

Empowering Junior High School English Teachers to Integrate Intercultural Communicative Competence in English Language Teaching

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ABSTRACT

Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) has become an essential component of English language teaching as educators are expected to prepare learners to communicate effectively in culturally diverse contexts. However, many English teachers still emphasize language proficiency but struggle to incorporate intercultural perspectives into their classroom instruction. The community service was designed to strengthen the Intercultural Communicative Competence of junior high school English instructors through a participatory professional development program. The program was conducted with English teachers from five junior high schools in Gianyar Regency, Bali, Indonesia. The program ran for 8 weeks, incorporating collaborative workshops, lesson planning, classroom mentorship, reflective practice, and peer discussion. Pre-test and post-test, classroom observations, evaluation surveys, and semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data. Results showed that all aspects of ICC improved significantly. The overall mean ICC score rose from 63.5 on the pre-test to 88.0 on the post-test. Teachers also had very positive perceptions of the curriculum, reporting enhanced professional confidence, stronger lesson-planning abilities, and greater preparedness to adopt intercultural pedagogy in English classrooms. The study finds that participatory professional development is an effective and sustainable approach to developing teachers' intercultural competence and supporting culturally responsive English language instruction.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of globalization, digital communication, and international mobility has radically changed the role of English in education. English is no longer viewed as a foreign language

to be learned for academic success or occupational goals. English is an international language that enables communication with people from diverse linguistic, cultural, and social backgrounds. As interactions take place across national and cultural boundaries, English language education is expected to prepare learners not only to communicate accurately and fluently but also to interact respectfully and effectively with people whose cultural values, beliefs, and communication practices differ from their own (Ahmed & Pardaev, 2025). Therefore, the objectives of English Language Teaching (ELT) have shifted from the development of linguistic competence to that of intercultural communicative competence (ICC), one of the core competencies required of learners in the 21st century.

Intercultural Communicative Competence is the ability to interact successfully and appropriately with people from different cultural backgrounds, demonstrating openness, empathy, critical cultural awareness, and respect for diversity (Aminah et al., 2025). ICC does not regard language and culture as independent entities but rather sees language as integrated into cultural practices, social norms, and systems of meaning. Therefore, successful intercultural communication goes beyond grammar knowledge and communicative skills. It also includes the ability to interpret cultural perspectives, negotiate meaning, manage cultural differences, and critically reflect on one's own assumptions and beliefs (Stadnik, 2024). The development of ICC in the English language classroom encourages learners to value their own cultural identities and those of others, and promotes mutual understanding and reduces cultural stereotypes.

The increasing significance of ICC has been extensively recognized by educational academics, curriculum makers, and international organizations. Current paradigms of language education argue that successful language users should be able to act as intercultural speakers who can build meaningful interactions across cultures (Kalogerogianni, 2025), rather than merely copying native speakers. Therefore, intercultural learning has increasingly been incorporated into many national curricula as an important aspect of English instruction. It is the responsibility of English teachers to provide learning experiences that expose students to diverse cultural perspectives, foster intercultural dialogue, promote critical thinking, and enhance learners' capacity to communicate effectively in culturally varied contexts (Mantra et al., 2024). Such instructional approaches foster language proficiency and the development of global citizenship, social responsibility, and lifelong learning.

Despite these regulatory changes, the actual implementation of ICC in English classrooms remains problematic, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) environments. Classroom training tends to focus on language knowledge, vocabulary, grammatical precision, pronunciation, and examination preparation (Widiastuti et al., 2023), whereas intercultural learning is comparably less important. English textbooks in many schools offer very superficial cultural material, mostly about the cultures of English-speaking countries, and without allowing pupils to compare them with their own local surroundings. Consequently, learners have few opportunities to develop intercultural knowledge, critical cultural reflection, or the communicative skills needed to interact successfully with people from different cultural backgrounds (Harrison & Skrebneva, 2020; List et al., 2024). The inadequate integration of intercultural elements into classroom practice implies that many teachers need more support in converting theoretical conceptions of ICC into relevant pedagogical practices.

