Lo status dovrebbe essere controllato con l'auto-disciplina. Le persone con meno potere dovrebbero essere dipendenti. Le persone con meno potere sono emotivamente polarizzate tra dipendenza e contro-dipendenza. I genitori insegnano ai figli a obbedire e il rispetto verso genitori e parenti anziani è una virtù fondamentale e duratura per sempre. I figli sono una fonte di sicurezza per i genitori quando invochiano. Gli studenti rispettano gli insegnanti, anche al di fuori della scuola. Gli insegnanti dovrebbero prendere tutte le iniziative in aula. Gli insegnanti sono dei guru che trasmettono il sapere personale. Le politiche legate all'istruzione si concentrano sulle università. La qualità dell'apprendimento dipende dall'efficienza dell'insegnante. Le persone dimostrano valori autoritari, indipendentemente dal grado di istruzione. I pazienti trattano i medici come superiori, le consultazioni sono più brevi e controllate dai dottori.

16. Meeuwesen, van den Brink-Muinen e Hofstede, 2009. Lo studio utilizzò registrazioni tv di interazioni tra 307 medici generalisti e 5.820 pazienti in 10 Paesi europei (Belgio, Estonia, Germania, Gran Bretagna, Olanda, Polonia, Romania, Spagna, Svezia e Svizzera).

Distanza di potere in ambito lavorativo

La maggior parte delle persone inizia la vita lavorativa da giovane adulto, dopo un percorso d'apprendimento in famiglia e a scuola. Alle coppie di ruolo genitore-figlio, insegnante-allievo e medico-paziente si aggiunge la coppia capo-collaboratore, e non sorprenderà nessuno se anche sui capi viene traslato l'atteggiamento tenuto verso i genitori, specialmente padri e insegnanti, che fa parte della nostra programmazione mentale.

Nei contesti ad alta PD, superiori e subordinati si considerano reciprocamente differenti per definizione; la gerarchia si fonda su questa disuguaglianza *essenziale*. Le organizzazioni centralizzano al massimo il potere nelle mani di pochi e i collaboratori si aspettano che sia detto loro cosa fare. Molto personale occupa ruoli di supervisione in strutture con grandi gerarchie, in cui le persone riferiscono le une alle altre. Il sistema salariale mostra un'ampia forbice tra i livelli organizzativi più alti e più bassi. La classe operaia è relativamente meno istruita e il lavoro manuale ha uno status inferiore rispetto a quello impiegatizio. I superiori hanno diritto a privilegi (letteralmente: leggi private) e ci si aspetta che siano solo loro a ini-

17. Deschepper, Grigoryan, Lunenburg, Hofstede, Cohen, Van der Keien, Deliens e Haaijze-Krakamp, 2008. Lo studio riassume i risultati di tre diversi studi in Paesi europei: un'indagine presso pazienti di 19 Paesi su farmaci prescritti e auto-medicazione, uno studio sulla distribuzione o il rimborso di antibiotici in 24 Paesi, i dati di Eurobarometer sull'uso di farmaci in campioni di popolazione rappresentativi in 15 Paesi.

18. de Kort, Wagemans, van Dongen, Sloboom, Hofstede e Veldhuizen, sulla stampa. Tra 25 Paesi, la PD era correlata con donatori per 100 abitanti con $r = -0,54^{**}$, con la raccolta di sangue per 1000 abitanti con $-0,77^{***}$, e con sangue fornito agli ospedali con $-0,65^{***}$.

