



**Máster Universitario en Profesorado de Educación Secundaria Obligatoria e
Bacharelato, Formación Profesional e Ensinanzas de Idiomas
Especialidade: Linguas e Literaturas
Campus de Santiago de Compostela**

Traballo de Fin de Máster

**Assessing the Role of the North American Language and Culture
Assistants in English Classrooms in Galicia**

**Avaliación do papel dos auxiliares de conversa
na aula de inglés en Galiza**

**La evaluación del papel de los auxiliares de conversación
en el aula de inglés en Galicia**

Autora: Anne Marie Haggerson Ramsay

Titor: Martín Fernández Fernández

CURSO 2024 – 2025

Table of Contents

Abstract:	3
Resumo:	4
Resumen:	5
1. Introduction and Justification	6
2. Research Questions	9
3. Theoretical Framework	10
4. Methods	12
4.1. The Language and Culture Ambassador Questionnaire Results	14
4.2. Results from the Questionnaires from the Supervising Teachers	19
5. Discussion and Recommendations	23
5.1. Leveraging Authentic Materials	23
5.2. Leveraging Pedagogies of Social Agency: Mediation	26
5.3. Leveraging the Initial Training	31
6. Limitations of the Study	34
7. Conclusion	35
8. References	38
9. Attachments	42
9.1. Questionnaire for the Language and Culture Assistant (Auxiliar)	42
9.2. Questionnaire for the Mentor Teacher	46

Abstract:

Each year, the Education Office of the Embassy of Spain puts forth a call for applicants from the United States and Canada to join the North American Language and Culture Assistants Program (NALCAP) to promote public diplomacy, cultural exchange, and language instruction in English classrooms throughout Spain. This Master's Thesis (TFM) focuses on assessing the role of the North American Language and Culture Assistants in high schools and official language schools in Galicia, Spain. The thesis is research-driven, using data drawn from questionnaires distributed both to assistants and to the teachers who supervise them. The goal of the questionnaires is to assess the distinct types of cultural information that the language ambassadors exchange with students in the classroom. Through the theoretical lens of intercultural competence, the thesis analyzes to what extent the North American Culture and Language Ambassadors are shifting teaching methodologies from traditional, grammar-based approaches toward communicative and intercultural approaches. This TFM refers to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) standards on intercultural communication and the official curriculum established by the Autonomous Community of Galicia. Ultimately, the aim of my TFM is to offer ways to improve pedagogical methods, teacher training, and the development of NALCAP.

Keywords: language and culture assistant, intercultural education, mediation, teacher training, interculturality.

Resumo:

Cada ano, a Oficina de Educación da Embaixada de España publica unha convocatoria para que solicitantes dos Estados Unidos e Canadá se unan ao Programa de Auxiliares de Conversa de América do Norte (NALCAP) co fin de promover a diplomacia pública, o intercambio cultural e o ensino de idiomas nas aulas de inglés en toda España. Este Traballo de Fin de Máster (TFM) céntrase en avaliar o papel dos auxiliares de conversa de América do Norte nos institutos e nas Escolas Oficiais de Idiomas de Galicia, España. O traballo é de corte investigador, xa que utiliza datos extraídos de cuestionarios distribuídos electronicamente tanto aos asistentes como aos profesores que os supervisan. O obxectivo dos cuestionarios é avaliar os diferentes tipos de información cultural que os embaixadores lingüísticos intercambian co alumnado na aula. A través da base teórica da competencia intercultural, o traballo analiza ata que punto os auxiliares de América do Norte están a modificar as metodoloxías docentes, pasando de enfoques tradicionais baseados na gramática a enfoques comunicativos e interculturais. Este TFM fai referencia aos estándares do Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para as linguas (MCER) sobre comunicación intercultural e ao currículo oficial establecido pola Comunidade Autónoma de Galicia. En definitiva, o obxectivo do meu TFM é ofrecer vías para mellorar os métodos pedagóxicos, a formación do profesorado e o desenvolvemento do NALCAP.

Palabras clave: **auxiliar de conversa, educación intercultural, mediación, formación do profesorado, interculturalidade.**

Resumen:

Cada año, la Oficina de Educación de la Embajada de España publica una convocatoria para que solicitantes de Estados Unidos y Canadá se unan al Programa de Auxiliares de Conversación de América del Norte (NALCAP) con el fin de promover la diplomacia pública, el intercambio cultural y la enseñanza de idiomas en las aulas de inglés en toda España. Este Trabajo de Fin de Máster (TFM) se centra en evaluar el papel de los auxiliares de conversación de América del Norte en los institutos y en las Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas de Galicia, España. El trabajo es de carácter investigativo, ya que utiliza datos extraídos de cuestionarios distribuidos electrónicamente tanto a los auxiliares como a los profesores que los supervisan. El objetivo de los cuestionarios es evaluar los diferentes tipos de información cultural que los embajadores lingüísticos intercambian con el alumnado en el aula. A través de la base teórica de la competencia intercultural, el trabajo analiza hasta qué punto los Auxiliares de América del Norte están modificando las metodologías docentes, pasando de enfoques tradicionales basados en la gramática a enfoques comunicativos e interculturales. Este TFM hace referencia a los estándares del Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para las lenguas (MCER) sobre comunicación intercultural y al currículo oficial establecido por la Comunidad Autónoma de Galicia. En definitiva, el objetivo de mi TFM es ofrecer vías para mejorar los métodos pedagógicos, la formación del profesorado y el desarrollo del NALCAP.

Palabras clave: **auxiliar de conversación, educación intercultural, mediación, formación del profesorado, interculturalidad.**

1. Introduction and Justification

The Culture and Language Ambassador Program in Spain, known as the North American Language and Culture Assistants Program (NALCAP) is a unique initiative launched by the Spanish Ministry of Education to foster language and cultural exchange between Spain and various English-speaking countries (Ministerio de Educación, Formación Profesional y Deportes, 2024). The program recruits native speakers of English, as well as other languages such as French and German, to work as language assistants in Spanish primary and secondary schools. This initiative has been instrumental in enhancing foreign language education in Spain while providing participants with valuable teaching experience and a deep immersion in Spanish culture. The Spanish Ministry of Education outlines the key roles and responsibilities in a training guide for the language and culture assistants which includes not only serving as language ambassadors while assisting content-area and language teachers, but also as cultural ambassadors, sharing insights into their country's customs, traditions, and way of life with Spanish students and colleagues (Ministerio de Educación, Formación Profesional y Deportes, 2024).

NALCAP aims to facilitate public diplomacy, foster cultural exchange, and enhance language instruction in English classrooms across Spain. This academic year, the number of Language and Culture Assistants in Galicia surpassed a record number, reaching 665 assistants from a total of 24 countries and a budget of 4.7 million euros (Galicia@Press, 2024). In addition, since Galicia has a partnership with the Fulbright commission, the program has been awarded a significant number of North American Language and Culture Assistants from the United States with competitive academic profiles (Xunta de Galicia, 2024). Language and culture assistants support language and content teachers in their lessons by aiding them in improving students' linguistic abilities, intercultural awareness, and materials development (Ministerio de Educación, Formación Profesional y Deportes, 2024). To understand how to fully leverage the language and culture assistants in the classroom as an agent of culture and a catalyst of cultural exchange, we must explore the foundation of the secondary curriculum, LOMLOE, and refer to the current Spanish educational law (Royal Decree 156/2022), which draws on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001) along with the CEFR *Companion Volume* (2020) and works at the level of communicative competences, plurilingualism, and interculturality. In addition, the Official School of Language's (EOI) curriculum also focuses on intercultural, sociocultural, and sociolinguistic competence (Royal

Decree 81/2018). In terms of general skills, educators aim to develop: knowledge of the world and socio-cultural knowledge through cultural study and intercultural awareness, encouraging reflection and dialogue between different cultures; and the competence of autonomous learning, creating different activities that encourage research and reflection on the process of study and self-learning (Council of Europe, 2001, p.147-184).