Teachers are at the center of facilitating intercultural learning as they decide how the curricular objectives are interpreted and implemented in classroom practice. Their views, knowledge, attitudes, and instructional judgments influence students' ability to experience culturally responsive learning at a very deep level (Anlimachie et al., 2025). Teachers with high intercultural communication competence are more likely to develop classes that use authentic cultural resources, promote reflective dialogue, stimulate intercultural exchange, and connect local cultural values with global perspectives. In contrast, teachers with insufficient knowledge of intercultural pedagogy are likely to avoid cultural talks entirely and consider culture as additional information rather than an essential part of language learning (Mantra et al., 2025). Thus, enhancing teachers' ICC has become a crucial objective to improve the quality of English language education.

Professional development is an effective way to improve teachers' intercultural competency and instructional techniques. Research repeatedly shows that continuous professional learning opportunities lead to growth in teachers' pedagogical expertise, instructional confidence, and classroom performance (Fadhly et al., 2026; Sekar, 2025; Wibowo et al., 2024; Widiastuti et al., 2026). However, traditional professional development initiatives generally use didactic methods, such as seminars and lectures, with few opportunities for instructors to actively generate knowledge, communicate with colleagues, or reflect on their classroom experiences. Such techniques sometimes lead only to transient changes when teachers are not adequately involved in applying new knowledge in authentic teaching environments.

Participatory professional development is a more collaborative approach, in which teachers are not passive users of knowledge but active providers. Teachers take an active role in identifying problems in teaching, designing innovations, applying new teaching tactics, commenting on classroom experiences, and jointly evaluating results. The continuous interaction among participants stimulates professional reflection, peer learning, and collective problem-solving, enabling instructors to develop realistic solutions that are sensitive to their specific educational contexts. This form of collaboration aligns with contemporary conceptions of teacher learning, which hold that professional competence is developed through repeated cycles of experience, reflection, feedback, and instructional improvement (Al-Jarf, 2026; Novita et al., 2020; Shimoyamada, 2026).

The significance of participatory professional development is most visible in junior high schools as kids grow cognitively, emotionally, and socially. Digital media, social networking, travel, and international communication are rapidly exposing adolescents to other cultural influences. These excursions are excellent opportunities for English classes to promote intercultural understanding and language skills simultaneously. Teachers who are able to incorporate intercultural perspectives into English language teaching can assist students in critically exploring cultural similarities and differences, appreciating cultural diversity, challenging stereotypes, and developing respectful communication skills that enable them to participate in multicultural communities (Cong-Lem, 2025; Zabrodska & Wang, 2025). Thus, improving teachers' intercultural competence at this level of school can produce long-term benefits for instructors and students alike.

The context of Bali is a very important context for intercultural English language education. Bali is one of Indonesia's most well-known tourist destinations. Tourists come from various countries, and students have frequent intercultural contacts. At the same time, Balinese society has many local traditions, values, languages, rites, and artistic practices which are excellent cultural resources for education (Sri & Purnamawati, 2022). By incorporating these local cultural resources into the English language teaching and learning process, students can use English to express their own cultural identity and develop a respect for global cultural variety. This method fosters culturally responsive pedagogy by balancing local wisdom with global perspectives and equipping learners to become skilled intercultural communicators.

While previous research has examined teachers' perceptions of intercultural competence and various professional development activities, relatively few community services programs have employed participatory approaches such as collaborative workshops, classroom mentoring, lesson planning, reflective practice, and ongoing professional dialogue (Gombo, 2024; Purbasari et al., 2026; Putu Niken Praweda Yanti et al., 2025; Rasmitadila et al., 2021). Moreover, there is no information on the effectiveness of participatory professional development in developing teachers' intercultural communication skills in Indonesian junior high schools. Further empirical research is required to understand the effects of collaborative professional development on teachers' intercultural knowledge, attitudes, pedagogical practices, and professional confidence.