APPENDIX 8 Individualismo: tabella e differenze

Tab. 4.1 - Valori degli indici d'Individualismo (IDV) per 76 Paesi e Regioni basati sui punteggi di 14 item nel database IBM, più studi estensivi

Rank	America C/S	Europa S/SE	Europa N/NO Paesi Anglofoni	Europa C/E Ex-Soviet.	M.do Islam M.E e Africa	Asia Est Asia SE	Indice
1			USA				91
2			Australia				90
3			Gran Bretagna				89
4-6			Canada				80
4-6			Olanda	Ungheria			80
7			Nuova Zelanda				79
8			Belgio Ol.				78
9		Italia					76
10			Danimarca				74
11			Canada F.				73
12			Belgio F.				72
13-14		Francia					71
13-14			Svezia				70
15-16			Irlanda				70
15-16				Lettonia			70
17-18			Norvegia				69
17-18			Svizzera Ted.				69
19			Germania				67
20					Sudafrica		65
21			Svizzera F.				64
22			Finlandia				63
23-26				Estonia			60
23-26				Lituania			60
23-26			Lussemburgo				60
23-26				Polonia			60
27		Malta		Rep. Ceca			59
28							58
29			Austria				55

Tab. 4.1 - segue

Rank	America C/S	Europa S/SE	Europa N/NO Paesi Anglofoni	Europa C/E Ex-Soviet.	M.do Islam M.E e Africa	Asia Est Asia SE	Indice
30					Israele		54
31				Slovacchia			52
32		Spagna				India	51
33							48
34	Suriname						47
35-37	Argentina					Giappone	46
35-37					Marocco		46
38					Iran		41
39-40	Giamaica						39
39-40				Russia			39
41-42					Paesi Arabi		38
41-42	Brasile	Turchia					38
43							37
44	Uruguay	Grecia					36
45							35
46				Croazia			33
47					Filippine		32
48-50				Bulgaria			30
48-50	Messico						30
48-50				Romania			30
51-53					Africa Or.		27
51-53		Portogallo					27
51-53				Slovenia			27
54						Malesia	26
55-56						Hong Kong	25
55-56				Serbia			25
57	Cile					Bangladesh	20
58-63						Cina	20
58-63							20

Hofstede G., Hofstede G.J., Inkpen P., *Culture e organizzazioni*, Milano: Franco Angeli, 2016

Tab. 4.1 - segue

Rank	America C/S	Europa S/SE	Europa N/NO Paesi Anglofoni	Europa C/E Ex-Soviet.	M.do Islam M.E e Africa	Asia Est Asia SE	Indice
58-63						Singapore	20
58-63						Tailandia	20
58-63						Vietnam	20
58-63					Africa Occ.		20
64	El Salvador						19
65						Corsica Sud	18
66						Taiwan	17
67-68	Peru						16
67-68	Trinidad						16
69	Costa Rica						15
70-71						Indonesia	14
70-71					Pakistan		14
72	Colombia						13
73	Venezuela						12
74	Panama						11
75	Ecuador						8
76	Guatemala						6

112

collettivismo come due dimensioni separate, nonostante nella maggior parte dei Paesi vadano di pari passo. Un motivo per correlarli è che ambidue sono associati con un terzo fattore: la ricchezza nazionale. Se la ricchezza nazionale rimane una costante, ad esempio se i Paesi ricchi sono comparati solo con Paesi ricchi ed i Paesi poveri con quelli poveri, la relazione si indebolisce considerevolmente¹⁰.

Confronti tra i risultati IBM e altri studi confermano la distinzione tra distanza di potere e collettivismo¹¹. Inoltre, come abbiamo dimostrato nel Capitolo 3, gli indici di distanza di potere potrebbero essere calcolati non soltanto per i Paesi, ma anche per tipi di occupazione, mentre gli indici di individualismo possono essere calcolati solo per i Paesi, non per le occupazioni. Le risposte date da persone con differenti occupazioni alle domande sui 14 obiettivi di lavoro, in base alle quali l'IDV venne calcolato, non poterono essere classificate in termini di individualismo e collettivismo.

Individualismo e Collettivismo nella famiglia

All'inizio di questo capitolo l'individualismo è stato associato alla famiglia nucleare e il collettivismo a quella allargata, con la distinzione per quest'ultima tra endogrupo ed esogrupo. La relazione tra l'individuo e il gruppo, come altri elementi basilari della cultura umana, si apprende per la prima volta in famiglia. Il fatto che il Giappone si trovi a metà strada nella Tab. 4.1 (con una classifica di 35/37 e un IDV di 46) può almeno in parte essere compreso se si considera che nella famiglia tradizionale giapponese solo il figlio maggiore continua a vivere con i genitori, dando luogo a una struttura familiare a metà tra quella nucleare e quella estesa.

