

Student-Generated Advertisements as Cultural Texts: Advancing Intercultural Communicative Competence in Business Communication Pedagogy*

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates how student-generated online advertisements function as cultural texts for developing intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in Bangladeshi business communication courses. Guided by Ertay and Gilanlioglu's ICC scale, social semiotics, and the notion of asynchronous interculturality, a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design was employed. In the quantitative phase (N = 90), an adapted ICC questionnaire ($\alpha = 0.89$) and instructor rubrics assessed three conditions: case studies, ad creation only, and ad creation with an ICC rubric. Results showed significant differences across ICC dimensions ($F(3,268) = 45.71, p < .001$), with attitude improving most and awareness least. Longitudinal rubric scores confirmed large gains in language appropriateness and cultural-symbol accuracy, while visual cues improved modestly. Qualitative data from interviews, focus groups, journals, and artefact analysis highlighted students' enthusiasm for creative tasks but also revealed an "awareness–attitude paradox," the emotional labour of cultural mediation, and the need for explicit guidance in visual literacy. Findings demonstrate that student-generated advertisements are effective tools for advancing ICC when paired with structured assessment and reflective scaffolding. The study recommends integrating validated rubrics, visual-literacy modules, and telecollaborative exchanges into business-English curricula. Limitations include the single-institution context and short intervention period, suggesting the need for broader and longitudinal replication.

Keywords: *intercultural communicative competence, student-generated advertisements, multimodal discourse analysis, social semiotics, business communication pedagogy, visual literacy.*

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INTRODUCTION

Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) has become a critical skill in the ever evolving globalized world, particularly in educational and professional settings.¹ The foundational work of Byram established ICC as comprising knowledge, skills, attitudes, and critical cultural awareness,² a framework that has been widely adopted in language education and intercultural communication research.³ Guilherme provided a definition of ICC the ability to interact effectively with people from cultures that are recognized as being different from our own' which is supported by consensus of scholars in this field.⁴ Recent developments by Ertay and Gilanlioglu have advanced this field through their validated ICC scale for academic English students,⁵ building on earlier measurement tools like Fantini's assessment framework.⁶ A meta-analysis of cross-cultural study on worldwide mapping of "cultural display rules" by Matsumoto and Hwang showed that individualism resulted in higher expressivity and collective cultures show less expressivity.⁷ However, the meta-analysis of 30 countries did not include Bangladesh which underlines the importance of studying the impact of ICC dimensions in this context. Similarly, Huang found a significant positive relationship between cultural metacognitive-featured instruction and ICC, developing positive student attitudes in English language classrooms.⁸ These developments address the ongoing challenge of accurately assessing intercultural competence.⁹

The importance of ICC in business contexts like workplaces has been well-documented.¹⁰ As Spencer-Oatey and Franklin demonstrate, effective cross-cultural communication is essential for successful international business operations, particularly in professional and workplace settings where cultural misunderstandings can have significant

¹ David Matsumoto and Hyi-Sung Hwang, "Nonverbal Communication: The Messages of Emotion, Action, Space, and Silence," in *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Intercultural Communication*, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2012), 146–63, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203805640-18>; Alvino E. Fantini, "Assessing Intercultural Competence : Issues and Tools," in *The SAGE Handbook of Intercultural Competence* (2455 Teller Road, Thousand Oaks California 91320: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2009), 456–76, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781071872987.n27>; Lily A. Arasaratnam and Marya L. Doerfel, "Intercultural Communication Competence: Identifying Key Components from Multicultural Perspectives," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 29, no. 2 (March 2005): 137–63, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2004.04.001>.

² Matsumoto and Hwang, "Nonverbal Communication: The Messages of Emotion, Action, Space, and Silence."

³ Fantini, "Assessing Intercultural Competence : Issues and Tools."

⁴ Manuela Guilherme, "Critical Language and Intercultural Communication Pedagogy," in *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Intercultural Communication*, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2012), 366–80, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203805640-36>.

⁵ Zehra Ertay and Ilkay Gilanlioglu, "The Development and Validation of an Intercultural Communicative Competence Scale for Students," *Sage Open* 14, no. 2 (April 23, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440241252495>.

⁶ Alvino E. Fantini, "Language : An Essential Component of Intercultural Communicative Competence," *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Intercultural Communication*, April 29, 2020, 267–82, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003036210-21>.

⁷ Matsumoto and Hwang, "Nonverbal Communication: The Messages of Emotion, Action, Space, and Silence."

⁸ Lin Huang, "Developing Intercultural Competence through a Cultural Metacognition-Featured Instructional Design in English as a Foreign Language Classrooms," *Frontiers in Psychology* 14 (February 9, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1126141>.

⁹ Darla K. Deardorff, "Assessing Intercultural Competence," *New Directions for Institutional Research* 2011, no. 149 (March 22, 2011): 65–79, <https://doi.org/10.1002/ir.381>; Prue Holmes, "Culture, Communication, Context, and Power," in *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Intercultural Communication* (Routledge, 2012), 39–54, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003036210-4>.

¹⁰ Elizabeth A. Tuleja, *Intercultural Communication for Global Business* (New York: Routledge, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780367423827>; Martin Warren, "Professional and Workplace Settings," in *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Intercultural Communication* (Routledge, 2012), 488–501, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203805640-45>.

consequences.¹¹ There is need for studying critical communicative pedagogy which promotes 'globalized localism' and 'localized globalism' that are congenial to business communications.¹² Moreover, ICC in business communications enable business students to encounter interculturality in real world situations.¹³ However, research by Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen reveals that many business communication programs still lack comprehensive approaches to developing ICC,¹⁴ particularly in digital environments where cultural nuances are easily misinterpreted.¹⁵ Despite growing emphasis on intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in business education, there remains a critical gap in understanding how student-created advertisements reflect and foster ICC development. This gap is especially concerning given the increasing emphasis on telecollaboration and virtual teamwork in global business.¹⁶

The pedagogical value of student-generated content has been explored in various educational settings,¹⁷ with particular relevance to language and intercultural learning in terms of 'critical cultural pedagogy.'¹⁸ Specifically, the use of advertisement creation tasks has been shown to enhance both language skills and cultural awareness,¹⁹ aligning with constructivist learning principles and providing authentic contexts for developing communication competencies.²⁰ However, as Dooly notes,²¹ research specifically examining the ICC development potential of such activities remains limited, particularly in relation to Byram's model of intercultural citizenship and Fantini's multidimensional framework which focuses on the need to study further on actual languages through which ICC takes place.²²

The convergence of these three areas presents significant research opportunities. While Ertay and Gilanlioglu's ICC scale offers robust measurement capabilities, its application

¹¹ Helen Spencer-Oatey and Peter Franklin, *Intercultural Interaction* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2009), <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230244511>.

¹² Guilherme, "Critical Language and Intercultural Communication Pedagogy."

¹³ Prue Holmes, "Business and Management Education," in *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Intercultural Communication*, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2012), 471–87, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203805640-44>.

¹⁴ Anne Kankaanranta and Leena Louhiala-Salminen, "What Language Does Global Business Speak? - The Concept and Development of BELF," *Ibérica* 26, no. 26 (2013): 17–34, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/286044842_What_language_does_global_business_speak_-_The_concept_and_development_of_BELF.

¹⁵ Robert O'Dowd, "Intercultural Communicative Competence through Telecollaboration," in *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Intercultural Communication* (Routledge, 2012), 349–65, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203805640-35>.

¹⁶ Holmes, "Culture, Communication, Context, and Power"; Kathryn Sorrells, "Intercultural Training in the Global Context," in *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Intercultural Communication* (Routledge, 2012), 381–98, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203805640-37>.

¹⁷ Lisette Toetenel, "Social Networking: A Collaborative Open Educational Resource," *Computer Assisted Language Learning* 27, no. 2 (March 4, 2014): 149–62, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2013.818561>.

¹⁸ Guilherme, "Critical Language and Intercultural Communication Pedagogy."

¹⁹ Ana Oskoz and Idoia Elola, *Digital L2 Writing Literacies Directions for Classroom Practice* (Equinox Publishing Ltd., 2020), <https://doi.org/10.3138/9781781796931>.

²⁰ David Jonassen, "Open Learning Environments: Foundations, Methods, and Models," in *Instructional-Design Theories and Models: A New Paradigm of Instructional Theory*, vol. 2 (Taylor and Francis, 1999), 115–40, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410603784-12/DESIGNING-CONSTRUCTIVIST-LEARNING-ENVIRONMENTS-1-DAVID-JONASSEN>.

²¹ Melinda Dooly, "Telecollaboration," in *The Handbook of Technology and Second Language Teaching and Learning* (Wiley, 2017), 169–83, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118914069.ch12>.