North American Language and Culture Assistants can spark and foster interculturality in the classroom. Intercultural awareness is not only a skill that teachers should embody, but it is also a competence outlined in the Galician curricular objectives (Royal Decree 156/2022; Royal Decree 81/2018). According to Trujillo Sáez (2005), the relationship between interculturality and language teaching integrates cultural and sociolinguistic dimensions in teaching, promoting richer and more inclusive learning. This perspective reinforces the idea that language learning is also a tool to understand and respect cultural diversity and develop intercultural communicative competence.

In fact, the main goals of NALCAP are to enhance language education in Spain and foster cultural exchange. As stated in their job description, language and cultural assistants should serve as both language and cultural ambassadors, exchanging with Spanish students and colleagues about their country's customs, cultural heritage, and lifestyle (Ministerio de Educación, Formación Profesional y Deportes, 2024). In return, participants gain first-hand exposure to Spanish culture, traditions, and the diverse regional identities within Spain. This reciprocal exchange promotes cross-cultural awareness and enriches the educational experience for both students and language assistants. By hosting language assistants, Spain strengthens educational and cultural ties with English-speaking nations, reinforcing its role as a global cultural hub. Moreover, many former participants become informal ambassadors for Spain upon returning to their home countries, promoting Spanish culture and tourism. At the classroom level, this rich cultural exchange has vast potential as a pedagogical tool to open doors of communication and cultural awareness.

Despite the incredibly positive benefits of having language and cultural assistants in classrooms, there are several pressing challenges that previous research studies have unleashed. For example, many teachers are overwhelmed by the presence of language and culture assistants in their classrooms and do not know how to take full advantage of them since the assistants typically do not have teaching experience, are often recent college graduates, and do not have the training to deal with classroom discipline problems (Litzler Frances, 2020; Pérez

& Cerqueiro, 2024). Furthermore, López-Medina and Otto's (2020) research reveals how language assistants are undervalued in classrooms and that their responsibilities don't always reflect the guidelines and specifications in their job description. Litzler Frances (2020) reports the need for mentor teachers to be more transparent with language assistants about their roles. Further research carried out by Buckingham suggests that there often is not enough communication between the mentor teachers and the language and cultural assistants about how to fulfill their role successfully and that oftentimes the cultural dimensions the assistant could bring to the classroom are not applied in the teaching and learning process (2018, p. 48).

This research study fills an important gap in the current body of research by exploring how teachers could creatively utilize the North American Language and Cultural Assistants in dynamic ways, thoughtfully leveraging their cultural backgrounds to enhance teaching and learning. Also, there is a greater need for research that looks at the teachers' perspective of the role of the language and culture assistants, and this study contributes to furthering understanding of teachers' experiences working alongside assistants. In addition, previous research has explored the role of Language and Culture Assistants in bilingual schools in Spain (Buckingham, 2018, 2019; Litzler Frances, 2020; López Medina & Otto, 2020; Tobin & Abello-Contesse, 2013). While Pérez and Cerqueiro (2024) focus on language assistants in primary schools in Galicia, this master's thesis fills an important gap in the body of scholarly knowledge about language and cultural assistants and highlights findings from multilingual and multicultural Galician context in secondary schools and in the Official School of Languages.

This thesis is research-driven, using data drawn from questionnaires distributed to both North American Language and Culture Assistants and to the teachers who supervise them. The questionnaires were sent to participants in the program who have worked in Official Schools of Languages and middle and high schools over the last 5 years within the Galician provinces of A Coruña, Lugo, Ourense, and Pontevedra. There were 32 responses from language and culture assistants and 32 responses from the teachers who supervise them. The questionnaire data covers responses from a majority (60%) of NALCAP assistants, but some of the respondents may have been hired through other programs. Notwithstanding, the results, which draw on a broader data pool, are designed to improve the NALCAP program. Accordingly, the recommendations may be applicable and relevant to other language and culture assistant programs in Spain that recruit from regions such as India, Australia, Kenya, the Philippines, and the UK.

Throughout this master's thesis, the language and culture assistants will be referred to as cultural and linguistic assistants and ambassadors. In the aforementioned research studies, these individuals are referred to as language assistants. However, it is important to emphasize the dual nature of their role. Therefore, the more comprehensive, longer term will be employed as a way of emphasizing both the cultural and linguistic work they do in classrooms. This decision is mentioned advertently because other researchers have delved into the fact that the cultural aspects of their presence is often minimized and the linguistic aspects are accentuated. Thus, the way they are described on the official Spanish Ministry of Education website, "North American Language and Culture Assistants" and more generally, "language and culture assistants" will be used in this paper as a way of connecting the theoretical thread of interculturality to their work.

The research will also share the teachers' perspectives about the benefits of having ambassadors in their classrooms and the ways they have found to fully take advantage of the fresh and contemporary language and cultural perspectives the assistants bring to the teaching context. Also, recommendations will be provided of ways North American Language and Culture Assistants could use authentic materials in their teaching to leverage their cultural backgrounds and provide student-centered approaches where textual and spoken mediation is used. Overall, the findings focus on ways teachers can leverage the North American Language and Culture Assistants in Galicia, Spain, and suggest further methods they could use to develop intercultural competence, one of the main curricular pillars in the educational law LOMLOE (Royal Decree 156/2022).

2. Research Questions

Through this study, I sought to discover what kinds of cultural information the language and culture ambassadors exchange with students and about the methods they use to fulfill their duties. Furthermore, I wanted to understand the way the teachers who mentor the assistants harness their skills and utilize them in the classroom to foster intercultural competence. The following research questions drive this study:

- 1) What kind of cultural information do language and cultural ambassadors exchange with students in the classroom?
- 2) What are some common methods language assistants use with students? Do these methods facilitate intercultural competence?

- 3) How can the teachers who work with language assistants draw upon their rich cultural backgrounds and identities and leverage them in the classroom to teach interculturality?

3. Theoretical Framework

This study adopts *intercultural competence* (Byram, et.al., 2002; Deardoff, 2019) as the main theoretical lens. Intercultural competence refers to the ability to communicate and interact effectively and appropriately with people of other cultures, being aware of one's own identity while maintaining a sense of open-mindedness towards other languages and cultures. According to Byram et. al. language teachers strive to “develop learners as intercultural speakers or mediators who are able to engage with complexity and multiple identities and to avoid the stereotyping which accompanies perceiving someone through a single identity” (2002, 9). This awareness is a discovery process that involves respecting the basic human qualities of shifting individual identities, a process that goes beyond labels and associations with regions, nationalities, or countries. The big-picture vision of intercultural communication is based on the democratic principles of equality, respect, and human rights. The role of the North American Language and Culture Ambassadors is naturally intercultural since the relationships that they develop with students and teachers in Spain are designed to support the development of intercultural competence. Could intercultural competence be developed more deliberately and purposefully? These questions will be explored in more depth in the discussion section.

Above all, language and culture assistants have the potential to spark and foster interculturality in the classroom. According to Trujillo Sáez (2005), the relationship between interculturality and language teaching integrates cultural and sociolinguistic dimensions in teaching, promoting richer and more inclusive learning. This perspective reinforces the idea that language learning is also a tool to understand and respect cultural diversity and develop effective intercultural communicative competence, a key concept highlighted in the state school curriculum. In fact, the main goals of NALCAP is to enhance language education in Spain and foster cultural exchange.

However important intercultural competence is at the curricular level, language and culture assistants are not always aware of how to draw upon their cultural backgrounds and facilitate intercultural communication and awareness. The study conducted by Buckingham (2018) suggests that the mentor teachers and the language and cultural assistants frequently do

not communicate well enough about how to carry out their roles, and the assistants' potential cultural contributions to the classroom are frequently overlooked during the teaching and learning process. They may focus more on language and communication, without considering how to draw upon their rich cultural backgrounds to develop these complex skills.