Therefore, this community service program was designed to improve the Intercultural Communicative Competence of the English teachers in junior high schools through a participatory professional development program. The program included collaborative seminars, practical lesson design, classroom implementation, mentoring, peer reflection, and ongoing evaluation to assist

teachers in integrating intercultural viewpoints into English language teaching. Community service also examined the impact of program involvement on teachers' intercultural competency, classroom teaching practices, and professional perceptions.

It is predicted that the results will contribute to the theory and practice of English language instruction. The study, in theory, contributes to understanding participatory professional development as an effective means of enhancing teachers' intercultural communicative competence in EFL contexts. In practice, the findings offer evidence-based suggestions to schools, teacher education institutions, curriculum creators, and educational officials interested in strengthening culturally responsive English language instruction. The ultimate goal of developing teachers' intercultural competence is to raise the quality of English teaching and, at the same time, equip students with the skills to interact confidently, ethically, and effectively in an increasingly interconnected, culturally diverse global context.

2. METHODS

This community service activity adopted a participatory professional development method to improve the Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) of junior high school English instructors. The program was implemented over eight weeks in five Junior High Schools in Gianyar Regency, Bali, Indonesia, with 15 English teachers voluntarily involved in the activities. The participative approach involved instructors as active collaborators throughout the program, enabling them to identify teaching issues, share professional experiences, and co-construct practical solutions to incorporate intercultural perspectives into teaching English. The collaborative model was chosen to foster ongoing professional development by encouraging continued interaction, reflection, and shared learning.

The program was delivered in four interrelated phases: needs assessment, professional development workshops, classroom implementation, and reflective evaluation. Classroom observations, lesson plan evaluations, questionnaires, and informal discussions were conducted during the needs assessment to identify teachers' current understanding of intercultural communication skills and the problems they faced in classroom practice. The findings guided the design of a series of interactive workshops on intercultural communication, culturally responsive pedagogy, integration of local and global cultures, and development of intercultural learning activities. Teachers then worked together to modify lesson plans and develop instructional resources that included intercultural objectives into English language learning.

The community service team continued to coach and professionally support the participants after the workshops as they implemented the modified curriculum in their classrooms. We provided helpful input on instructional methods through classroom observations and consultation meetings, and assisted in improving teaching strategies. Teachers were urged to use authentic cultural resources, engage in comparative cultural conversations, and implement reflective learning activities and student-centered assignments that encourage intercultural interaction. Furthermore, during implementation, participants maintained reflective notebooks in which they recorded their teaching experiences, classroom challenges, and professional development. These journals provided excellent sources for assessing the program's success.

The success of the community service program was measured using both quantitative and qualitative data. Pre-test and post-test evaluation of four domains of Intercultural Communicative Competence, namely intercultural knowledge, intercultural attitudes, intercultural skills, and critical cultural awareness, were conducted to gather quantitative data. Qualitative data were collected via classroom observations, reflective diaries, evaluation surveys, and semi-structured interviews after the program was completed. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean scores and score improvements between the pre-test and post-test, and qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns in teachers' experiences, perceptions, and instructional practices. The triangulation approach to integrating numerous data sources increased the reliability and trustworthiness of the community service's conclusions.

**Figure 1**

Participants in the ICC workshop are actively engaged in the community service program.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

To evaluate the efficacy of the participatory professional development program, participating teachers completed pre-test and post-test assessments measuring four dimensions of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC): intercultural knowledge, intercultural attitudes, intercultural skills, and critical cultural awareness. The comparison of the outcomes is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test ICC Scores

ICC Dimension	Pre-test	Post-test	Improvement
Intercultural Understanding	64.8	87.6	+22.8
Intercultural Attitudes	68.7	89.8	+21.1
Intercultural Competence	60.9	86.2	+25.3
Cultural Awareness	59.4	88.5	+29.1
Overall ICC	63.5	88.0	+24.5

Results show considerable gains in all facets of Intercultural Communicative Competence following the implementation of the professional development program. The overall ICC score grew from a pre-test level of 63.5 to a post-test level of 88.0, with an average gain of 24.5 points. The most significant gain was in Critical Cultural Awareness (+29.1), demonstrating that teachers became better able to critically assess cultural viewpoints and lead reflective discussions in English teaching. Similarly, Intercultural Skills (+25.3) also improved significantly, indicating that participants were more confident in using intercultural learning strategies and in handling culturally diverse classroom interactions. Enhancements in intercultural knowledge and attitudes also imply that the program was successful in developing teachers' conceptual understanding and professional orientation toward culturally responsive teaching.