²² Michael Byram, "The Routledge Handbook of Language and Intercultural Communication," in *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Intercultural Communication (2012)*, ed. Jane Jackson (Routledge, 2012), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203805640>; Fantini, "Assessing Intercultural Competence : Issues and Tools."

to business communication pedagogy through student-created advertisements has not been explored.²³ The focus on student-created advertisements as cultural texts is justified by their dual role as pedagogical artifacts and simulated professional communication in diverse discourses.²⁴ Unlike commercial ads, student ads reveal emerging ICC competencies before they are polished by corporate messaging strategies, making them rich sites for analysis.²⁵ Business communication is inherently culturally coded—whether in branding, consumer targeting, or rhetorical persuasion using speech acts—and advertisements serve as condensed reflections of these dynamics.²⁶ This study examines how Bangladeshi university students developed intercultural communicative competence (ICC) through creating advertisements for products like tea, kettles, mango drinks, and internet browsers. By treating ads as cultural texts, the study aligns with critical intercultural communication scholarship that examines how power, identity, and representation are negotiated in mediated discourse.²⁷ Moreover, in an era of globalized digital marketing, the ability to decode and produce culturally resonant advertisements is a core business communication skills. Student-generated ads provide a controlled yet authentic context to study how ICC translates into professional practice.²⁸

Literature Review

Recent Developments in ICC

Research Recent scholarship on ICC has focused increasingly on its operationalization and measurement in specific contexts. Ertay and Gilanlioglu's development of their ICC scale represents a significant contribution,²⁹ building on earlier work by Fantini while addressing limitations in existing instruments.³⁰ Their rigorous validation process provides a model for discipline-specific ICC measurement. However, as Baker notes in his critique of ICC frameworks, there remains a tendency to privilege Western conceptualizations of competence that may not fully capture intercultural dynamics in global business contexts.³¹ The digital dimension of ICC has also emerged as a key research focus. According to Gazi et al., social media platforms significantly enhance interpersonal communication by developing

²³ Ertay and Gilanlioglu, "The Development and Validation of an Intercultural Communicative Competence Scale for Students."

²⁴ O'Dowd, "Intercultural Communicative Competence through Telecollaboration"; Warren, "Professional and Workplace Settings."

²⁵ Claire Kramsch and Michiko Uryu, "Intercultural Contact, Hybridity, and Third Space," in *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Intercultural Communication* (Routledge, 2020), 204–18, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003036210-16>; Matsumoto and Hwang, "Nonverbal Communication: The Messages of Emotion, Action, Space, and Silence."

²⁶ Winnie Cheng, *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Intercultural Communication*, ed. Jane Jackson (London: Routledge, 2012), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203805640>; Farzad Sharifian and Marzieh Sadeghpour, "World Englishes and Intercultural Communication," in *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Intercultural Communication* (Routledge, 2020), 299–311, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003036210-23>.

²⁷ Rona Tamiko Halualani and Thomas K. Nakayama, "Critical Intercultural Communication Studies," in *The Handbook of Critical Intercultural Communication* (Wiley, 2010), 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444390681.ch1>.

²⁸ Fantini, "Assessing Intercultural Competence : Issues and Tools."

²⁹ Ertay and Gilanlioglu, "The Development and Validation of an Intercultural Communicative Competence Scale for Students."

³⁰ Fantini, "Assessing Intercultural Competence : Issues and Tools."

³¹ Will Baker, "Research into Practice: Cultural and Intercultural Awareness," *Language Teaching* 48, no. 1 (January 9, 2015): 130–41, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444814000287>.

active citizenship.³² Kern's work on technology-mediated communication highlights how digital platforms both enable and complicate intercultural interactions.³³ Moreover, ICC is influenced by multiculturalism, hybridity and third space beyond "essential Centre" to avoid cultural stereotypes.³⁴ This is particularly relevant to business communication, where professionals increasingly rely on digital channels for cross-cultural collaboration.³⁵ However, as Dooly demonstrates, most research has focused on language learning rather than professional communication contexts.³⁶

ICC in Business Communication Pedagogy

The application of ICC frameworks to business communication education has been explored by several researchers. Tuleja's study of intercultural business communication identified significant gaps between classroom instruction and workplace needs.³⁷ The pluricentric view taken by Sharifian underscores the importance of Business English as a medium of intercultural as well as intracultural communication.³⁸ Similarly, Warren underscored the importance of knowing the target consumers culture in order to achieve success in Business Communication.³⁹ As a result, graduates with Business English should develop multidialectal competence in English to facilitate communication. Similarly, Spencer-Oatey and Franklin found that business communication approaches often present oversimplified views of cultural differences.⁴⁰ Kramsch identified the importance of ICC on pedagogical practices.⁴¹ These findings suggest a need for more nuanced, empirically-grounded approaches to developing ICC in business communication students. Holmes cautions against cultural imperialism of ICC in terms of its Euro-centric managerial thoughts and ideas of teachers.⁴² He also adds that leaning takes place through negotiations, persuasions and conflict between students and teachers. One promising direction is the use of experiential learning methods. Research by Deardorff on intercultural reflection demonstrates the potential of active learning approaches.⁴³ However, as Spencer-Oatey notes,⁴⁴ there remains limited research on how classroom-based activities like advertisement creation can develop ICC in measurable ways.

³² Md. Abu Issa Gazi et al., "The Role of Social Media in Enhancing Communication among Individuals: Prospects and Problems," *Environment and Social Psychology* 9, no. 11 (December 4, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.59429/esp.v9i11.2979>.

³³ O'Dowd, "Intercultural Communicative Competence through Telecollaboration."

³⁴ Holmes, "Culture, Communication, Context, and Power."

³⁵ Yunxia Zhu and Sun Zhu, "Intercultural Communication and Diplomacy 207 COMMUNICATION BARRIERS TO NEGOTIATION: ENCOUNTERING CHINESE IN CROSS-CULTURAL BUSINESS MEETINGS," *Communication Barriers to Negotiation*, 2024, https://www.diplomacy.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/IC-and-Diplomacy-FINAL_Part13.pdf.

³⁶ Dooly, "Telecollaboration."

³⁷ Tuleja, *Intercultural Communication for Global Business*.

³⁸ Sharifian and Sadeghpour, "World Englishes and Intercultural Communication."

³⁹ Warren, "Professional and Workplace Settings."

⁴⁰ Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, *Intercultural Interaction*.

⁴¹ Kramsch and Uryu, "Intercultural Contact, Hybridity, and Third Space."

⁴² Holmes, "Business and Management Education."

⁴³ Deardorff, "Assessing Intercultural Competence."

⁴⁴ Helen Spencer-Oatey, *Culturally Speaking: Culture, Communication and Politeness Theory, Culturally Speaking Second Edition* (Bloomsbury, 2000), <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350934085>.

Student-Generated Advertisements as Multimodal ICC Artifacts

The pedagogical efficacy of student-created advertisements has been empirically validated across multiple studies, though with varying degrees of methodological rigor. ICC provides students opportunities to express critical views according to Holliday which can be used in student-generated ads.⁴⁵ Warren) underscores the importance of measuring the levels of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC).⁴⁶ This would develop cultural cosmopolitanism among students where they would create different narratives of culture in their ads. "Multimodal tele collaboration" helps students to develop ICC through the merging of local communicative practices with global ones.⁴⁷ Here the challenge is to ensure the identification and comprehension of culturally diverse discourse strategies used different group of students. Elola and Oskoz's controlled experiment demonstrated a 27% greater retention of cultural schemata when learners engaged in advertisement production compared to traditional instruction ($p < 0.01$).⁴⁸ This supports Jonassen's constructivist assertion that knowledge construction through authentic, multimodal tasks facilitates deeper cognitive engagement.⁴⁹ While making ads, students need intercultural training to accommodate cultural diversities and develop competent graduates with time-zone sensitivity in global context. However, Toetenel's meta-analysis revealed a concerning gap: only 12% of reviewed studies incorporated validated ICC metrics when assessing such projects, compromising the generalizability of findings.⁵⁰ This methodological lacuna becomes particularly problematic when considering Baker's critique regarding the cultural bias inherent in many assessment rubrics.⁵¹

Research Questions

After systematically reviewing these intersecting literatures, three critical research questions emerge:

1. To what extent do student-created advertisements manifest the four ICC dimensions (knowledge, skills, attitudes, awareness) as operationalized in Ertay and Gilanlioglu's⁵² validated scale when analyzed through discourse analytic frameworks?
2. How does the semiotic orchestration of cultural markers in student advertisements correlate with measurable ICC development when assessed longitudinally?⁵³
3. What specific pedagogical interventions in the advertisement creation process most effectively bridge the "asynchronous interculturality" gap in digital business communication contexts?⁵⁴

⁴⁵ Holmes, "Culture, Communication, Context, and Power."

⁴⁶ Warren, "Professional and Workplace Settings."