In order to make the most of language and cultural assistants as facilitators of intercultural dialogue and representatives of cultural diversity within the classroom, it is essential to begin with an examination of the curricular framework and the legislative foundation that shapes it. The current Spanish educational law, LOMLOE (Royal Decree 156/2022), is aligned with the principles outlined in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe, 2001) and its *Companion Volume* (Council of Europe, 2020). This framework emphasizes key areas such as communicative competence, interculturality, and plurilingualism. From a general skills perspective, educators are encouraged to foster learners' understanding of global and socio-cultural contexts through cultural exploration and intercultural sensitivity. Additionally, emphasis is placed on nurturing learner autonomy by designing activities that promote research, reflection, and critical thinking (Council of Europe, 2001, pp. 147–184).

When teachers bring culture into the classroom, they may reinforce stereotypes or present a static version of the tradition that may highlight one particular perspective (Ladson-Billings, 2014). North American Language and Culture Assistants have a unique opportunity to leverage their culture and bring a fresh, dynamic approach that contrasts with static textbooks that are out of date or that do not accurately portray the ways cultures are changing and shifting. In a more diverse world, where cultural identities and traditions are constantly in flux, it is key to resist these one-sided, slanted perspectives and build intercultural competence, which promotes more respectful interactions that take into account the complexity of shifting identities and give voice to multiple perspectives (Byram, et al., 2002). Exploring culture in a more in-depth way can be tricky in the language classroom since there often are not resources available for teachers that explore culture from a deeper lens. Yazdanpanah states:

Additionally, well-designed intercultural competence education should go beyond *surface knowledge*—objective and observable aspects of culture (e.g., food and clothing)—to *deep culture*, often understood as subjective underlying aspects of culture (e.g., attitudes and beliefs of gender roles). (2019, p. 3)

Along this theoretical vein, this research study explores how North American Language and Culture Ambassadors have the potential to break these stereotypical, stagnant views of culture and present a more up-to-date, realistic view of how traditions are being celebrated in real-time. It is clear that identities change and shift and the language and culture assistants are positioned uniquely to share their identities and express their cultural backgrounds in creative ways.

For this reason, communicative tasks offer ways for assistants to bring their own culture into the classroom and present a fresh perspective that is more authentic and dynamic. One of the central ideas in the updated 2020 *Companion Volume* to the CEFR is its positioning of the user/learner as a social agent, which is defined as someone “acting in the social world and exerting agency in the learning process” (Council of Europe, 2020, p.22). As a result, learning a language requires active participation rather than sitting back passively and listening to someone give a presentation. This idea becomes a key component of my theoretical framework since the process of developing intercultural competence is active and interactive rather than static and passive. Byram et al. explain that the goal of the language teacher is not to support students in acquiring knowledge, facts, and cultural information about other nationalities and countries. Instead, the goal is to organize the classroom to focus on processes that promote analytical thinking, critical awareness, reflection, and taking risks (2002, pp. 33-34).

The data and results will be analyzed through the lens of intercultural competence to assess the language assistants’ role as catalysts for intercultural exchange. The questionnaire data, discussion, and suggestions will be framed through this defining theoretical concept. Consequently, alternative pedagogical options, strategies, and ways of making the most of the language and culture assistants will be discussed. Thus, the learning theories surrounding the concept of intercultural competence will be positioned next to the survey results to analyze how well the teaching methodologies that the language assistants employ align with theories of intercultural competence in the classroom. In summary, the analysis will be carried out using intercultural competence as the theoretical framework for the study.

4. Methods

Quantitative research, characterized by precision and applicability, remains foundational in educational research and social sciences. One of the most common and effective tools to carry out quantitative research is the survey or questionnaire, which facilitates systematic data collection across large populations. According to Albert Gómez (2007), surveys

are essential for measuring variables in a structured and replicable manner, ensuring the reliability and validity of research findings. In the quantitative framework, surveys enable researchers to quantify attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions through carefully designed questions. Indeed, the questionnaire, defined as a collection of standardized questions aimed at capturing data from a sample proves particularly advantageous due to its scalability, efficiency, and ease of distribution (Albert Gómez, 2007, p. 123).

Moreover, when grounded in theoretical constructs and subjected to validation processes, these instruments yield reliable data to formulate discussions around the research questions that drive the study. Furthermore, Albert Gómez (2007) emphasizes the importance of the quality and clarity of the questions in the survey. Effective questionnaires must be carefully designed and tested. For example, tools such as Likert scales and Guttman scales allow for nuanced data collection that aligns with specific research objectives (Albert Gómez, 2007, pp. 116–120). These tools transform subjective opinions into quantifiable metrics, enhancing the data analysis process. As Albert Gómez (2007) illustrates, the strategic use of surveys and questionnaires not only strengthens the methodological rigor of quantitative research but also contributes meaningfully to the creation of reliable, generalizable knowledge. The integration of questionnaires into research designs ensures that findings are statistically credible, affirming their value in educational research.

The thesis is research-driven and quantitative, using data drawn from questionnaires distributed to both North American Language and Culture Assistants and to the teachers who supervise them. The questionnaires were sent to participants in the program who have worked in the Official School of Languages (EOI) and middle and high schools over the last 5 years within the Galician provinces of A Coruña, Lugo, Ourense, and Pontevedra. There were 32 responses from Language and Culture Assistants and 32 responses from the teachers who supervise them. The questionnaires were distributed electronically through Microsoft Forms in mid-February, 2025 and the results were anonymous in order to protect the data protection rights of the participants. The research methods in this study were approved by the University of Santiago de Compostela's ethics committee on January 29th, 2025. The questionnaire for the Language and Culture Assistants took approximately 15 minutes to complete and the questionnaire for the teachers took around 10 minutes to complete (see attachments).

Each questionnaire featured questions following McDonough and McDonough's (1997) guidelines for designing varied, user-friendly, unambiguous, and concise questionnaires

for research in ELT. The goal of the questionnaires was to get information on participants' demographics, background and teaching experience, pedagogical methods, topics being taught, benefits and challenges of the program, perceptions of work, and future career goals. For example, the questionnaires began with factual questions about age, nationality, educational background, teaching experience, to name a few. Then, multiple-choice questions were created with the "other" categories available so that the participants could add an additional answer option that they did not see available. This strategy allowed participants to answer quickly but also add additional information if they had the time or desire to do so. The questionnaire offered a mix of question types that would allow for a range of data to be collected. There were also ranked questions with a numerical scale from one to five, two open-ended questions, and Likert-scale questions where participants could answer the level at which they agreed or disagreed with a statement.

The questionnaires went through a number of revisions and also were tested in a pilot study with two North American Language and Culture Assistants and two teachers to make sure they were clear, unambiguous, and easy to complete. After the mini-pilot study, the questionnaires were updated based on the feedback of the respondents and comments from university advisors. Next, the questionnaires were distributed electronically. After 64 questionnaires were submitted, the results were analyzed by comparing numerical results and by noting any significant differences in the chosen answers. The open-ended answers were coded by theme and category and any significant results were analyzed through the lens of an intercultural competence theoretical framework.

4.1. The Language and Culture Ambassador Questionnaire Results

The questionnaires completed by the language and culture assistants showed that participants' ages ranged from 18 to 54 years old. Age of participants included: 19 participants were 25-34 years old (61%), 7 participants were between the ages of 18-24 years old (23%), 3 participants were between the ages of 35 and 44 years old (10%), and 2 participants were between the ages of 45-54 (6%). These statistics attest to the fact that the majority of Language and Culture Assistants are recent college graduates, young, and early in their careers.