Il bambino che cresce tra adulti, coetanei e bambini più piccoli impara naturalmente a concepirsi come parte del *noi*, molto più di quanto non accada nella famiglia nucleare. Il bambino di una famiglia estesa non è quasi mai solo, né di giorno, né di notte. Una studentessa africana venuta in Belgio per studiare ci disse che per la prima volta in vita sua era stata da sola in una stanza per un notevole lasso di tempo. Al contrario, studenti nordafricani, dopo tirocini in Perù o in Malesia, si lamentavano perché non erano mai lasciati soli da chi li ospitava.

In una situazione in cui i contatti sociali sono intensi e continui, mantenere l'armonia con l'ambiente diventa una virtù fondamentale che si estende

anche ad altre sfere esterne alla famiglia. Nella maggior parte delle culture collettiviste, una discussione aperta e diretta con un'altra persona è considerata maleducata e indesiderabile. La parola *no* è usata raramente, perché dire *no* significa dar inizio a uno scontro. «Potresti aver ragione» o «Ci penseremo» sono esempi per declinare educatamente una richiesta.

Allo stesso modo, la parola *si* non dovrebbe essere interpretata necessariamente come un assenso, ma come un modo di tenere aperta la comunicazione: in Giappone significa «sì, ti ho sentito».

Nelle culture individualiste, d'altra parte, dire ciò che si pensa è una virtù: dire la verità su quanto si prova è una caratteristica delle persone oneste e sincere. Uno scontro può essere salutare e un aspro confronto di opinioni può essere migliorativo; l'effetto che una comunicazione ha sulle altre persone andrebbe preso in considerazione, ma non giustificata, di norma, cambiare i fatti. Le persone adulte dovrebbero essere in grado di accogliere in maniera costruttiva un feedback molto esplicito. Nelle famiglie s'insegna ai bambini a dire sempre la verità, anche se può ferire, e affrontare il conflitto fa parte della vita familiare.

Un ex missionario olandese in Indonesia (un Paese con un IDV di 14 e una classifica di 70/71), raccontò l'inaspettata esegesi dei suoi parrocciani della parabola seguente:

Un uomo aveva due figli. Si rivolse al primo e disse: «Figlio, oggi vai a lavorare la vigna». E lui replicò «Non ne ho voglia». Poi, però, si pentì e vi andò. Si rivolse al secondo e disse lo stesso. Ed egli rispose «Sì, signore», ma non vi andò. Chi dei due ha compiuto la volontà del padre?¹²

La risposta della Bibbia è che la compì il primo, ma i parrocciani indonesiani scelsero il secondo, perché aveva formalmente mantenuto l'armonia con il padre e non l'aveva contraddetto; che poi vi fosse andato realmente era di secondaria importanza. Durante una delle lezioni di Gert-Jan Hofstede, uno studente greco domandò se erano presenti altre persone: se sì, il secondo figlio avrebbe fatto bene perché non aveva contraddetto il padre *in pubblico*. La Grecia ha una cultura di collettivismo intermedio.

Quando si tratta di esprimere un'opinione, nella famiglia collettivista i bambini imparano dagli altri che le opinioni personali non esistono, ma sono predeterminate dal gruppo. Se emerge una questione nuova su cui non esiste un parere consolidato, è necessaria una sorta di riunione familiare prima che si possa esprimere un giudizio. Se un bambino esprime ripetutamente pareri diversi da quanto collettivamente condiviso, è considerato di pessimo carattere. Nella famiglia individualista, al contrario, i bambini sono incoraggiati a sviluppare opinioni personali e un bambino che ripor-

12. La Sacra Bibbia, CEI UELCI 2008, Matteo 21, 28-31.

ta sempre le opinioni altrui è considerato debole di carattere: quindi, quale sia il comportamento di chi ha un buon carattere dipende dall'ambiente culturale.