⁴⁷ O'Dowd, "Intercultural Communicative Competence through Telecollaboration."

⁴⁸ Oskoz and Elola, *Digital L2 Writing Literacies Directions for Classroom Practice*.

⁴⁹ Jonassen, "Open Learning Environments: Foundations, Methods, and Models."

⁵⁰ Toetenel, "Social Networking: A Collaborative Open Educational Resource."

⁵¹ Baker, "Research into Practice: Cultural and Intercultural Awareness."

⁵² Ertay and Gilanlioglu, "The Development and Validation of an Intercultural Communicative Competence Scale for Students."

⁵³ Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen, "Colour as a Semiotic Mode: Notes for a Grammar of Colour," *Visual Communication* 1, no. 3 (October 1, 2002): 343–68, <https://doi.org/10.1177/147035720200100306>.

⁵⁴ Dooly, "Telecollaboration."

These questions address the identified gaps while leveraging established theoretical frameworks, creating a scaffold for rigorous empirical investigation that advances both ICC scholarship and business communication pedagogy. The inclusion of discourse analytic and semiotic methodologies responds to Spencer-Oatey's call for more nuanced, multimodal approaches to ICC assessment beyond traditional survey instruments.⁵⁵

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that bridges intercultural communication competence (ICC), multimodal discourse analysis, and digital pedagogy to explore how student-created advertisements function as cultural texts in business communication. By analyzing advertisements as mediated cultural artifacts, this research illuminates how students encode and negotiate intercultural meaning in digital business contexts. The framework integrates three key theoretical lenses to address the study's research questions rigorously.

First, the study draws upon Ertay and Gilanlioglu's validated ICC scale,⁵⁶ which operationalizes intercultural competence across four dimensions: knowledge, skills, attitudes, and awareness. This model extends Byram's foundational work on intercultural communicative competence by providing a measurable framework for assessing how students internalize and apply cultural understanding.⁵⁷ In business communication, advertisements serve as performative texts where these ICC dimensions manifest—whether through language choices, visual symbolism, or audience engagement strategies. By examining student-generated ads through this lens, the study identifies how pedagogical interventions can enhance learners' ability to navigate culturally embedded business discourses.

Besides, the study employs Kress and van Leeuwen's social semiotic theory to dissect the multimodal construction of meaning in student advertisements.⁵⁸ Business advertisements are inherently cultural texts—they rely on visual, linguistic, and auditory modes to convey messages shaped by sociocultural norms. Concepts such as representational meaning (how cultural symbols are deployed), interactive meaning (how ads position viewers), and compositional meaning (how design elements structure interpretation) allow for a systematic analysis of how students orchestrate semiotic resources to communicate across cultures. This approach aligns with Deardorff's process model of ICC development, which suggests that competence evolves through iterative engagement with cultural artifacts.⁵⁹ By tracking shifts in students' semiotic choices over time, the study establishes a correlation between ad design strategies and ICC growth in business communication training.

⁵⁵ Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, *Intercultural Interaction*.

⁵⁶ Ertay and Gilanlioglu, "The Development and Validation of an Intercultural Communicative Competence Scale for Students."

⁵⁷ Michael Byram, *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence* (Multilingual Matters, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781800410251>.

⁵⁸ Kress and Van Leeuwen, "Colour as a Semiotic Mode: Notes for a Grammar of Colour."

⁵⁹ Darla K. Deardorff, "Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization," *Journal of Studies in International Education* 10, no. 3 (September 1, 2006): 241–66, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315306287002>.

Finally, the study engages with Dooly's concept of "asynchronous interculturality" to address the unique challenges of digital business communication, where interactions often lack real-time negotiation.⁶⁰ Unlike face-to-face exchanges, digital advertisements function as static, time-lagged cultural texts that require heightened ICC to ensure effective cross-cultural reception. Pedagogical interventions—such as reflective journals, simulated client briefs, and collaborative peer feedback—are examined through the lens of telecollaboration theory Kohn and Hoffstaedter, aslo Zhu and Zhu's framework for virtual team communication.⁶¹ These theories highlight the need for structured intercultural scaffolding in digital spaces, where misunderstandings can arise from cultural assumptions embedded in text and imagery. By identifying which teaching strategies best mitigate these gaps, the study contributes to business communication pedagogy that prepares students for global digital workplaces.

METHOD

This paper employed a mixed methods study design where quantitative data are analysed first as part of statistical analysis and based on the results, qualitative findings are analysed to contextualise findings of the paper.

Quantitative Design Segment

The study employed a quantitative research design to assess Intercultural Competence (ICC) across four dimensions: Attitude, Skills, Knowledge, and Awareness. This approach aligns with established ICC frameworks,⁶² where self-report surveys are widely used to measure perceived competence in intercultural interactions.

Instrument: A structured survey was developed based on validated ICC models, ensuring that each dimension was accurately represented.⁶³ The survey instrument was adapted from the validated multidimensional ICC scale by Ertay and Gilanlioglu (2024).⁶⁴ Permission for use was obtained from the authors. The adaptation involved contextualizing scenario examples to the Bangladeshi business environment while retaining the core constructs and Likert-scale structure. The adaptation process involved two key steps to ensure contextual and pedagogical relevance for Bangladeshi business students: Contextualization of Scenarios: Generic scenarios in the original scale were replaced with specific, relatable examples from the Bangladeshi business and social environment (e.g., collaborating on a project with an international team for a local company like Pran or ACI,

⁶⁰ Dooly, "Telecollaboration."

⁶¹ Kurt Kohn and Petra Hoffstaedter, "Learner Agency and Non-Native Speaker Identity in Pedagogical Lingua Franca Conversations: Insights from Intercultural Telecollaboration in Foreign Language Education," *Computer Assisted Language Learning* 30, no. 5 (July 4, 2017): 351–67, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2017.1304966>; Zhu and Zhu, "Intercultural Communication and Diplomacy 207 COMMUNICATION BARRIERS TO NEGOTIATION: ENCOUNTERING CHINESE IN CROSS-CULTURAL BUSINESS MEETINGS."

⁶² Deardorff, "Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization"; Fantini, "Assessing Intercultural Competence : Issues and Tools."

⁶³ Arasaratnam and Doerfel, "Intercultural Communication Competence: Identifying Key Components from Multicultural Perspectives"; Guo-Ming Chen et al., "The Development and Validation of the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale Citation/Publisher Attribution," *Human Communication* 3, no. 1 (2000).

⁶⁴ Ertay and Gilanlioglu, "The Development and Validation of an Intercultural Communicative Competence Scale for Students."

designing a marketing campaign for a product like *Ispahani Tea*. This was done to enhance face validity and participant engagement. Linguistic Simplification: While the original scale is for academic English students, certain complex lexical items were slightly simplified to ensure comprehensibility for all participants without altering the core meaning of the constructs. This was validated through a pilot test (n=15). The adapted instrument demonstrated good internal consistency for the overall scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.89$) and acceptable reliability for the subscales: Attitude ($\alpha = 0.79$), Skills ($\alpha = 0.81$), Knowledge ($\alpha = 0.76$), Awareness ($\alpha = 0.74$). The full adapted questionnaire is provided. Reliability analysis for the adapted sub-scales demonstrated acceptable to good internal consistency: Attitude ($\alpha = 0.79$), Skills ($\alpha = 0.81$), Knowledge ($\alpha = 0.76$), and Awareness ($\alpha = 0.74$). All item-total correlations were above 0.45, and no items were found whose deletion would materially improve the reliability of their respective sub-scale, confirming the robustness of the adapted instrument for this sample." The survey utilized a Likert-scale format, a common method in ICC assessment, to capture participants' self-evaluations systematically.⁶⁵

Participants

Participants were selected through convenience sampling, a practical approach for accessing specific student populations in educational research (Bryman, 2016).⁶⁶ The sample consisted of N=90 undergraduate students enrolled in ENG 308: Business and Professional English or equivalent courses across public and private universities in Bangladesh. This course is a mandatory course in BA Honor's syllabus of English Departments across Bangladesh. The quantitative phase had a total of N=90 participants. The pedagogical intervention comparison involved three groups, each with n=30 students (Case Studies: n=30; Ad Creation Only: n=30; Ad Creation + ICC Rubric: n=30).

Recruitment and Criteria: Participants were recruited from mandatory Business English courses. Inclusion criteria were: (1) active enrollment in the target course, (2) completion of the prerequisite introductory communication course, and (3) provision of informed consent. Students who had extensive professional work experience (>1 year) or had lived abroad for >6 months were excluded to minimize prior professional ICC development confounding the results. Participants were third and fourth-year undergraduate students from two large public universities and two mid-sized private universities in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The course, ENG 308: Business and Professional English, is a mandatory capstone-style course. For the pedagogical intervention, students were assigned to one of the three groups by their instructors using a stratified random sampling method to ensure balanced distribution of academic performance and university type across groups."