There were a variety of nationalities represented, but 20 of the 32 participants (62%) were from the United States, while 6 of the 32 participants (18%) were British, 2 were Filipino (.06%), 2 were Indian (.06%), 1 was from Australia (.03%), and one was from Kenya (.03%).

These statistics show that there is some diversity represented in the cultural and nationality backgrounds of the language and culture assistants, but that those who responded to the questionnaires were predominantly from the United States.

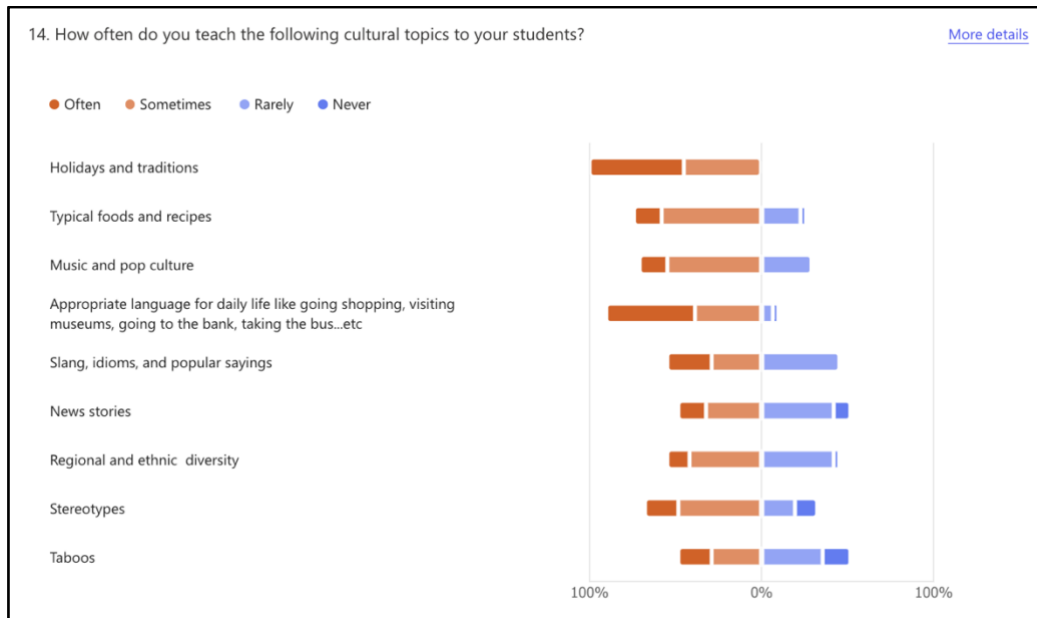


Figure 1. The topics the language and cultural assistants taught

Regarding their educational background and previous degrees, most respondents (77%) are university graduates while (19%) have master’s degrees and even fewer (3%) hold doctorate degrees. 16 of the respondents worked in middle and high schools, 10 worked in Official Language Schools and the remaining 6 worked in “other” locations, which could be referring to vocational training schools or primary schools. All of the participants (100%) had served in their roles within the last 5 years and 74% worked in the position within the last two years, from 2023-2025. If we analyze the results about their teaching experience, about 52% of them do not have teaching experience while 48% of them do have previous teaching experience.

Concerning their linguistic repertoire, the majority of the respondents speak Spanish at an advanced level, but do not speak Galician very well. According to the results, 71% of the participants do not speak Galician while 29% of the respondents said they did speak Galician. These percentages highly contrast with 100% of them speak Spanish and 71% of them speak Spanish at an advanced level. 19% of the respondents speak Spanish at an intermediate level and 10% of them speak Spanish at a beginner level. Regarding their Galician proficiency levels, 48% of them speak Galician at a beginner level, 35% of them have zero proficiency in Galician, 13% of them have an intermediate level of Galician, and 3% of them have an advanced level

of Galician. This linguistic information could serve as useful in the discussion about training and development that follows.

A considerable number of the participants (81%) identified themselves as both a cultural and language ambassador while only 3 (10%) identified themselves more as language ambassadors and 1 (3%) as a cultural ambassador rather than as having a mixed role. 2 respondents clicked on “other” and described themselves as “the main teacher in the class” and “a class adviser.”

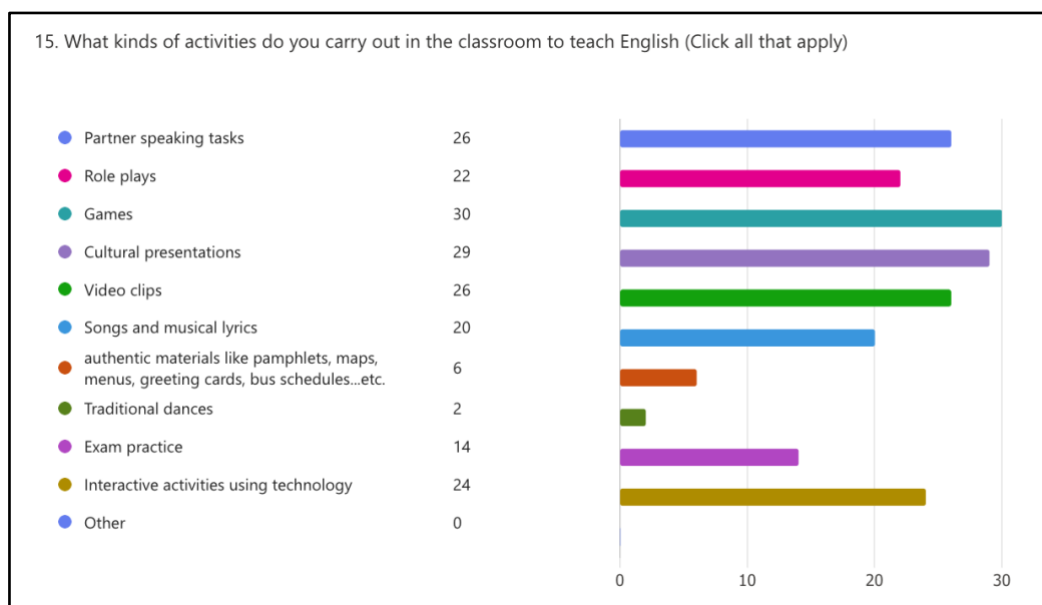


Figure 2. The kind of methods the language and culture assistants used with students

Pertaining to the topics that the language and culture assistants taught, holidays and traditions were taught often (54.8%) and 42.5% of the participants said that they sometimes taught those topics (see Figure 1). The respondents said that they often (51.6%) taught appropriate language for daily life like going shopping, visiting museums, going to the bank, taking the bus, etc., and 38.7% of the participants said that they sometimes taught daily language, 6.5% said that they rarely taught daily language, and 3.2% responded that they never taught it. Music and pop culture, typical foods and recipes, and stereotypes all have similar responses with respondents often teaching them (16%), sometimes (58%), rarely (22.6%), and never (3.2%). The topic of taboos had the most responses in the “never” category (16.1%), rarely (35.5%), sometimes (29%), and often (19.4%).

On the subject of the kinds of activities that the language and culture assistants carry out (see figure 2), the greatest number of respondents clicked on “games” (30), “cultural

presentations” (29), “partner speaking tasks” (26), “video clips” (26), “interactive activities using technology” (24), “role plays” (22), “songs and musical lyrics” (20), “exam practice” (14), “authentic materials like pamphlets, maps, menus, greeting cards, bus schedules” (6), and “traditional dances” (2).