La lealtà al gruppo, elemento essenziale nella famiglia collettivista, significa anche che le risorse vanno condivise. Se un membro di una famiglia estesa di venti persone ha un lavoro pagato e un altro no, si presume che chi guadagna condivida le sue entrate per nutrire l'intera famiglia. Partendo da questo principio, una famiglia potrebbe coprire collettivamente le spese necessarie perché un proprio componente riceva un'istruzione superiore, attendendosi che quando poi guadagnerà, il suo compenso sarà diviso con tutta la famiglia.

Nelle culture individualiste, i genitori sono fieri se i propri figli, da giovanissimi, svolgono dei lavoretti per guadagnare qualcosa che da soli decideranno come spendere. All'inizio di un corso di studi superiori, la maggior parte dei figli è pronta a lasciare la casa dei genitori e vivere per conto proprio, e lo stesso si aspettano i genitori.

Nelle culture collettiviste questo succede meno frequentemente. I dati del sondaggio Eurobarometer in 19 Paesi dell'Unione Europea, relativamente ricchi, dimostrano che se i giovani argomentano di non potersi permettere di lasciare la casa di famiglia, si tratta in realtà di un atteggiamento legato al collettivismo, non alla ricchezza nazionale. Le argomentazioni economiche sono spesso una razionalizzazione dei valori culturali¹³.

Gli obblighi verso la famiglia in una società collettivista non sono soltanto finanziari, ma anche rituali. Le celebrazioni familiari, come battesimi, matrimoni e particolarmente i funerali, sono molto importanti e non si dovrebbe mai disattenderli. Spesso manager espatriati provenienti da società individualiste si sorprendono dei motivi familiari adottati dai collaboratori collettivisti per ottenere permessi speciali, e pensano si tratti di motivi fasulli, quando invece è molto probabile che i motivi siano reali.

Nelle culture individualiste, quando s'incontrano, le persone sentono il bisogno di parlare: stare in silenzio non è normale, conversare è d'obbligo, anche se di banalità. In una cultura collettivista, già il trovarsi insieme può essere emotivamente sufficiente: non vi è alcun obbligo di parlare, a meno che non si debba dare un'informazione particolare.

I dati del sondaggio Eurobarometer nei 19 Stati più ricchi d'Europa dimostrano grandi differenze nella misura in cui le persone affermano di frequentare ristoranti o bar tutti i giorni: nelle culture più collettiviste, questo modo di socializzare rientra nella normalità, nelle culture individualiste si

preferisce semmai incontrarsi a casa propria: casa mia è il mio castello è un detto dell'individualista Gran Bretagna¹⁴.

L'antropologo e noto autore americano Edward T. Hall (1914-2009) distinguere le culture in base al loro modo di comunicare, cioè lungo una dimensione che va da un contesto forte a uno debole¹⁵. In una comunicazione di contesto forte si parla o scrive poco, perché la maggior parte delle informazioni risiede nel contesto ambientale o si suppone sia già conosciuta dalle persone coinvolte, mentre la parte esplicita e codificata del messaggio ne contiene poche. Questo tipo di comunicazione è frequente nelle culture collettiviste. In una comunicazione di contesto debole l'insieme d'informazioni è trasmesso con un codice esplicito, com'è tipico delle culture individualiste. Molte cose che nelle culture collettiviste sono auto-esplicative devono essere esplicitamente comunicate nelle culture individualiste: ad esempio, i contratti d'affari americani sono molto più lunghi di quelli giapponesi.

Accanto all'armonia, un altro importante concetto connesso al collettivismo è la vergogna.

Le società individualiste sono state descritte come culture della colpa: le persone che infrangono le regole sociali spesso si sentono colpevoli, tormentate da una coscienza sviluppata individualmente che funziona come una guida interiore. Le culture collettiviste, al contrario, sono le culture della vergogna: le persone appartenenti a un gruppo, di cui un membro ha infranto le regole sociali, provano vergogna a causa del senso collettivo del dovere. La vergogna, per sua natura, ha carattere sociale, il senso di colpa, individuale; la vergogna si prova solo se la violazione viene risaputa da altri, in quanto la notorietà della trasgressione è fonte di vergogna molto più della violazione stessa. Questo non si verifica affatto per il senso di colpa, che si prova indipendentemente dalla notorietà o meno della trasgressione.