Table 2. Classroom Observation Results

Teaching Practice	Before (%)	After (%)
Integrating local cultural content	38	96
Comparing local and global cultures	25	92
Facilitating intercultural classroom activity	31	94
Using authentic intercultural learning materials	44	95
Conducting reflective intercultural activities	19	91

Classroom observations demonstrated significant improvements in teachers' instructional methods following the intervention. Before the program, intercultural learning activities were conducted only occasionally, and the lectures focused mainly on grammar, vocabulary, and textbook exercises. Following the professional development events, almost all observed classrooms included intercultural components in English courses. Teachers often introduced Balinese cultural traditions, local community experience, Indonesian cultural values, and foreign cultural themes. Students were invited to compare cultures, articulate their own views, participate in debates, and think about intercultural issues. The greater use of authentic cultural materials and learner-centered activities indicates that teachers were able to transfer knowledge gained in the workshops into effective classroom practice.

Participants completed an evaluation form after completion of the community service program to rate the quality and usefulness of the professional development activities. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Teachers' Evaluation of the Professional Development Program

Statement	Mean	Category
The program improved my understanding of ICC	4.86	Very High
The activities increased my confidence in teaching interculturallly	4.82	Very High
The workshops enhanced my lesson planning skills	4.79	Very High
The program was directly applicable to classroom teaching	4.91	Very High
Overall satisfaction with the program	4.93	Very High

The questionnaire findings indicate that the participants had very positive views of the community service program. Overall satisfaction received the highest mean score ($M = 4.93$) with the statement concerning the practical relevance of the curriculum to classroom teaching scoring quite closely ($M = 4.91$). Teachers valued the workshops for their collaborative aspect, classroom mentoring, and the opportunity to share ideas with colleagues from other schools. Participants also expressed increased confidence in their ability to facilitate intercultural learning and identified concrete instructional strategies that could be implemented immediately in their classrooms.

Table 4. Major Themes Identified from Teacher Interviews

Theme	Frequency (n = 15)	Representative Response
Greater awareness of intercultural teaching	15	"I now understand that language learning and cultural learning cannot be separated."
Increased confidence in classroom implementation	14	"I feel much more prepared to facilitate discussions involving different cultures."
Higher student motivation and participation	14	"Students became more enthusiastic because they could relate English to their own culture."
More creative instructional planning	15	"My lesson plans now integrate Balinese culture with international contexts."
Commitment to continuous professional development	13	"This experience motivates me to continue improving my intercultural teaching practices."

The interview results align with the quantitative results, showing significant changes in teachers' professional knowledge, instructional confidence, and classroom practice. All participants

said that the training broadened their understanding of international communicative competence and made them aware of the need to incorporate cultural perspectives into English language education. The majority of teachers expressed increased confidence in leading intercultural conversations and developing culturally sensitive teaching activities. Participants also reported increased student involvement when classroom activities prompted students to compare local traditions with global cultures and to discuss their own cultural experiences. Finally, several teachers emphasized the need for ongoing mentoring and collaborative professional learning to sustain multicultural pedagogy in English language teaching.