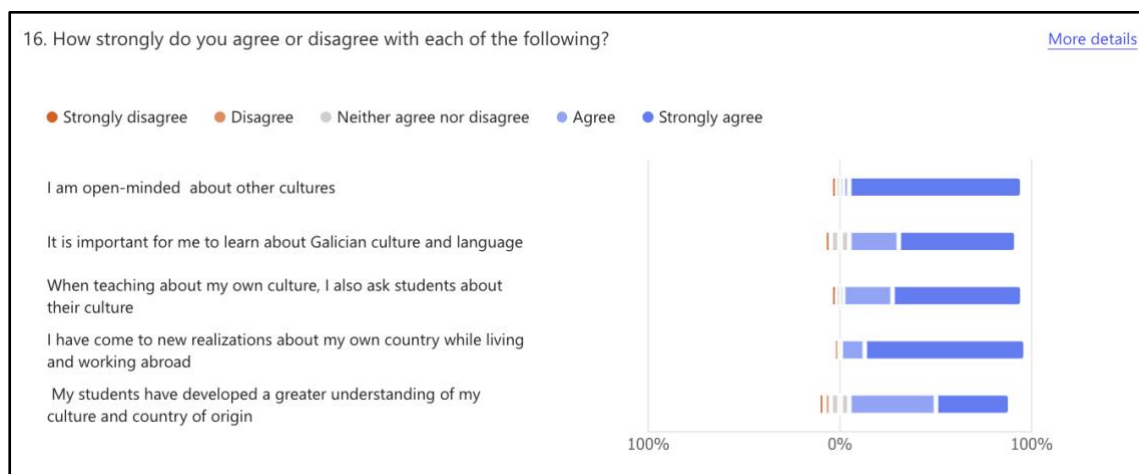


Figure 3. Language and culture assistants’ responses regarding intercultural awareness

With respect to the questions about intercultural awareness (see Figure 3), 90.3% of the language and culture assistants responded that they were open-minded about other cultures, 3.2% agreed, 3.2% neither agreed nor strongly disagreed, and 3.2% strongly disagreed. 61.3% of the respondents strongly agreed that it is important for them to learn about Galician culture and language, 25.8% agreed, 9.7% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 3.2% strongly disagreed. When teaching about their culture, 67.7% of language and culture assistants strongly agreed that they also asked students about their culture, 25.8% agreed that they inquired about students’ cultures, 3.2% were neutral, and 3.2% strongly disagreed. When asked if they have come to new realizations about their own countries while living and working abroad, 83.9% of them strongly agreed that they had, 12.9% agreed, and 3.2% strongly disagreed. When asked if they thought their students had developed a greater understanding of their culture and country of origin, 38.7% of the respondents strongly agreed, 45.2% agreed, 9.7% of them neither agreed nor disagreed, 3.2% disagreed, and 3.2% strongly disagreed.

For the language and culture assistants, they noted many benefits of working in this role (See Figure 4). Firstly, 30 of the respondents said that the best part of the position was living and working abroad. Secondly, 26 of the participants said that improving their Spanish language skills was one of the most beneficial aspects of the job. Thirdly, 23 of the participants responded that the school environment and the students were the best part of the job. Learning new

teaching methods had 16 responses while improving Galician language skills had 13 responses. One student commented in the “other” category” that “Learning about other cultures” was the best part of the program.

The language and culture assistants also responded about the challenges of the role and 18 of the respondents (36%) said that discipline problems in the classroom presented difficulties, while 10 participants (20%) responded that they did not have enough time to plan with the teaching staff, 9 respondents (18%) described clashes in methodologies and approaches with the teaching staff (traditional vs. innovative styles) to be an issue, 6 (12%) said that they had complicated schedules with too many classes, and 7 (14%) wrote comments in the “other” category. In the other category, respondents mentioned poor training and communication, low pay, engaging students in conversation, and the challenge of explaining false cognates to students.

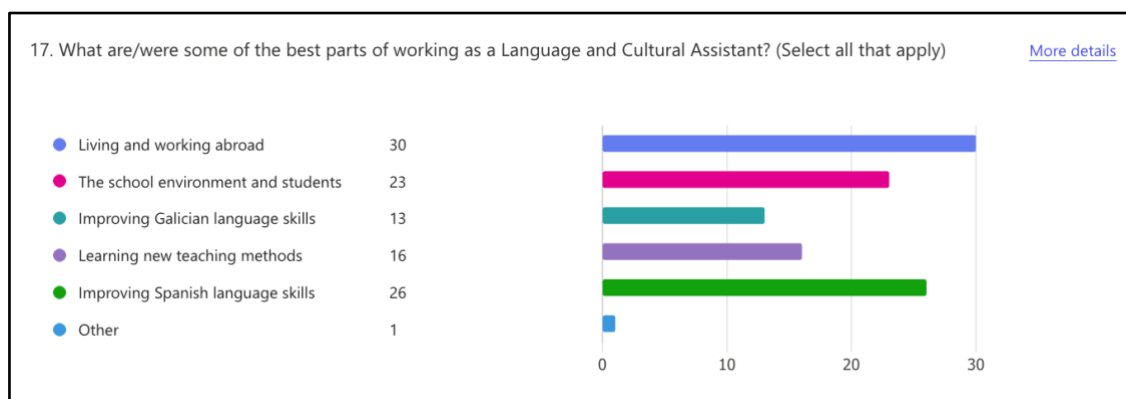


Figure 4. The best parts of working as a language and culture assistant

When asked about some of the steps that could be taken to improve the program in the future, 16 respondents (26%) said that they would like more classroom management training, 15 respondents (24%) said that they would like more opportunities to learn Spanish and Galician, 15 participants (24%) responded that they would like more training in how to teach English as a second language, 12 (19%) said that they would like ideas of ways to bring their culture into the classroom, and 4 (6%) checked the “other” box. 3 respondents added that they would like higher pay and benefits, and 1 participant explained that they would like better training to understand the role and training for teachers as to how to better implement them into their lesson plans.

Overall, the respondents rated how likely they would be to recommend the program to a friend at an average of 4.26/5. 16 respondents rated it at 5/5, 9 rated it at 4/5, 4 rated it at 3/5,

and 2 rated it at 2/5. When the participants were asked about their future plans in an open-ended question style, 9 respondents mentioned staying in the field of education, while 8 wrote that they would go into other fields like business or the non-profit sector.

4.2. Results from the Questionnaires from the Supervising Teachers

There were 32 teachers who responded to the questionnaires. 20 participants (63%) had more than 15 years of teaching experience, 5 respondents (16%) had between 5 and 10 years of teaching experience, 3 respondents (9%) had between 1 and 5 years of teaching experience, 2 (6%) had worked for between 10 and 15 years, one had more than 25 years of experience, and one respondent had more than 30 years of teaching experience. 91% of them worked at Official Language Schools, while 9% of them worked at middle and high schools. Many of the teachers who responded to the questionnaire had previous experience working with language and culture assistants: 44% of them had worked with between 4 and 8 assistants, 31% had worked with between 1 and 4 assistants, 19% of the supervising teachers had worked with between 8 and 12 assistants over the years, and 6% responded in the “other” category. One added that they have worked with more than 12 and one respondent added that they had worked with nearly 20 assistants over the years.

Regarding the role of the language and culture assistant, 28 respondents (88%) responded that the assistant was a language and culture ambassador, 2 respondents (6%) selected the assistant’s role to be cultural ambassador, 1 respondent (3%) said they were linguistic ambassadors, and one teacher responded that they should be assistant teachers who work with small groups of students (maximum 4) to scaffold language learning and facilitate more interaction and practice.

The teachers recognized the benefits that the language and culture assistants bring to classrooms and cited the top benefit (29%) to be the fact that the assistants share their traditions and culture with students. A second benefit that the teachers recognized (28%) was that the students were motivated to speak English with the language and culture assistant. Thirdly, 24% of the teachers saw the positive scope of the Galician students sharing their cultural traditions with the language assistants, thus increasing intercultural awareness. 17% of the teachers saw the benefit of exchanging language and cultural traditions with the assistant for their professional development. Finally, one teacher made an additional comment in the “other”

category that the language and culture assistant added a more contemporary cultural and linguistic reality to the classroom.