Un altro concetto presente nelle famiglie collettiviste è la faccia. *Perdere la faccia*, nel senso di essere umiliati, è un'espressione che deriva dalla lingua cinese; eccone la definizione data da uno studioso cinese: «la faccia si perde quando una persona, per un'azione compiuta da lei o da qualcuno molto vicino a lei, non adempie agli obblighi cruciali che le spettano in virtù della posizione sociale che occupa¹⁶. I Cinesi usano anche l'espressione *dare la faccia* a qualcuno, nel senso di tributare onore e prestigio. Sostanzialmente, la faccia descrive la relazione con l'ambiente sociale e la sua importanza deriva dal vivere in una cultura molto attenta agli aspet-

14. Flash Eurobarometer. 241. 2008. Nei 19 Paesi europei con Reddito Nazionale Lordo pro capite superiore ai 19.500 euro, il 72% delle differenze nella risposta a questa domanda sono spiegate da un basso IDV (si ringrazia Marieke de Mooij).

15. Hall, 1976.

16. Ho, 1976, p. 867.

ti sociali. Anche in altre culture collettiviste troviamo parole con significati simili. Nelle società individualiste il corrispettivo della faccia è la *dignità* personale, ma definita da un punto di vista individuale, mentre la faccia riflette il punto di vista del contesto sociale.

Le società collettiviste sono solite creare legami simili a quelli familiari anche con persone che non sono imparentate in senso biologico, ma sono socialmente integrate in un endogruppo. In America Latina, ad esempio, questo si ritrova nell'istituzione dei *compadres* e delle *comadres* che sono trattati come parenti, pur non essendolo; un altro esempio è il ruolo del *padrino* e della *madrina*, tradizionalmente molto sentito nei Paesi europei cattolici e ortodossi. In passato, in Giappone, i figli minori diventavano apprendisti presso i maestri artigiani grazie a una forma di adozione, analogamente a quanto avveniva in Europa nel Medio Evo.

Poiché nelle società collettiviste si devono rispettare le opinioni della propria cerchia di congiunti, la scelta dello sposo o della sposa costituisce un evento cruciale, non soltanto per i due futuri partner, ma anche per le loro famiglie. L'americano David Buss ha coordinato un sondaggio sui criteri di scelta del potenziale coniuge, evidenziando come nei Paesi collettivisti gli sposi preferiscano spose giovani e ricche, operse e caste¹⁷. Con-

Tab. 4.2 - Differenze fondamentali tra società collettiviste e individualiste. 1°: norme generali e famiglia

Collettiviste	Individualiste
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Le persone nascono in famiglie allargate o in altri endo-gruppi che continuano a proteggerle in cambio della lealtà I bimbi imparano a pensare in termini di "noi" Valori standard sono applicati diversamente a chi appartiene o no al gruppo: esclusivismo L'armonia andrebbe sempre mantenuta e scontranti diretti evitati Le amicizie sono predeterminate I guadagni dovrebbero essere condivisi con i familiari Figli adulti vivono con i genitori Comportamenti a contesto forte Frequenti socializzazioni in pubblico Comportarsi male e comportarsi vergognoso e perdita di faccia per sé e per il gruppo Le mogli dovrebbero essere giovani, diligenti e caste; i mariti più anziani L'influenza maggiore sull'ideale di bellezza delle ragazze: le amiche 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ognuno nasce per prendersi solo cura di sé e della sua famiglia ristretta (nucleare) I bimbi imparano a pensare in termini di "io" Si suppone che gli stessi valori standard siano applicati a tutti: universalismo Dire ciò che si pensa è caratteristico di una persona onesta Le amicizie sono scelte e dovrebbero essere favorite Possesso individuale delle risorse, anche per i bambini I figli adulti lasciano la casa di famiglia Comunicazioni a contesto debole La mia casa è il mio castello Comportarsi male crea senso di colpa e perdita di rispetto per sé Non vi sono criteri predeterminati per sposarsi L'influenza maggiore sull'ideale di bellezza delle ragazze: i ragazzi in generale

17. Buss, 1989; Bus e altri, 1990; *Culture's Consequences*, 2001, pp. 230-31.

sequenza questa del fatto che il matrimonio è un contratto tra famiglie, non tra individui: quindi moglie e marito hanno poca voce in capitolo nella scelta del loro partner, ma questo non significa che tali matrimoni siano meno felici¹⁸.