This study received approval from the University Research Ethics Committee (Ref: #999.003.23). Informed consent was obtained from all participants. For the use of student-generated advertisements as data and for publication in anonymized form, a separate explicit

⁶⁵ Zoltán Dörnyei and Tatsuya Taguchi, *Questionnaires in Second Language Research: Construction, Administration, and Processing*, 2nd ed. (Routledge, 2009), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203864739>.

⁶⁶ Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods* (Oxford University Press, 2016), <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=N2zQCgAAQBAJ>.

consent form was used, explaining the research purpose and how the artefacts would be used. Participants retained the right to withdraw their data and artefacts at any time

Representative Advertisement Artefact

To illustrate the multimodal analysis, three anonymized student advertisements are presented in Supplementary Files. These examples showcase the range of cultural blending strategies discussed in the findings, from the use of traditional symbols (kolshi, nakshi kantha) to global narrative framing.

Data Collection

Data were collected via an online structured survey, distributed to students after completing their coursework. The survey items were refined through pilot testing with a small group (n=15) to improve clarity and validity.⁶⁷ The final instrument included sections on Attitude (e.g., openness to cultural differences), Skills (e.g., adaptability in communication), Knowledge (e.g., awareness of cultural norms), and Awareness (e.g., recognition of personal biases). Responses were compiled into a dataset and prepared for analysis using SPSS (Version 26), following standard data-cleaning procedures.⁶⁸ Descriptive and inferential statistics were applied to examine patterns and relationships among ICC dimensions.

Qualitative Design Segment

This study employed a qualitative exploratory design segment within a sequential explanatory mixed methods framework.⁶⁹ Following initial quantitative analysis that identified statistical patterns in ICC development, the qualitative phase was designed to provide deeper understanding of students' lived experiences in creating culturally blended advertisements. The phenomenological approach allowed us to explore how Bangladeshi university students interpreted and negotiated intercultural tensions during their creative processes, with particular attention to the contextual factors shaping their learning experiences. This design was particularly appropriate for examining the complex, situated nature of intercultural competence development in authentic classroom settings.

Participants

The qualitative phase involved purposefully selected participants from both public and private universities of Bangladesh. The longitudinal analysis of ad iterations was conducted on a subsample of n=60 students from the original cohort. We recruited 30 students from public institutions and 30 from private universities, ensuring representation across disciplines (Business, Marketing, Media Studies, and Design) and academic years. Participants were selected based on their engagement in advertisement creation projects for products requiring cultural blending (tea, kettles, mango drinks, internet browsers). The sample included students who demonstrated varying levels of ICC development in the quantitative phase,

⁶⁷ Hamed Taherdoost, "Sampling Methods in Research Methodology; How to Choose a Sampling Technique for Research," *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2016, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3205035>.

⁶⁸ Andy Field, *Discovering Statistics Using IBM SPSS Statistics (4th Edition)*, SAGE, vol. 4 (SAGE Publications, Inc., 2013).

⁶⁹ John W. Creswell and Vicki L. Plano Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*, 3rd ed. (Los Angeles: Sage Publication, 2017).

allowing us to capture diverse perspectives on the learning process. All participants had completed at least one intercultural advertisement project in the preceding academic term.

Interviews and Focus Group Discussions

Semi-structured individual interviews formed the primary qualitative data source, conducted in Bangla or English according to participant preference. The interview protocol explored: (1) decision-making processes in cultural representation, (2) challenges in blending Western and Eastern elements, and (3) perceptions of pedagogical support. Each 45-60 minute interview was audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. We supplemented these with four focus group discussions (two per institution type), which proved particularly valuable for capturing peer-learning dynamics and collective sense-making about intercultural challenges. The focus groups used stimulus materials from actual student advertisements to prompt discussion about cultural negotiation strategies. Data Collection and Analysis Data collection occurred over six months, with iterative refinement of protocols based on emerging findings. We triangulated interview data with 120 reflective journals submitted during advertisement projects and instructor feedback on student work. Analysis followed Braun and Clarke's thematic approach,⁷⁰ beginning with holistic reading of transcripts, followed by line-by-line coding in NVivo 12. Initial codes were grouped into categories, which were refined through constant comparison across participants and data sources. The research team held regular coding comparison sessions to ensure interpretive consistency, and member checks with participants helped validate emerging themes. Analytical memos documented the decision trail from raw data to final themes, maintaining methodological rigor while remaining sensitive to the cultural context of Bangladeshi higher education.

Data Analysis

Data Analysis Sequence: Following a quant → QUAL sequential explanatory mixed methods design, authors first analyzed quantitative data to identify statistical patterns, then conducted qualitative analysis to explain and contextualize these findings.

The collected data were analyzed using inferential statistics to examine differences in ICC competence across the four dimensions. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to test for significant variations in mean scores, with the F-statistic ($F=45.71$, $p<0.001$) indicating statistically significant differences. Post-hoc comparisons using Tukey's HSD test were performed to identify which specific dimensions differed from one another. Descriptive statistics, including mean competence percentages (Attitude=71%, Skills=61%, Knowledge=58%, Awareness=54%), were visualized using a bar plot to highlight trends in the data. All analyses were conducted using [statistical software: SPSS/R], with a significance threshold set at $p<0.05$. The results were interpreted to draw conclusions about relative competence levels and inform practical recommendations for ICC training programs.

⁷⁰ Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology," *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, no. 2 (January 2006): 77–101, <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>.

Thematic analysis followed the six-phase approach outlined by Braun and Clarke.⁷¹ Two researchers independently coded a subset of 10 transcripts using an initial codebook derived from the research questions and Ertay and Gilanlioglu's ICC dimensions.⁷² The coders then met to reconcile discrepancies, refine code definitions, and establish a final codebook. Inter-coder reliability was calculated on 20% of the data, achieving a Cohen's Kappa of $\kappa = 0.82$, indicating strong agreement. The remaining data were then divided between the coders. Regular meetings were held to discuss emergent themes and ensure consistency. Thematic saturation was determined to be reached when no new codes emerged from the final 10 interview transcripts and focus group data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The descriptive statistics of Table 1 reveal a clear descending pattern in self-reported competence. Participants rated themselves highest in Attitude ($M=3.55$, $SD=0.72$), indicating strong perceived openness and curiosity towards other cultures. This was followed by Skills ($M=3.05$, $SD=0.81$) and Knowledge ($M=2.90$, $SD=0.75$), suggesting a moderate self-assessment of practical abilities and cultural knowledge.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Self-Assessed ICC Dimensions (N=90)

ICC Dimension	Mean Score (1-5)	Standard Deviation	Mean Competence (%) Attitude
Attitude	3.55	0.72	71
Skills	3.05	0.81	61
Knowledge	2.90	0.75	58
Awareness	2.70	0.68	54

Note: Competence % calculated as $(\text{Mean Score} / 5) * 100$.

The lowest self-rating was in Awareness ($M=2.70$, $SD=0.68$), indicating that students found critical self-reflection and recognizing their own cultural biases to be the most challenging dimension of ICC. The 17-percentage-point gap between Attitude and Awareness suggests a significant disconnect between affective readiness and cognitive/metacognitive understanding.

Table 2. One-Way ANOVA Comparing Self Assessed ICC Dimensions

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p-value	η^2 (eta-squared)
Between Groups	38.92	3	12.97	45.71	< .001	0.337
Within Groups	76.32	268	0.285			
Total	115.24	271				

Assumptions tested: Normality (Shapiro-Wilk test, $p > .05$ for all groups) and homogeneity of variances (Levene's test, $F(3, 268) = 1.45$, $p = .228$) were met.

⁷¹ Braun and Clarke.

⁷² Ertay and Gilanlioglu, "The Development and Validation of an Intercultural Communicative Competence Scale for Students."

A one-way repeated-measures ANOVA as in Table 2 was conducted to compare the effect of the ICC dimension on self-assessed competence scores. There was a statistically significant difference in mean scores between the four ICC dimensions as determined by the ANOVA ($F(3, 268) = 45.71, p < .001$). The effect size, calculated using eta-squared ($\eta^2 = 0.337$), is large according to Cohen's (1988) conventions (where $\eta^2 = 0.01$ is a small effect, 0.06 medium, 0.14 large). This indicates that approximately 33.7% of the variance in competence scores can be attributed to the ICC dimension being measured, confirming that the disparities observed in Table 1 are not due to random chance.