In terms of the topics the language and culture assistants are focusing on, the main emphasis is on festivals and traditions, where 40% of the responses show that those topics are taught “frequently.” The second most frequent topic is that of common expressions, slang, and idioms at 25%. Finally, the topic of food is taught “frequently” at a response rate of 15% as is the concept of “regional diversity.” The topics of “taboos” were never taught by 56% of the respondents.

The kinds of activities the teachers responded that are carried out with the language and culture assistants correspond quite closely with the results from the questionnaire completed by the assistants themselves.

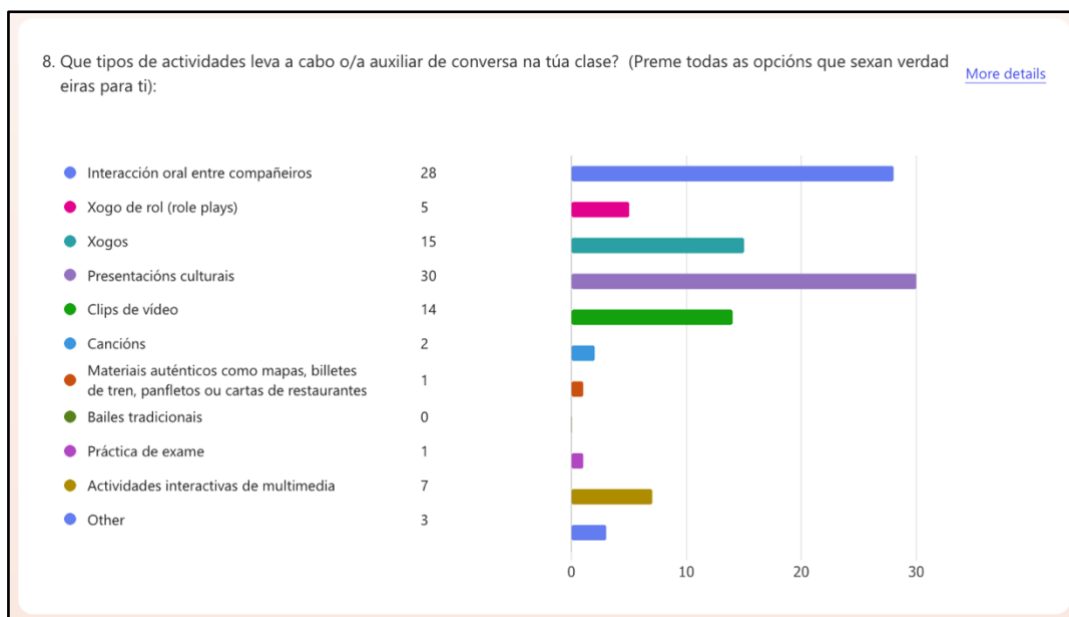


Figure 5. The Teachers’ responses to the kinds of activities carried out with the assistant

Cultural presentations rated the highest by 30 respondents (28%), followed by 28 respondents selecting partner speaking activities (26%). Games (14%) and video clips (13%) show similar percentages while interactive multimedia activities (7%), role plays (5%), songs (2%), exam practice (1%), and authentic materials (1%) are used less frequently. Also, in the “other” category 3% responded that they use the assistant to carry out small-group activities and to support small-group conversation activities (see Figure 5).

When asked about how they would take advantage of the language and culture assistant in their classroom, 37% responded by saying they would learn about the assistant's culture and traditions from their country of origin, 36% responded that they would use the assistant to help their students practice pronunciation, 16% said they would use them to design materials and resources to reuse every year, 6% would use the assistant for exam preparation, one teacher wrote "authentic listening comprehension," and another teacher added that they would practice strategies like recasting, or restating what the language assistant said by using communicative strategies to verify understanding.

Regarding the positive aspects of having language and culture assistants in the centers, 32% of the respondents rated the fact that their students could practice speaking with a native English speaker as the top benefit, followed by 27% saying that it gave them opportunities to have cultural workshops and talks at their centers, 22% said they offer a unique perspective to their center, 16% said they create innovative activities with the students, and 3% responded in the "other" category. One teacher wrote that the language and culture assistants provide a fresh cultural and linguistic perspective from someone who lives in a country where the language of study is spoken. Another teacher shared that the assistant offers the chance for students to practice authentic communication in a less rigid context that goes beyond the routine and theoretical bounds the traditional classroom offers.

For the teachers who participated in the survey, there were a number of challenges they mentioned (see Figure 6): 47% of respondents felt that the language and culture assistants had minimal teaching experience and classroom management training, 27% said that the students had difficulty understanding the assistant due to how fast they spoke the language, 10% said that collaborating with the assistant required additional work, 2% mentioned that the language barrier, and 14% responded in the "other" category. One teacher explained that the assistants have difficulty adjusting their language to different levels from pre-intermediate to advanced. Another teacher added that students may feel frustrated by not understanding the assistant. Another teacher wrote that students are embarrassed to speak to a native speaker and feel intimidated. Two other teachers mentioned that some of the assistants are very shy and struggle to draw upon their strengths and cultural backgrounds in the classroom setting while other assistants may lack initiative.

When asked how the program could be improved, 49% of the teachers responded that there needed to be better training in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)

methodology, 25% of them said that they could offer the assistants more opportunities to learn Spanish and Galician or to do language exchanges, 15% responded in the “other” category, and 11% said that they could train the language and culture assistants in intercultural communication. One teacher mentioned that they should help them integrate into the culture more since many of them feel isolated and that it would be beneficial to organize some cultural activities for them so that they do not feel so lonely and can get to know the culture better. Another teacher stated that they should enroll in Spanish and Galician courses before they arrive. 4 teachers mentioned the need to train assistants in the CEFR levels. One teacher explained that each assistant offers different challenges, as some need constant guidance while others take the initiative. Two other teachers mentioned that they need training in working with small groups and in designing authentic speaking tasks that make communication in the target language necessary to achieve the task.

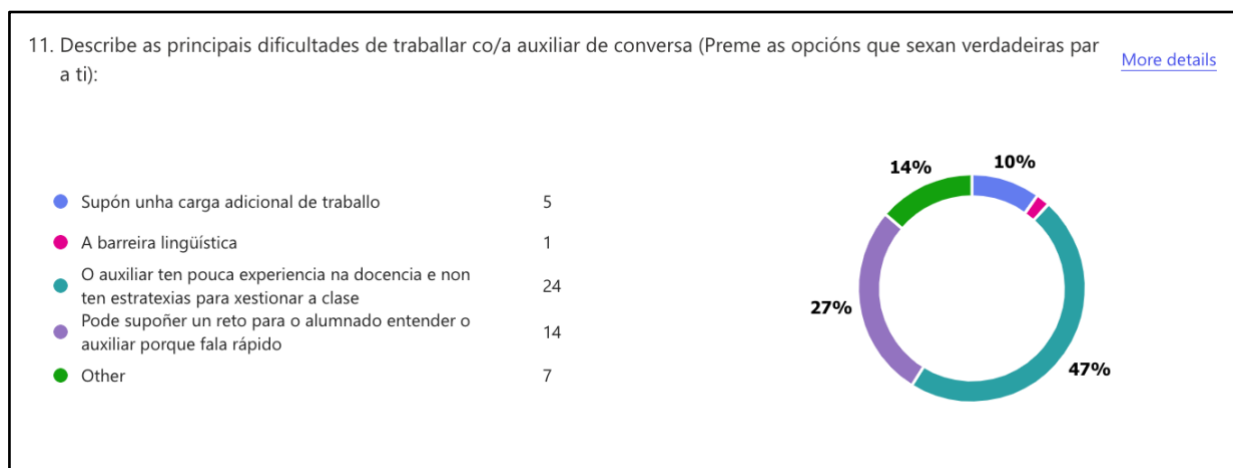


Figure 6. Teachers share the biggest challenges of working with the assistants

When rating NALCAP on a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being the highest and 1 being the lowest, the teachers rated it at 3.91/5, which was slightly lower than the rating that assistants themselves provided. 22 respondents rated the program 4/5, 5 respondents rated the program at 5/5, 3 respondents rated the program at 3/5, 1 respondent rated it at 2/5, and 1 rated the program at 1/5.