Una ricerca di mercato, condotta su ragazze tra i quindici e i diciassette anni in 10 Paesi, chiedeva chi influenzasse maggiormente il loro ideale di bellezza. Nelle culture collettiviste, le giovani donne facevano molto spesso riferimento alle amiche del loro gruppo di appartenenza; nelle culture individualiste, invece, ai coetanei maschi in generale¹⁹.

Lingua, personalità e comportamento nelle culture individualiste e collettiviste

La coppia nippo-australiana composta da Yoshi ed Emiko Kashima, lui psicologo e lei linguista, ha studiato la relazione tra culture e lingue e, tra l'altro, i loro studi si sono concentrati sull'omissione del pronome personale da una frase (ad esempio: *I love you* in spagnolo diventa *te quiero* anziché *yo te quiero*)²⁰. Le lingue parlate nelle culture individualiste tendono a richiedere a chi parla di usare il pronome *io* quando ci si riferisce a se stessi; nelle culture collettiviste è consentita o prescritta l'omissione del pronome di prima persona singolare. La lingua inglese, parlata nella maggior parte dei Paesi individualisti della Tab. 4.1, è l'unica in cui si scrive *io* con la maiuscola.

Le lingue cambiano nel tempo, ma lentamente; il pronome di prima persona singolare era usato in poesia dalle lingue dell'Europa Occidentale nel Medio Evo, mentre un detto arabo dello stesso periodo recita: *sia dannato il satanico io!*²¹. La connessione tra punteggi delle culture e caratteristiche linguistiche illustra le radici molto antiche delle differenze culturali: è ingenuo pensare che le attuali differenze possano scomparire nello spazio di una vita.

L'antropologo cino-americano Francis Hsu sostiene che la lingua cinese non ha equivalenti per la parola *personalità* come la s'intende nel mondo occidentale. La personalità in occidentale è un'entità separata, distinta da società e cultura: un attributo dell'individuo. In cinese la traduzione più vicina è *ren*, ma il termine non include soltanto l'individuo, bensì anche il suo

18. Yelsma e Athappilly, 1988; Dion e Dion, 1993; *Culture's Consequences*, 2001, p. 230.

19. Etcoff, Orbach, Scott e Agostino, 2006.

20. Le correlazioni erano $r = -0,75^{***}$ per 60 Paesi e $-0,64^{***}$ per 30 lingue. Da Kashima e Kashima, 1998; *Culture's Consequences*, 2001, p. 233.

21. Habib, 1995, p. 102.

membri della famiglia, e sono loro a prendere le decisioni più importanti sul futuro della persona disabile. Gli Italiani tendono a comportamenti interdipendenti, mostrando una differenza tra le persone originarie del Nord, più individualiste della maggioranza collettivista del Sud.

Tab. 4.3 - Differenze fondamentali tra società collettiviste e individualiste. 2°: linguaggio, personalità e comportamento

Collettiviste	Individualiste
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Si evita l'uso della parola "io" • Ego interdipendenti • Nei test di personalità, le persone risultano più introverse • Mostrare tristezza è incoraggiato, felicità scoraggiato • Più lentezza nella camminata • Abitudini di consumo mostrano dipendenza dagli altri • La rete sociale fonte primaria d'informazione • Minor spesa sia privata sia pubblica per la sanità • I disabili sono una vergogna per la famiglia e vanno tenuti lontano dagli occhi altrui 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S'incoraggia l'uso della parola "io" • Ego indipendenti • Nei test di personalità le persone risultano più estroverse • Mostrare felicità è incoraggiato, tristezza scoraggiato • Più velocità nella camminata • Abitudini di consumo mostrano stili di vita centrati su se stessi • I media fonte primaria d'informazione • Maggior spesa sia privata sia pubblica per la sanità • I disabili dovrebbero partecipare il più possibile a una vita normale