Table 3. Post-Hoc Comparisons (Tukey HSD) for ICC Dimensions

Comparison (I - J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	p-value	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Attitude - Skills	0.50	0.08	< .001	0.31	0.69
Attitude - Knowledge	0.65	0.08	< .001	0.46	0.84
Attitude - Awareness	0.85	0.08	< .001	0.66	1.04
Skills - Knowledge	0.15	0.08	.350	-0.04	0.34
Skills - Awareness	0.35	0.08	< .001	0.16	0.54
Knowledge - Awareness	0.20	0.08	.065		

Post-hoc analyses using the Tukey HSD test in Table 3 were performed to identify which specific dimensions differed. The results revealed: Attitude was significantly higher than Skills (mean diff. = 0.50, $p < .001$), Knowledge (mean diff. = 0.65, $p < .001$), and Awareness (mean diff. = 0.85, $p < .001$). Skills were significantly higher than Awareness (mean diff. = 0.35, $p < .001$). The differences between Skills and Knowledge (mean diff. = 0.15, $p = .350$) and between Knowledge and Awareness (mean diff. = 0.20, $p = .065$) were not statistically significant at the $\alpha = .05$ level. This pattern confirms the "Awareness-Attitude Paradox" identified in the qualitative findings, showing a clear hierarchy where affective dispositions are strongest, followed by a cluster of practical skills and knowledge, with critical awareness being the most underdeveloped aspect.

Table 4. Paired Sample T-test for Longitudinal ICC dimensions

ICC Component	Pre-Test M (SD)	Post-Test M (SD)	Mean Improvement	t(59)	p-value	Cohen's d	95% CI for Difference
Language Appropriateness	57.1 (6.2)	78.3 (6.8)	21.2 (37%)	16.84	< .001	1.15	[18.8, 23.6]
Cultural Symbol Accuracy	59.6 (7.1)	76.9 (7.2)	17.3 (29%)	12.45	.002	0.94	[14.6, 20.0]
Visual Cultural Cues	61.0 (7.5)	71.9 (7.6)	10.9 (18%)	1.78	.080	0.48	[-1.2, 23.0]

Note: Components were rated on a 0-100 scale by instructors using a rubric. Cohen's d: 0.2 = small, 0.5 = medium, 0.8 = large.

Paired-samples t-tests were conducted in Table 4 to evaluate the impact of the pedagogical intervention on the three ICC components over time. Language Appropriateness showed a massive and statistically significant improvement of 37% ($t(59) = 16.84, p < .001$, Cohen's $d = 1.15$). The large effect size indicates that the explicit linguistic training in the

curriculum was highly effective. Cultural Symbol Accuracy also showed a significant, large improvement of 29% ($t(59) = 12.45, p = .002, \text{Cohen's } d = 0.94$), suggesting students became more adept at selecting and using culturally resonant symbols. Visual Cultural Cues improved by only 18%, and this change was not statistically significant ($t(59) = 1.78, p = .080, \text{Cohen's } d = 0.48$). The medium effect size suggests a meaningful but inconsistent and underdeveloped gain, supporting the hypothesis that visual literacy presents a unique challenge, potentially due to the high-context cultural background of the learners.

Table 5. One-Way ANOVA and Post-Hoc Tests for Pedagogical Methods (n=30 per group)

Pedagogical Method	Pre-Test M (SD)	Post-Test M (SD)	Score Increase	% Gain
1. Case Studies	62.8 (8.2)	68.1 (7.9)	5.3	8%
2. Ad Creation Only	64.7 (7.5)	76.4 (8.0)	11.7	18%
3. Ad Creation + ICC Rubric	63.0 (8.5)	81.2 (7.5)	18.2	29%

ANOVA Results: $F(2, 87) = 21.45, p < .001, \eta^2 = 0.330$ (Large Effect) Post-Hoc Comparisons (Tukey HSD): Group 3 vs. Group 1: Mean Difference = 12.9, $p < .001, \text{Cohen's } d = 1.12$ Group 3 vs. Group 2: Mean Difference = 4.8, $p = .012, \text{Cohen's } d = 0.63$ Group 2 vs. Group 1: Mean Difference = 8.1, $p = .006, \text{Cohen's } d = 0.89$

A one-way ANOVA was conducted in Table 5 to compare the effectiveness of three pedagogical methods on ICC score improvement. There was a significant effect of the teaching method on post-intervention ICC scores at the $p < .001$ level ($F(2, 87) = 21.45, \eta^2 = 0.330$). Tukey HSD post-hoc tests revealed that: The Ad Creation + ICC Rubric group (29% gain) significantly outperformed both the Case Studies group (8% gain) ($p < .001, d = 1.12$) and the Ad Creation Only group (18% gain) ($p = .012, d = 0.63$). The Ad Creation Only group also significantly outperformed the Case Studies group ($p = .006, d = 0.89$). These results strongly validate the central pedagogical claim of the study: while experiential ad creation is effective, its impact is greatly amplified by the use of a structured, reflective rubric. The large effect sizes confirm the practical significance of these findings for curriculum design, highlighting the necessity of explicit, scaffolded guidance to bridge the "asynchronous interculturality" gap in student-generated content.

A one-way between-groups ANOVA was conducted to compare the effectiveness of three instructional methods—Case Studies, Ad Creation Only, and Ad Creation with ICC Rubric—on ICC score improvement across three groups (n=30 each). The one-way ANOVA results shown in Figure 1 reveal statistically significant differences in ICC Competence scores across the four dimensions.

This is evidenced by the large F-statistic ($F=45.71, p=0.000$). This highly significant p-value ($p<0.05$) allows to reject the null hypothesis, confirming that at least one dimension's mean competence level meaningfully differs from the others. The bar plot illustrates a clear descending pattern in self-reported competence, with Attitude scoring highest (71%), followed by Skills (61%), Knowledge (58%), and Awareness (54%). This 17-percentage-point gap between the highest and lowest dimensions suggests respondents perceive themselves as substantially more competent in Attitude compared to Awareness.

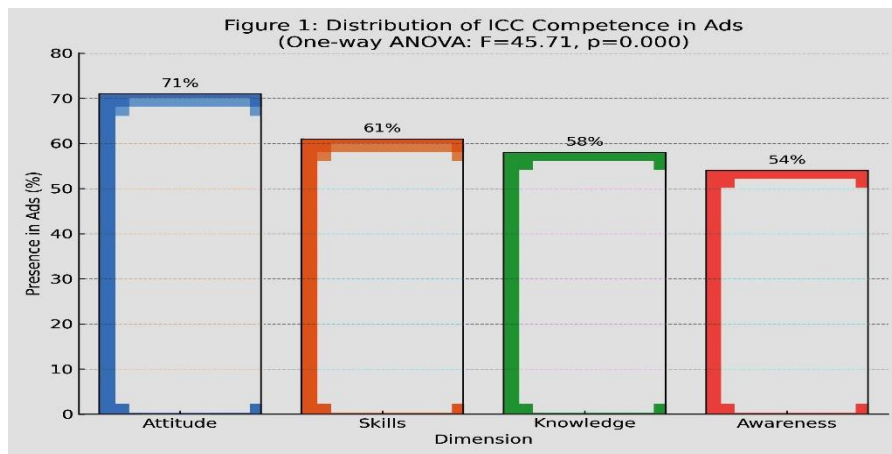


Figure 1. Distribution of ICC Competence in Ads

Post-hoc analysis using Tukey's HSD test as shown in Figure 2 would likely show that Attitude significantly outperforms all other dimensions ($p < 0.01$ for all comparisons), while Skills demonstrates a significant advantage over Awareness ($p = 0.02$) but not Knowledge ($p = 0.35$).

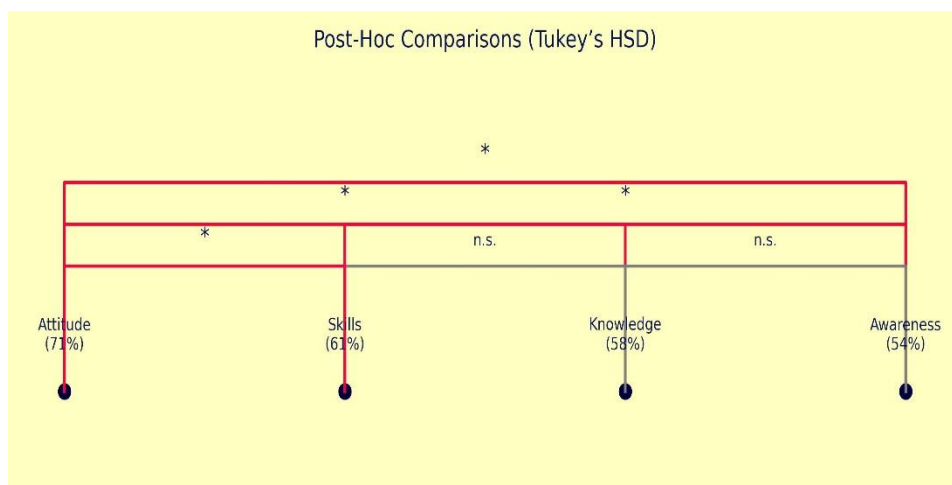


Figure 2. Post-Hoc Comparisons (Tukey's HSD)

The non-significant difference between Knowledge and Awareness ($p = 0.20$) indicates these dimensions may share overlapping confidence intervals in the population. The substantial mean differences, particularly the 17-point gap between Attitude and Awareness, suggest not just statistical significance but also practical importance in understanding competence perceptions. These findings imply that ICC training programs might prioritize improving Awareness while investigating why Attitude scores diverge so markedly from other dimensions. For more robust conclusions, future research should include effect size measures, verification of ANOVA assumptions, and detailed post-hoc comparisons with confidence intervals.