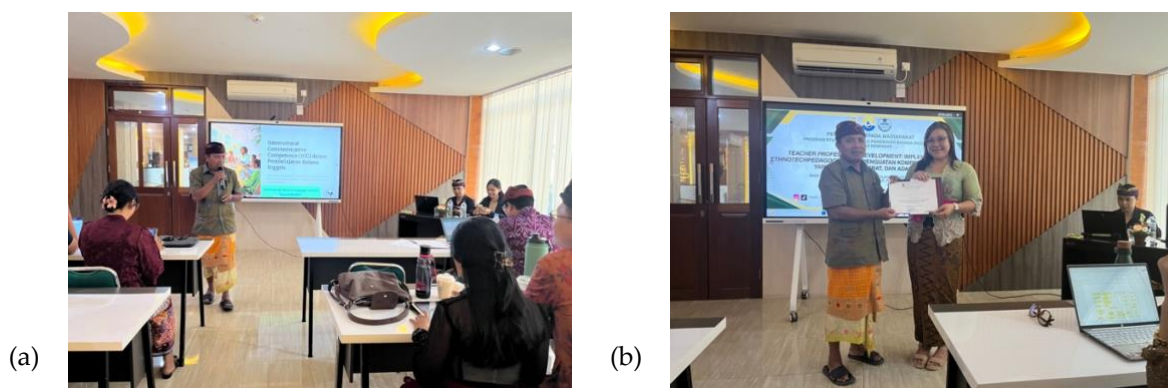


Figure 2
Presentation of certificates to the ICC workshop speakers

Discussion

The results of this community service reveal that participatory professional development is an effective approach to improve the Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) of junior high school English instructors. All four elements of ICC, intercultural knowledge, intercultural attitudes, intercultural skills, and critical cultural awareness, showed significant development. The improvement in ICC scores from pre-test to post-test indicates that the teachers had a better grasp of intercultural education and improved their capacity to integrate cultural components into English language teaching. These findings indicate that professional development programs that incorporate collaborative learning, reflective practice, and classroom application can yield substantial gains in professional competence and instructional practice.

The substantial increase in intercultural knowledge indicates that the workshops were effective in developing teachers' conceptual grasp of intercultural communication and culturally responsive education. Before the intervention, most teachers considered culture to be supplemental information that could be taught through festivals, food, traditional costumes, or historical facts. However, following the professional development events, the participants demonstrated a broader understanding of culture as a dynamic system of beliefs, values, communication styles, identities, and social practices that constantly shape language use. This conceptual change is particularly significant, as successful international language education needs teachers to appreciate the inescapable link between language and culture. Teachers with a greater conceptual understanding of intercultural communication are better able to create meaningful learning opportunities that help students to communicate authentically in a multicultural environment, rather than just increasing grammatical competence (Curran & Ladegaard, 2025; Hassan, 2025).

Another important conclusion is the significant development in teachers' intercultural competence. The professional development events were not only theoretical debates but also focused on practical classroom applications, allowing teachers to translate new information into pedagogical practice. Participants were taught how to lead intercultural conversations, get students to compare cultural viewpoints, and develop learning activities that foster critical thinking through shared lesson preparation, conversations among colleagues, classroom mentoring, and reflective teaching. These

experiences seem to have contributed to teachers' confidence in international classroom interaction and have offered students the opportunity to voice viewpoints, negotiate meaning, and respect cultural diversity. The practical skill is crucial, as intercultural communication cannot be developed solely on a theoretical level but requires continuous opportunities for real engagement and reflective learning (Godwin, 2013).

The greatest improvement was seen in the domain of critical cultural awareness. This conclusion needs particular attention because critical cultural awareness is often considered one of the most complex elements of intercultural communicative skills. Critical cultural awareness, compared to factual cultural knowledge, means that individuals can assess cultural activities objectively, acknowledge diverse views, question stereotypes, and refrain from ethnocentric judgments. The large improvement indicates that the participatory learning activities helped teachers critically reflect on their cultural preconceptions and become more sensitive to cultural diversity. During the workshops and reflection sessions, participants were encouraged to explore authentic intercultural settings, discuss cultural misunderstandings, assess classroom scenarios, and consider other perspectives. These reflective activities seem to have improved teachers' capacity to lead similar reflective learning experiences for their pupils.