To close the questionnaire, there was an open-ended question that allowed the teachers to add any further comments about NALCAP that they wanted to share. In this section, three teachers shared that the program works effectively when the supervising teachers guide the language and culture assistant and give them clear tips on how to be successful, but that the program fails when teachers expect the assistants to lead the class or already know how to

design activities to teach English as a second language. These teachers mentioned that the success of the assistant also depends on the training and guidance that they receive from their supervising teachers. Another teacher mentioned that the assistants are spread too thin in some centers and cannot build strong relationships with students because they see groups for 45 minutes every week for 6-8 weeks. Another respondent explained that the language and culture assistants need better methodological and pedagogical training from the start and that it would be useful for them to work for 2-3 years at the same center to develop and build on their skills and not have to start over every year training a new Language and Culture Assistant. One teacher expressed a desire to host more British assistants because they never call in sick and are more dependable than language assistants from the United States. Another teacher said that each assistant is different, but that they often have better luck with assistants who are older and more mature, but that many of the assistants showed little initiative to create motivating activities for students.

5. Discussion and Recommendations

The survey data sheds light on significant trends that can be examined from multiple perspectives to consider ways to improve the overall level of satisfaction and effectiveness of NALCAP; and offer suggestions to further develop intercultural competence and social agency in the teaching and learning process. There are three main areas of focus in the recommendations section that will be examined through the lens of the theoretical framework of intercultural competence: recommendations for teaching materials, suggestions for more effective pedagogical methods, and ways to enhance the initial teacher training for the language and culture assistants.

5.1. Leveraging Authentic Materials

Based on the survey results, the language and culture assistants are using a variety of activities in their sessions such as: videos, interactive games, partner speaking activities, songs, role-plays, and exam practice. However, the survey results showed that only 3% of language and culture respondents use authentic materials in the classroom, namely: pamphlets, maps, greeting cards, menus, bus schedules, and tickets. They seem to be relying more on games (15%), cultural presentations (15%), and partner speaking tasks (13%) as their preferred classroom activities. In the questionnaire for mentor teachers, the results were slightly different

and they rated cultural presentations as being carried out more often (28% of the time), while partner speaking activities (26% of the time), games (14%) and video clips (13%), and authentic materials were utilized only 1% of the time. These results show an overall lack of use of authentic materials by language and culture assistants. Moreover, the data underscores the relevance of training teachers and assistants in practical ways of developing intercultural competence through the use of authentic materials in communicative and written tasks.

Mentor teachers might consider encouraging language and culture assistants to bring authentic materials to their sessions, sharing their culture more interactively and creatively. Buckingham (2019) suggests teachers request the language and culture assistants who work in their classrooms to bring authentic materials to use both in communicative tasks, but also in cultural presentations, or as an example of a final product that students could create at the end of a unit (22). Items such as tickets to a basketball game, bus route schedules, maps, magazines, menus from restaurants, and pamphlets from cultural events from the home country can make for creative and authentic learning opportunities that provide a window into intercultural competence. Many of these items can be found on the internet and printed out or projected on the screen, but the sheer novelty of having a tactile object or colorful item from a different country stimulates learning. Gilmore (2007) provides evidence that authentic materials can be highly motivating for language learners and often contrast with the bland, often artificial dialogues presented in textbooks.

The teachers who responded to the questionnaires commented on the value that the language and culture assistants offer since they, “bring a fresh cultural and linguistic perspective of someone who resides in the country where the target language is spoken.” So, the interactions between students and the language and cultural assistants are seen as beneficial since they learn about each other’s cultures. Another teacher explained that students benefit because they feel “a necessity to speak to be able to communicate and the dynamic breaks down the rigidity of typical classroom.” These comments show some of the key benefits the teachers perceived the program to have.

In the survey, 67% of the language and culture assistants strongly agreed and 26% agreed when responding to the question about exchanging cultural information; when they shared information about their own culture with students in classrooms, they also asked students about Galician culture in exchange. To draw on these statistics, which show cultural exchange as an area of strength, and to further develop the skill of intercultural awareness and

competence, mentor teachers and language and culture assistants could make a concerted effort to bring in more opportunities to talk about holidays and festivals in a contemporary approach with authentic materials from current events.

Notably, when the students explain their local cultural traditions to the assistant, the conversation opens up authentic opportunities for communication and exchange (Buckingham, 2019, p. 23). For instance, students may want to explain the Holy Week and Easter traditions to the assistant using authentic posters and flyers from Galicia, which requires linguistic mediation, an important skill for communication. These kinds of conversations stimulate intercultural communication (Arasaratnam-Smith & Deardorff, 2023) because students reflect on their own culture and then compare it to cultures in other parts of the world. In exchange, the North American Language and Cultural Assistant can share about the importance of the Easter bunny or about the tradition of hunting for Easter eggs in the United States or about any similar traditions in their home country. Interactions like these lead to comparing and contrasting, which is a higher-order thinking skill on Bloom's Taxonomy and pushes students to think critically and more globally beyond the walls of their classrooms.

To develop critical thinking and analysis skills, students could explore authentic materials from a critical perspective, comparing and contrasting two comics about a topic like education or sports. This could also be done by selecting two comics showing different perspectives and analyzing the differences. The comic could be analyzed from a historical context or from a political, ideological, cultural, or religious viewpoint. According to Byram et. al:

It is important to use authentic material but to ensure that learners understand its context and intention. Materials from different origins with different perspectives should be used together to enable learners to compare and to analyse the materials critically. It is more important that learners acquire skills of analysis than factual information. (2002, p. 24)

This also applies to the kinds of authentic materials that the North American Language and Culture Assistants bring to the classroom and their ability to help students explore the materials with a critical and analytical perspective.

In the survey results, the language and culture assistants mainly talk about holidays and traditions and language for shopping, visiting museums, going to the bank and daily routines.

They sometimes talk about foods and recipes, music and pop culture, and stereotypes; they rarely talk about news stories and regional and ethnic diversity. Based on the results, there could be more of an effort made to build on activities that bring an analytical perspective into language instruction, discussing issues of race, gender, diversity, inclusion, tolerance, and respect.

Beyond the critical and intercultural approach to language instruction, the task-based learning approach also holds educational value in the plurilingual classroom. Fernández López and Navarro Blanco (2010) explain that the task-based approach motivates students by engaging them in real and authentic activities, where they practice communicative skills in contexts that replicate everyday situations or that facilitate meaningful and gradual language acquisition. Students feel motivated by the need to communicate the missing information in order to complete the task. When task-based learning is combined with authentic materials, students work on improving their communication skills while simultaneously discovering cultural information. Palacios Martínez (2014) explains that when language learning goes beyond the walls of the classroom through relevant and authentic communicative tasks, students are also more motivated to participate in the lesson.

When North American Language and Culture Assistants bring authentic materials into the classroom, they have an opportunity to bridge their culture into the curriculum and offer a new, dynamic approach. In contrast to static textbooks that are outdated or fail to adequately capture the ways in which cultures are changing and evolving, North American Language and Culture Assistants can potentially build intercultural competence and resist biased, one-sided, stereotypical viewpoints. The ability to think critically is crucial in today's more diverse world, where cultural identities and traditions are always changing. Furthermore, intercultural competence fosters more respectful interactions that acknowledge the complexity of changing identities and give voice to different points of view in a democratic society (Byram et al., 2002).