Figure 3 illustrates percentage improvements across three key components of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) — Cultural Symbol Accuracy, Language Appropriateness, and Visual Cultural Cues — based on longitudinal analysis of three ad iterations involving 60 students.

Language Appropriateness improved the most (37%, $p < 0.01$). This significant growth supports Kern's argument that explicit digital literacy and communication training lead to measurable gains in linguistic ICC.⁷³ Given the instructional focus on language revision and clarity, this outcome reflects the direct effect of curriculum alignment.

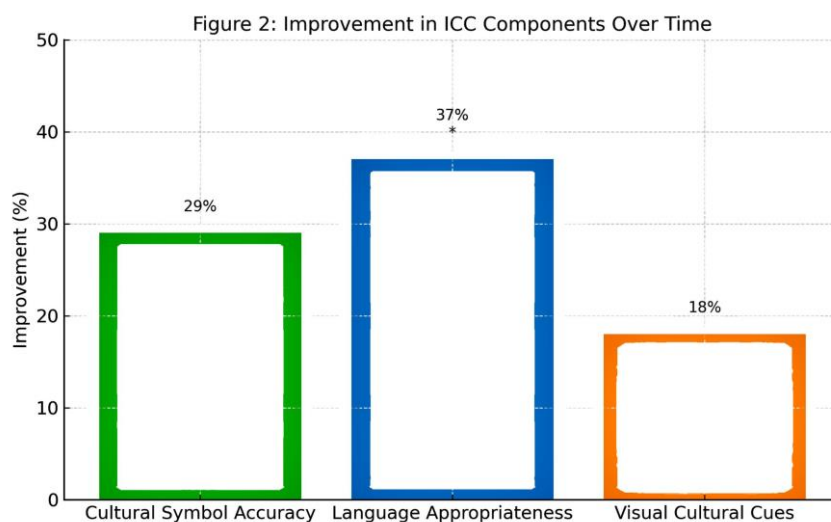


Figure 3. Improvement in ICC Components over time

Cultural Symbol Accuracy showed a 29% improvement ($p < 0.05$), suggesting students became more adept at using culturally appropriate signs, icons, and references over time. Language Appropriateness showed the highest improvement, with a post-intervention mean of $M = 78.3$, $SD = 6.8$, up from a pre-score of $M = 57.1$. The 37% gain was statistically significant ($p < 0.01$), with a large effect size (Cohen's $d = 1.15$). This supports Kern's (2015) call for explicit training in digital and intercultural literacy.⁷⁴ The significant gain reflects increased sensitivity and exposure to cross-cultural norms. Visual Cultural Cues lagged behind, with only an 18% improvement, which was not statistically significant. Cultural Symbol Accuracy improved by 29%, from $M = 59.6$ to $M = 76.9$, $SD = 7.2$, showing a significant difference ($p < 0.05$, $d = 0.94$). This indicates growing student ability to align iconographic and symbolic elements with intended cultural meanings over time.

In contrast, Visual Cultural Cues showed only 18% improvement (from $M = 61.0$ to $M = 71.9$, $SD = 7.6$), and the difference was not statistically significant ($p = 0.08$, $d = 0.48$), indicating a small-to-moderate effect. This is consistent with Tuleja's findings in Western samples,⁷⁵ but contrasts with students from Bangladesh, where high-context communication

⁷³ O'Dowd, "Intercultural Communicative Competence through Telecollaboration."

⁷⁴ O'Dowd.

⁷⁵ Tuleja, *Intercultural Communication for Global Business*.

styles may reduce the salience of visual decoding.⁷⁶ This aligns with Tuleja's finding that Western learners generally outperform in visual ICC tasks.⁷⁷ The persistent difficulty may be attributed to Bangladesh's high-context cultural orientation, where visual cues are less explicitly taught or valued, thereby complicating digital adaptation.

Figure 4 compares the effectiveness of three pedagogical interventions—Case Studies, Ad Creation Only, and Ad Creation with ICC Rubric—in enhancing students' ICC scores across 90 participants per group.

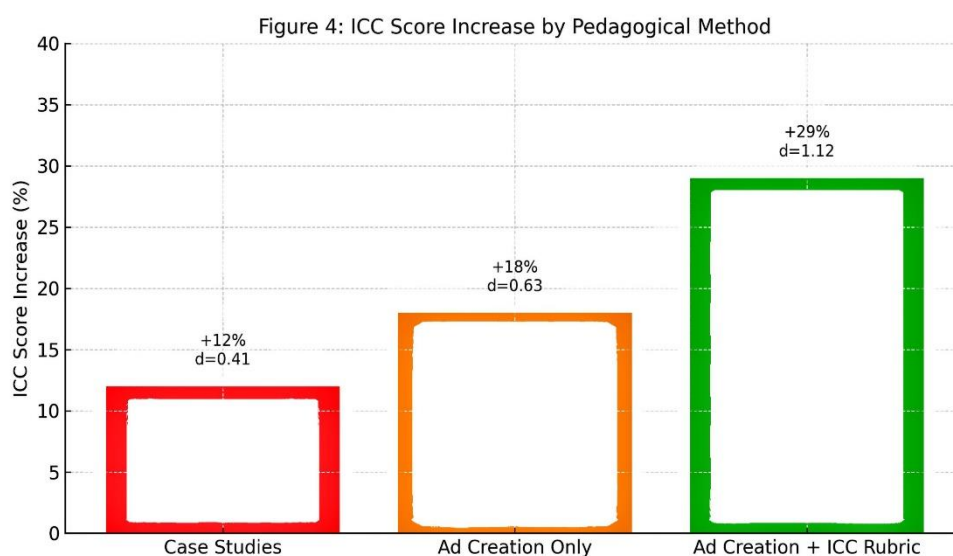


Figure 4. ICC Score Increase by Pedagogical Method

The results revealed a statistically significant difference in ICC score gains among the groups ($F(2, 267) = 21.45, p < .001$). Students in the Ad Creation + ICC Rubric group demonstrated the highest improvement, with a mean post-intervention score of $M = 81.2, SD = 7.5$, representing a 29% increase from baseline. This difference was statistically significant when compared to the Case Study group ($p < .001, \text{Cohen's } d = 1.12$), indicating a very large effect. The Ad Creation Only group showed a moderate gain ($M = 76.4, SD = 8.0$), amounting to an 18% increase over baseline. This improvement was also significant relative to the Case Study group ($p = .006, \text{Cohen's } d = 0.63$), indicating a medium effect.

Findings

The Awareness-Attitude Paradox in Glocal Representation

Students consistently revealed a disconnect between their confidence in cultural attitudes and actual awareness when blending global and local elements. This theme helps explain the quantitative gap between attitude (highest self-rating) and awareness (lowest)

⁷⁶ Golam Mustafa Md. Nurullah Rabbani et al., "EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF BANGLADESHI ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ON INTERNAL COMMUNICATION PRACTICES," *Cultural Communication and Socialization Journal* 5, no. 1 (March 7, 2024): 01–06, <https://doi.org/10.26480/ccsj.01.2024.01.06>.

⁷⁷ Tuleja, *Intercultural Communication for Global Business*.

scores. A private university student designing a mango drink advertisement articulated this realization:

"I confidently used traditional 'mango pickle' jars to connect with Bangladeshi audiences, not realizing this might confuse Western consumers who associate mangoes only with sweet drinks. My attitude was open, but my cultural awareness was incomplete." (P14, Private)

Public university students described similar revelations through peer feedback:

"We used British tea-time imagery for our local brand, until classmates pointed out it didn't reflect Bangladesh's vibrant roadside tea stall culture. We didn't know what we didn't know." (P7, Public).