Findings from the classroom observations further corroborate the evidence that the professional development program led to substantial shifts in teaching practice. Before the intervention, English sessions were largely teacher-centered, focusing on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and textbook exercises. Cultural issues were introduced intermittently, and often missed opportunities for meaningful conversation or critical thinking. However, after the program, teachers routinely included intercultural learning activities in their lessons. Classroom observations revealed greater use of authentic cultural resources, comparative discussions between local and international cultures, reflective learning tasks, collaborative student activities, and project-based learning (Handayani et al., 2026). These educational modifications imply that teachers can translate theoretical knowledge into classroom practice, a key aim of effective professional development.

Another key result of this community activity is the seamless incorporation of local cultural values into English-language training. Bali has rich cultural traditions, artistic legacy, community practices, and local wisdom, which are good resources for language acquisition. Rather than teaching textbook images of English-speaking countries, teachers brought Balinese ceremonies and traditional arts, local customs, environmental practices, and community values into classroom conversations. Students were encouraged to compare their own cultural experiences with those of other countries and to write about them in English. This method of teaching aligns with the modern view of English as an International Language, which considers it a language of intercultural communication rather than one belonging solely to local speaking cultures. Teachers place local culture alongside global viewpoints so that students can strengthen their cultural identity and, at the same time, develop openness to cultural diversity (Sudianta et al., 2026).

Integrating local culture also aligns with the tenets of culturally responsive teaching, which emphasize the need to link classroom learning to students' cultural backgrounds and lived experiences. Learning experiences are more engaging when they are meaningful and culturally relevant to students. Many students during class observations expressed their experiences of traditional ceremonies, local customs, family routines, and community activities. These talks provided real opportunities for genuine communication, as students were able to use English to articulate topics they knew and found personally important. Therefore, learning English became more contextualized, more interesting, and more communicative, and at the same time encouraged international understanding (Liu & Lee, 2025).

The professional development program received very positive feedback from the teachers, further emphasizing the success of the participative method. Participants described the workshops as realistic, relevant, and directly pertinent to their classroom responsibilities. Unlike more standard professional development initiatives, which are typically lecture-based information transfer activities, this program focused on cooperation, classroom experimentation, mentoring, and reflective conversation. Through

these encounters, teachers actively developed professional knowledge rather than passively acquiring information. The high satisfaction levels are therefore suggestive of the fact that teachers valued learning experiences that addressed real classroom issues and offered opportunities for dialogue with colleagues facing similar teaching conditions.

The interview results provide a better understanding of the professional development participants experienced. Almost all teachers felt more confident about supporting intercultural learning after finishing the program. Confidence is a key element of teacher professionalism, as teachers who lack confidence in intercultural issues may avoid classroom conversations about cultural diversity. Many participants said they had been reluctant to address multicultural themes before because they didn't know much and were worried about giving incorrect information about cultures. Through collaborative mentoring, supportive settings were developed where teachers could raise questions, receive constructive criticism, and incrementally improve their instructional approaches, thereby alleviating these worries. As teachers gained more confidence, they became more eager to create new classes that used actual cultural artifacts and student-centered activities.

Teachers also observed greater student involvement in each case after implementing intercultural learning activities. Students were more involved in discussions when classes compared local customs with international cultural practices or reflected on their own cultural experiences. This finding aligns with the idea that intercultural learning fosters cultural knowledge and language development by creating authentic communicative contexts. Rather than learning isolated vocabulary or grammatical rules, students utilized English as a vehicle to exchange ideas, describe cultural practices, ask questions, and negotiate meaning. So intercultural learning developed communicative ability and learner motivation, showing that language and culture can be integrated in meaningful classroom circumstances.

The collaborative aspect of the community service appears to have been a key factor in the program's success. Teachers were actively involved in all stages of the intervention, including the needs assessment, lesson planning, classroom execution, reflection, and evaluation. This participatory strategy is quite different from traditional in-service training programs, in which instructors are generally passive recipients of expert knowledge. Active engagement enabled teachers to take ownership of educational innovations and to build professional communication with peers from other schools. Participants learned from the facilitators and from one another's experiences through continued discussion and peer support, establishing a sustained professional learning community that may promote ongoing instructional improvement beyond the program's end.