Individualismo e Collettivismo nella scuola

La relazione tra l'individuo e il gruppo fissata nella coscienza del bambino durante i primi anni in famiglia si sviluppa e si rafforza a scuola, dove i comportamenti in classe sono esemplificativi. Una tipica lamentela degli insegnanti che passano da una cultura più individualista a un ambiente più collettivista è che gli studenti non prendono la parola quando l'insegnante pone una domanda alla classe; per uno studente che si concepisce come parte di un gruppo, non è logico parlare senza essere autorizzato a farlo dal gruppo, a meno che l'insegnante non gli si rivolga personalmente.

Persino in assenza del professore, gli studenti delle culture collettiviste esitano a parlare in gruppi ampi, specialmente se includono membri di altri gruppi, e prendono più facilmente la parola in piccoli gruppi. Se l'insegnante vuole accrescere la partecipazione degli studenti in una classe numerosa, collettivista o culturalmente eterogenea, deve creare piccoli gruppi, invitando ad esempio gli allievi a creare gruppi di tre o quattro persone per discutere una questione per pochi minuti, e a eleggere un portavoce per ogni gruppo. In tal modo, le risposte individuali diventano ri-

sposte di gruppo e il portavoce si esprime a nome del gruppo; spesso, dopo qualche tempo, gli studenti si alterneranno spontaneamente nel ruolo di portavoce.

In una società collettivista, gli studenti con diversi background etnici o di clan formano spesso nelle classi dei sottogruppi; inoltre gli studenti con lo stesso background etnico o familiare dell'insegnante o di altri funzionari della scuola si aspettano un trattamento di favore. In una società individualista questo sarebbe considerato nepotismo molto scorretto, ma in un ambiente collettivista è scorretto non trattare i membri del proprio gruppo meglio degli altri.

Nella classe collettivista le virtù dell'armonia e del salvare la faccia regnano sovrane. Discussioni e conflitti dovrebbero essere evitati, o almeno formulati in modo tale da non ferire nessuno; gli studenti non dovrebbero perdere la faccia, se lo si può evitare. Il senso di vergogna (che consiste nel chiamare in causa l'onore del gruppo) è un modo efficace per correggere chi si comporta male: saranno i membri del gruppo a correggere il comportamento del compagno.

Nelle classi individualiste, al contrario, gli studenti si aspettano di essere trattati come individui e in maniera imparziale, senza riguardo per il loro background. La creazione di gruppi di studenti è molto più finalizzata al compito o basata su particolari amicizie o competenze; i confronti e le discussioni aperte sono spesso considerati salutarissimi, e il concetto di faccia è poco sentito o inesistente.

L'obiettivo dell'istruzione è percepito diversamente tra una società individualista e una collettivista. Nella prima, consiste più nell'imparare *come si apprende* che sapere come si *fanno le cose*: l'assunto di base è che nella vita non si finisce mai d'imparare. Nella società collettivista l'apprendimento è più spesso visto come un processo, che ha un inizio e una fine, riservato solo ai giovani, che devono imparare *come fare* le cose per trovare il proprio posto nella società: si tratta di un rito di passaggio.

Il valore dei diplomi o degli attestati, testimoni di una positiva conclusione degli studi, è diverso tra i due poli della dimensione individualismo-collettivismo. Nella società individualista il diploma aumenta il valore economico di chi lo detiene ma anche la sua autostima: fornisce un senso di realizzazione. Nelle società collettiviste il diploma è un onore per chi lo detiene (e per il suo gruppo) che dà titolo al detentore di associarsi con i membri del gruppo con status più elevato: ad esempio, sposare un coniuge più attraente. In questa situazione, la tentazione di ottenere diplomi con una qualche irregolarità, magari illegalmente, diventa più forte.