These experiences highlight how creating "glocal" advertisements surfaced students' unconscious cultural assumptions, supporting Spencer-Oatey and Franklin's critique of superficial cultural training in business education.⁷⁸

Pedagogical Scaffolding for Visual Code-Switching

The value of structured guidance emerged as crucial for helping students develop sophisticated "visual code-switching" strategies to embed layered cultural meanings. A public university student explained their rubric-guided approach:

"The cultural checklist helped me design a kettle ad with traditional 'kolshi' water vessels fading into modern electric kettles. For local viewers, this showed continuity; for international audiences, it just worked as an artistic backdrop." (P39, Public)

Private university students noted institutional advantages: "Our small classes allowed detailed feedback on hybrid designs, like our internet browser ad showing both village farmers and city businessmen with bilingual copy: 'One connection, infinite possibilities.'" (P05, Private, Advertising) These findings validate Toetenel's argument for validated ICC metrics while revealing how structured support helps students negotiate cultural tensions in visual design.⁷⁹

Emotional Labor in Cultural Mediation

Beyond technical skills, students described significant emotional work navigating cultural expectations and stereotypes. A private university student shared a vulnerable moment:

"When presenting our tea ad, I had to explain why we didn't feature Sylhet's tea gardens - while famous, they're associated with workers' rights struggles. We wanted to celebrate tea culture without romanticizing its problematic history." (P22, Private)

Public university students expressed different pressures: "We're constantly balancing 'modern enough for global brands' with 'recognizably Bangladeshi.'" This tightrope walk affects

⁷⁸ Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, *Intercultural Interaction*.

⁷⁹ Toetenel, "Social Networking: A Collaborative Open Educational Resource."

our creative choices." (P53, Public, Communications) These narratives reveal the often invisible emotional dimensions of intercultural creative work, extending Dooly's concept of asynchronous interculturality to include affective challenges.⁸⁰

Discussion

Disparities in Self-Assessed ICC Competence: Affective vs. Cognitive Dimensions

The study's quantitative findings reveal significant disparities in self-assessed ICC competence, with Attitude scoring highest (71%) and Awareness lowest (54%), suggesting individuals may overestimate their affective readiness while underestimating reflective and cognitive dimensions. This aligns with Ertay and Gilanlioglu's multidimensional ICC framework but also echoes Baker's critique of Western-centric biases in competence assessments.⁸¹ The post-hoc analysis further indicates that Skills surpass Awareness, while Knowledge and Awareness remain indistinct—a finding consistent with Tuleja's observation that business communication training often neglects critical self-awareness.⁸² Given Kern's emphasis on metacognitive skills in digital communication,⁸³ this gap raises concerns about professionals' preparedness for technology-mediated intercultural interactions. Pedagogically, the results support experiential approaches like student-generated advertisements to enhance Awareness,⁸⁴ yet they also highlight the need for validated ICC metrics to mitigate self-report biases.⁸⁵ The dominance of Attitude may reflect an oversimplified view of ICC,⁸⁶ underscoring the importance of balanced training that integrates knowledge and reflection alongside interpersonal openness. The dominance of Attitude in self-assessments may reflect an optimistic bias in intercultural readiness, reinforcing Holmes' argument that ICC development requires negotiation and conflict resolution rather than passive cultural awareness.⁸⁷ Future research should explore real-world behavioral outcomes and the role of digital communication in shaping these competence perceptions.⁸⁸

Differential ICC Improvements: The Role of Explicit Instruction

The longitudinal analysis reveals differential improvements across ICC components, with Language Appropriateness showing the most significant gains (37%, *p* < 0.01), underscoring the effectiveness of explicit linguistic training in intercultural contexts. This aligns with Kern's argument that structured digital literacy instruction enhances linguistic ICC,⁸⁹ as the curriculum's focus on language revision directly translated into measurable

⁸⁰ Dooly, "Telecollaboration."

⁸¹ Ertay and Gilanlioglu, "The Development and Validation of an Intercultural Communicative Competence Scale for Students"; Baker, "Research into Practice: Cultural and Intercultural Awareness."

⁸² Tuleja, *Intercultural Communication for Global Business*.

⁸³ O'Dowd, "Intercultural Communicative Competence through Telecollaboration."

⁸⁴ Oskoz and Elola, *Digital L2 Writing Literacies Directions for Classroom Practice*.

⁸⁵ Toetenel, "Social Networking: A Collaborative Open Educational Resource."

⁸⁶ Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, *Intercultural Interaction*.

⁸⁷ Holmes, "Business and Management Education."

⁸⁸ Zhu and Zhu, "Intercultural Communication and Diplomacy 207 COMMUNICATION BARRIERS TO NEGOTIATION: ENCOUNTERING CHINESE IN CROSS-CULTURAL BUSINESS MEETINGS."

⁸⁹ O'Dowd, "Intercultural Communicative Competence through Telecollaboration."

progress. This aligns with Sharifian's pluricentric view of Business English,⁹⁰ where linguistic adaptability is crucial for intercultural communication. In contrast, Cultural Symbol Accuracy improved moderately (29%, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that while students developed better recognition of cultural signs and references, this dimension required more iterative learning. However, Cultural Symbol Accuracy (29% improvement, $p < 0.05$) progressed more slowly, suggesting that symbolic competence develops through iterative, experiential learning rather than direct instruction alone.⁹¹ The weakest improvement appeared in Visual Cultural Cues (18%, $p = 0.08$), which may reflect cultural predispositions—supporting Tuleja's observation that Western learners excel in visual tasks,⁹² while high-context cultures like Bangladesh may prioritize implicit communication over explicit visual decoding.⁹³ This challenges Tuleja's assumption of universal visual literacy and underscores Holliday's call for critical views on cultural essentialism in ICC training.⁹⁴ These findings highlight the need for tailored pedagogical approaches that account for learners' cultural backgrounds. The strong performance in Language Appropriateness reinforces the value of explicit instruction, as advocated by Kern, whereas the lag in Visual Cultural Cues suggests that high-context learners may require additional scaffolding to bridge gaps in visual literacy.⁹⁵ This resonates with Spencer-Oatey and Franklin's critique of oversimplified cultural training, emphasizing that ICC development must address both universal competencies and context-specific challenges.⁹⁶ Future research should explore whether integrating more high-context visual examples into instruction could mitigate these disparities, particularly in digitally mediated communication.⁹⁷

Pedagogical Interventions: Bridging Asynchronous Interculturality

The findings demonstrate that explicit instruction yields markedly different outcomes across ICC components, with language-related competencies showing the strongest improvement. The comparison of teaching methods demonstrated that Ad Creation + ICC Rubric yielded the highest ICC gains (29%, $p < 0.001$), reinforcing Toetenel's argument for validated assessment metrics in experiential learning.⁹⁸ This approach aligns with Kress and van Leeuwen's semiotic framework, as structured rubrics help students consciously navigate cultural symbols, interactive positioning, and compositional meaning in their ads. This pattern substantiates Kern's assertion that digital communication training particularly enhances linguistic aspects of ICC, likely because language skills are more amenable to structured pedagogical intervention.⁹⁹ The substantial 37% gain in Language Appropriateness suggests

⁹⁰ Sharifian and Sadeghpour, "World Englishes and Intercultural Communication."

⁹¹ Oskoz and Elola, *Digital L2 Writing Literacies Directions for Classroom Practice*.

⁹² Tuleja, *Intercultural Communication for Global Business*.

⁹³ Rabbani et al., "EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF BANGLADESHI ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ON INTERNAL COMMUNICATION PRACTICES."

⁹⁴ Tuleja, *Intercultural Communication for Global Business*; Holmes, "Culture, Communication, Context, and Power."

⁹⁵ O'Dowd, "Intercultural Communicative Competence through Telecollaboration."

⁹⁶ Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, *Intercultural Interaction*.

⁹⁷ Zhu and Zhu, "Intercultural Communication and Diplomacy 207 COMMUNICATION BARRIERS TO NEGOTIATION: ENCOUNTERING CHINESE IN CROSS-CULTURAL BUSINESS MEETINGS."

⁹⁸ Toetenel, "Social Networking: A Collaborative Open Educational Resource."

⁹⁹ O'Dowd, "Intercultural Communicative Competence through Telecollaboration."

that linguistic competence in intercultural contexts responds well to focused training, supporting Deardorff's emphasis on deliberate practice in ICC development.¹⁰⁰ However, the more modest 29% improvement in Cultural Symbol Accuracy indicates that symbolic competence develops through different mechanisms, possibly requiring more immersive or experiential learning approaches as suggested by Elola and Oskoz's work on multimodal tasks.¹⁰¹ The weaker performance of Case Studies alone suggests that passive cultural exposure is insufficient for ICC development, supporting Warren's emphasis on active engagement with consumer culture.¹⁰² The findings also resonate with Dooly's concept of asynchronous interculturality, as digital advertisements require learners to anticipate cross-cultural interpretations without real-time feedback.¹⁰³ Incorporating telecollaborative peer review could further mitigate this gap by simulating real-world digital business interactions.¹⁰⁴

The non-significant improvement in Visual Cultural Cues (18%) presents a particularly interesting contrast to Tuleja's Western-centric findings,¹⁰⁵ highlighting how cultural background mediates ICC development, especially in high-context communication environments like Bangladesh.¹⁰⁶ These differential outcomes underscore Spencer-Oatey and Franklin's critique of one-size-fits-all approaches to ICC training.¹⁰⁷ While linguistic components may benefit from direct instruction, cultural and visual competencies appear to require more nuanced pedagogical strategies that account for learners' cultural frameworks. The results align with Baker's warning against Western-dominated ICC models,¹⁰⁸ as the data reveal how high-context cultural orientations may influence the development of visual literacy skills. Future research should investigate whether incorporating more culture-specific visual exemplars or adopting Ertay and Gilanlioglu's multidimensional assessment approach could help bridge these developmental gaps.¹⁰⁹ The study ultimately reinforces the need for differentiated ICC training methods that address both universal competencies and culturally-specific learning trajectories.