Another major feature of this community service is its emphasis on reflective practice as a form of professional learning. Reflection meetings and teaching journals prompted participants to assess their instructional choices, recognize their strengths and limitations, and develop strategies to improve future lessons. Such reflection allows teachers to convert classroom experiences into professional knowledge by coupling practical experience with theoretical understanding. As reflection was institutionalized as part of the professional development process, participants increasingly became better at incorporating multicultural learning into English instruction. As the cycle of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection continued, it greatly enhanced the teachers' professional growth and instructional confidence.

The findings are also of considerable importance for educational policy and teacher education. Successful implementation, however, depends in significant measure on teachers' professional capacity, although many national curricula highlight global competency, intercultural education, and twenty-first-century skills. Curricular reform itself will not improve classroom practice unless teachers are provided with constant support to integrate curricular objectives into meaningful learning experiences. Thus, educational authorities should include intercultural communicative competence in pre-service teacher education and in-service professional development programs. Universities, teacher education institutions, and schools should work together to provide ongoing mentoring, collaborative lesson study, peer observation, and reflective learning opportunities to enable teachers to enhance their

intercultural pedagogical competency continuously (Gutiérrez-Santiuste & Ritacco-Real, 2023; Soriya Enny et al., 2025).

Although hopeful, there are numerous limits to consider. The community service was attended solely by 15 English instructors from 5 junior high schools in one regency of Bali. Consequently, the results may not be fully representative of teachers working in other educational contexts or geographic locations. The intervention lasted for eight weeks, so only short-term professional development effects could be measured. Longitudinal community service with larger groups of participants would provide more robust evidence on the sustainability of teachers' intercultural competence and its long-term impact on classroom practice. Moreover, students' learning outcomes, classroom achievement, and intercultural competency should be included as additional indicators to assess the broader educational effect of teacher professional development in future programs (Azizah & Akbar, 2025; Furiyanto et al., 2025).

To summarize, the results showed that participatory professional development is an effective and durable way to improve English teachers' Intercultural Communicative Competence. The combination of collaborative workshops, classroom mentorship, reflective practice, lesson design, and peer learning was successfully blended to enhance teachers' knowledge, instructional abilities, critical cultural awareness, and professional confidence. Most crucially, these gains were reflected in visible changes in classroom practice, with instructors increasingly integrating local and global cultural perspectives into English language acquisition. This community activity aims to improve the quality of English education and to enhance teachers' intercultural competency, which is vital for educating students to be competent, courteous, and responsible communicators in an increasingly interconnected multicultural world.

4. CONCLUSION

A community service study found that a participatory professional development program might enhance the Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) of junior high school English instructors. Significant increases were observed across all aspects of ICC in the pre- and post-tests, from intercultural knowledge and attitudes to abilities and critical cultural awareness. The classroom observations also bore out these gains, showing better integration of local and global cultural perspectives, more use of authentic intercultural learning materials, and more student-centered instructional techniques. Teachers also reported increased confidence in planning and conducting intercultural learning activities. At the same time, interview findings suggested the program helped promote professional reflection, collaborative learning, and stronger dedication to culturally responsive English language teaching. In brief, the findings support the idea that participatory professional development offers a feasible and durable way to increase teachers' intercultural competence and the quality of English language teaching.

These findings suggest that schools, teacher education institutions, and educational authorities should add Intercultural Communicative Competence as a basic component of teacher professional development programs for pre-service and in-service teachers. Professional learning efforts should move beyond short-term workshops to include ongoing mentoring, collaborative lesson study, peer observation, and reflective practice to enable sustained professional progress. Curriculum makers are also urged to provide instructional tools that incorporate local cultural heritage and global perspectives, enabling teachers to construct culturally responsive and internationally relevant learning experiences. Future community service programs should have more participants, include schools from diverse geographic backgrounds, and explore the long-term effects of teachers' intercultural competence on students' language achievement, intercultural development, and global communication skills.

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