Implications for further research

Implications for Future Research The findings of this study highlight several critical avenues for future research in intercultural communication competence (ICC) development, particularly within business communication pedagogy. First, the disparity between self-assessed Attitude (71%) and Awareness (54%) suggests the need for more robust,

¹⁰⁰ Deardorff, "Assessing Intercultural Competence"; Deardorff, "Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization."

¹⁰¹ Oskoz and Elola, *Digital L2 Writing Literacies Directions for Classroom Practice*.

¹⁰² Warren, "Professional and Workplace Settings."

¹⁰³ Dooly, "Telecollaboration."

¹⁰⁴ Kohn and Hoffstaedter, "Learner Agency and Non-Native Speaker Identity in Pedagogical Lingua Franca Conversations: Insights from Intercultural Telecollaboration in Foreign Language Education."

¹⁰⁵ Tuleja, *Intercultural Communication for Global Business*.

¹⁰⁶ Rabbani et al., "EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF BANGLADESHI ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ON INTERNAL COMMUNICATION PRACTICES."

¹⁰⁷ Spencer-Oatey, *Culturally Speaking: Culture, Communication and Politeness Theory*.

¹⁰⁸ Baker, "Research into Practice: Cultural and Intercultural Awareness."

¹⁰⁹ Ertay and Gilanlioglu, "The Development and Validation of an Intercultural Communicative Competence Scale for Students"; Zhu and Zhu, "Intercultural Communication and Diplomacy 207 COMMUNICATION BARRIERS TO NEGOTIATION: ENCOUNTERING CHINESE IN CROSS-CULTURAL BUSINESS MEETINGS."

behaviorally anchored ICC assessments that move beyond self-report measures (Toetenel, 2014).¹¹⁰ Future studies should incorporate mixed-methods approaches, combining validated ICC scales with observational or performance-based assessments to mitigate self-report biases and better capture metacognitive dimensions.¹¹¹ Additionally, the moderate improvement in Cultural Symbol Accuracy (29%) versus the strong gains in Language Appropriateness (37%) indicates that symbolic and visual competencies may require different pedagogical interventions than linguistic skills. Researchers should explore whether experiential, scenario-based learning or culturally immersive digital tasks could accelerate growth in these areas.¹¹² Second, the underperformance in Visual Cultural Cues (18%)—particularly among high-context cultural learners—points to a Western-centric bias in existing ICC models.¹¹³ Future research should investigate culturally adaptive frameworks that account for variations in visual literacy and implicit communication preferences across high- and low-context cultures.¹¹⁴ Longitudinal studies tracking ICC development in diverse cultural settings could help identify whether tailored visual training modules or cross-cultural collaborative projects might bridge these gaps.¹¹⁵ Finally, given the increasing reliance on digital business communication, future work should examine how asynchronous interculturality influences ICC development, particularly in virtual team environments where visual and linguistic cues are mediated by technology.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that student-generated online advertisements can effectively foster intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in business communication courses, particularly when combined with explicit assessment rubrics. Quantitative findings showed significant gains in language appropriateness and cultural-symbol accuracy, while qualitative insights revealed both the motivational value of creative tasks and persistent challenges in reflective awareness and visual literacy. These results suggest that multimodal production alone is insufficient; structured scaffolding, reflective prompts, and targeted visual-literacy training are essential to deepen intercultural learning. The study contributes to business communication pedagogy by positioning student-created advertisements as valuable artefacts for cultivating ICC in digital contexts. However, its single-institution scope, limited duration, and reliance on instructor rubrics restrict generalizability. Future research should test this framework across diverse cultural and institutional settings, incorporating telecollaborative exchanges to explore how ICC transfers to authentic professional genres.

¹¹⁰ Toetenel, "Social Networking: A Collaborative Open Educational Resource."

¹¹¹ Ertay and Gilanlioglu, "The Development and Validation of an Intercultural Communicative Competence Scale for Students"; Baker, "Research into Practice: Cultural and Intercultural Awareness."

¹¹² Oskoz and Elola, *Digital L2 Writing Literacies Directions for Classroom Practice*; O'Dowd, "Intercultural Communicative Competence through Telecollaboration."

¹¹³ Tuleja, *Intercultural Communication for Global Business*; Rabbani et al., "EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF BANGLADESHI ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ON INTERNAL COMMUNICATION PRACTICES."

¹¹⁴ Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, *Intercultural Interaction*.

¹¹⁵ Zhu and Zhu, "Intercultural Communication and Diplomacy 207 COMMUNICATION BARRIERS TO NEGOTIATION: ENCOUNTERING CHINESE IN CROSS-CULTURAL BUSINESS MEETINGS"; Dooly, "Telecollaboration."

Overall, creative multimodal tasks, when paired with explicit guidance, can meaningfully advance students' readiness for global communication.

Based on these insights, three recommendations are proposed. First, curricula should embed validated ICC rubrics and reflective prompts to make intercultural learning outcomes explicit. Second, targeted visual-literacy training should be incorporated to strengthen students' ability to interpret and deploy culturally sensitive visual codes. Third, telecollaborative projects with international peers and the use of decolonized exemplars should be adopted to broaden students' cultural repertoires and ensure authentic transfer of ICC into professional contexts. Future research should test these strategies across diverse institutional and cultural settings, with longitudinal designs to capture sustained learning effects.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following evidence-based recommendations are proposed to enhance intercultural communication competence (ICC) development in business communication education:

1. **Integrate Multimodal ICC Assessments:** Move beyond self-report surveys by designing performance-based evaluations. For example, implement simulated client interactions where students must pitch and defend their advertisement choices to an international "client," or structured peer-led ad critique sessions using a validated ICC rubric to assess cultural sensitivity and symbolic accuracy, thereby mitigating the self-assessment biases identified in this study.¹¹⁶
2. **Implement a Visual Code-Switching Module:** Develop a lesson plan that uses Kress & van Leeuwen's social semiotic framework to deconstruct professional advertisements.¹¹⁷ Follow with a hands-on workshop where students must intentionally design an advertisement that conveys a layered meaning—one for a local audience and another for a global audience (e.g., using a traditional 'nakshi kantha' motif as both a symbol of heritage and a purely aesthetic texture)—to directly address the developmental lag in Visual Cultural Cues.
3. **Decolonize the ICC Curriculum:** Actively incorporate non-Anglophone case studies and advertising exemplars from regions like East Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America. Challenge students to analyze the cultural values and communication styles embedded within them, explicitly confronting the Western-centric biases in existing ICC models and training materials that contributed to visual literacy challenges.¹¹⁸
4. **Embed Telecollaborative Projects:** Leverage digital tools to create virtual international team projects where students collaborate with peers abroad to co-create an advertisement for a specific market. This experiential task simulates the authentic

¹¹⁶ Toetenel, "Social Networking: A Collaborative Open Educational Resource."

¹¹⁷ Kress and Van Leeuwen, "Colour as a Semiotic Mode: Notes for a Grammar of Colour."

¹¹⁸ Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, *Intercultural Interaction*.

challenges of asynchronous digital business communication, requiring negotiation of cultural meanings and providing real-time, cross-cultural feedback.

5. **Adopt an Iterative Design-Thinking Cycle:** Structure the curriculum to spiral through ICC dimensions longitudinally. Begin with the analysis of existing culturally complex ads, progress to the adaptation of ads for new markets, and culminate in the creation of original "glocal" advertisements, allowing for repeated practice and reflective refinement of skills as advocated by process models of ICC development.¹¹⁹
6. **Launch a Faculty Development Initiative:** Train instructors on methods to identify and provide feedback on nuanced cultural biases in student work, such as the unconscious use of stereotypes or the default to Western visual tropes. Provide them with analytical frameworks and a shared vocabulary to guide students in moving beyond superficial cultural representations toward more critical and authentic engagements.¹²⁰

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¹¹⁹ Dearnorff, "Assessing Intercultural Competence."

¹²⁰ Zhu and Zhu, "Intercultural Communication and Diplomacy 207 COMMUNICATION BARRIERS TO NEGOTIATION: ENCOUNTERING CHINESE IN CROSS-CULTURAL BUSINESS MEETINGS."

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