5.2. Leveraging Pedagogies of Social Agency: Mediation

In the survey comments, many teachers expressed the importance of using language and culture assistants in the classroom for small-group work rather than for whole-class lectures and presentations. Since the majority of the language and culture assistants are recent college graduates and have little teaching and previous work experience, they need substantial guidance and mentorship to understand their role. They also reported struggling with classroom management and discipline issues as being their main challenge. One teacher wrote:

Paréceme un recurso valioso e mal utilizado ao mesmo tempo; en EOIs en particular, NON se debería utilizar o auxiliar en “whole class teaching”. Non é nin xusto para os auxiliares, nin para o alumnado. Ao meu parecer, conviría unha visión máis pragmática e orientada a produtos de aprendizaxe.

[It seems to me a valuable yet poorly used resource; in EOIs in particular, the language assistant should NOT be used in whole class teaching. It’s not fair to the assistants, nor to the students. In my opinion, a more pragmatic, learning-product-oriented approach would be more appropriate.]

The above quote from a teacher, who has worked with somewhere between 4 and 8 language assistants over the years, explained in a further comment that when the language and culture assistants work with small groups, the conversation flows more naturally and authentically. When they lecture or give whole-class presentations, she said that the students do not enjoy it as much and the language and cultural assistant is put in a position in which they are not prepared for or trained to fulfill. Palacios Martínez (2014) describes the importance of motivating students to be autonomous and to work together on collaborative, small group tasks in order to spark interest in the content. The idea of the pedagogical shift from whole-class instruction to small-group instruction aligns with the theoretical framework of the learner as a social agent.

The updated *Companion Volume* to the CEFR emphasizes the role of the language learner as a social agent—an individual who actively engages with their environment and takes ownership of their learning (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 22). This perspective shifts language learning away from passive reception toward meaningful, participatory interaction. In addition, mediation can be used with one language or with multiple languages and modalities (sign language or body language). In particular, the development of intercultural competence is framed as an active and dialogic process, requiring learners to engage in communication that challenges assumptions and fosters deeper cultural understanding. According to the Council of Europe, “Cross-linguistic and cross-modal mediation, in particular, inevitably involve social and cultural competence as well as plurilingual competence” (2020, p. 91).

In this action-oriented approach, small group activities and one-on-one conversations with the North American Language and Culture Assistant become especially valuable for meaning making through mediation. These small-group settings create opportunities for

learners to interact authentically, reflect critically, and take communicative risks to reach an agreement or construct new meaning. As Byram et al. (2002) argue, the role of the language teacher—and by extension, the assistant—is not to simply transmit facts about other cultures, but to structure learning experiences that cultivate analytical thinking, intercultural awareness, and reflective practice (pp. 33–34). All in all, changing the dynamic from whole-class to small-group is an essential part of increasing engagement in the learning process. Building on this idea, one of the methods that promotes the learner as a social agent is mediation.

Mediation is one of the five skills related to communication and language learning that involves reception, interaction, and production (Chiappii & Mansur, 2021). It can involve explaining a text, navigating communication in pluricultural spaces, and mediating through collaboration during group work. According to the Council of Europe:

In mediation, the user/learner acts as a social agent who creates bridges and helps to construct or convey meaning, sometimes within the same language, sometimes across modalities (e.g. from spoken to signed or vice versa, in cross-modal communication) and sometimes from one language to another (cross-linguistic mediation). (2020, p. 90)

Mediation involves cultural dimensions, socio-emotional, and textual dimensions in the meaning-making process. It also places students in the role of active, social agents who co-construct knowledge and reconstruct knowledge by taking notes, summarizing, elaborating, simplifying, and adapting information to pass it on. Students can work on correlating language chunks in order to relay specific information to their peers. Mediation creates a pluricultural space by recognizing the complex nature of language, yet its overall goal is to reduce outside stresses and make production realistic and practical.

When asked what they considered some of the benefits of having language and cultural assistants in the classrooms, 29% of teachers said that one of the benefits was for their students to learn about the cultural traditions of the language and culture assistant, 28% responded that their students were motivated to speak English with someone whose first language is English, 24% responded that it was beneficial for the Galician students to share their local cultural traditions with the language and cultural assistant to promote cultural exchange. In a later question, 37% of teachers said they take advantage of the language and culture assistant by learning about their country's traditions and 36% said they use the assistant to practice pronunciation.

While analyzing the survey results and aligning them to the CEFR descriptors, it became apparent that mediation is a core skill that fills an important gap in the process of fostering the development of students' intercultural competence and linguistic skills. Since mediation is a relatively newly recognized skill, it is often disregarded. Moreover, the primary skills of listening, reading, writing, and speaking are prioritized. However, mediation is an effective tool that aims to open doors to communication between learners from different sociocultural and sociolinguistic differences (Chiappini & Mansur, 2021). In her article, Piccardo (2022) describes how mediation serves as a powerful method to help students go from a “deficiency perspective” to a “proficiency perspective,” helping learners see the importance of being plurilingual and living in a pluricultural society in making meaning and knowledge construction (p. 17). In summary, there are unique approaches using mediation that are highly effective in promoting intercultural communication and awareness. Furthermore, mediation brilliantly aligns with the vision and goals of the North American Language and Culture Assistants program and the Spanish curriculum since it combines both intercultural communication with language use. To conclude, authentic materials and mediation are tools that can support the development of intercultural competence.

What is more, mediation can provide a kind of third space for meaning making. Coste and Cavalli (2015) explain, “Mediation is concerned with the ‘space between’. It is more than a go-between function and more than a kind of filter ..., mainly as a result of linguistic variation and reformulation and cultural information and advice ...” (p. 29). The authors go on to explain that mediation is transformative as it facilitates the construction of new meaning and tends to put two poles or ends of the spectrum in a process that develops an alternative or a possible solution.

The concept of mediation is quite theoretical, but in their teacher training series, Piccardo and North (2021) describe a variety of lesson plans that outline practical ways mediation can be carried out with students in classrooms. For example, they use a menu from an English-speaking country as an authentic cultural resource (p. 6). Students then have designated roles in the task. The first student describes the menu options to another classmate who doesn't speak any English and prepares a few questions to ask the server. Then, student B decides what they want to order off the menu and prepares additional questions for the server. Finally, student C plays the role of the server and comes to take the students' orders. Student A has to mediate what student B wants to the server and the server asks the students a number of questions that replicate an authentic restaurant scenario. The lesson plan also provides

adaptations for beginner to intermediate levels on the CEFR scale. The authors write that the constraints added to each role contribute to the mediation task, “but the presence of a person who does not speak (or pretends he/she does not) the target language encourages creativity and awareness of possible linguistic and cultural differences (p.7).” Moreover, a simple menu could be used for A1-A2 students and a more advanced menu with more option choices could be employed in the C1 level classes.

The above example from the Council of Europe’s website (2025) could be replicated with language and cultural assistants. For example, they could print off a menu from the internet from a local restaurant in their town. Then, students could be assigned roles with constraints and tasks to ask questions to the server. Students could role-play a restaurant scene, or they could each describe three menus from three different restaurants in the town and come to an agreement about which one to try out based on options, prices, and parking. This shifts the dynamic from the language and culture assistant simply describing the kind of typical foods from their county to giving more social agency to the students in the class. Thus, an action-oriented intercultural approach is utilized that involves participation, communication, and intercultural competence. To incorporate an analytical perspective, menus could be analyzed from a historical angle, exploring different dishes in different neighborhoods or regions of the language assistant’s city and learning about the historical, and cultural influences in the dishes.

An activity like this is similar to what students have to do in the mediation of the speaking exam at the Official School of Languages (EOI). However, only 7% of the language and cultural assistants are focusing on exam practice in their sessions. Teachers report an even lower percentage (1%) of focus on exam practice in the classroom. Perhaps exam practice could be renamed to be “speaking mediation” practice in small groups. The language and culture assistant could bring flyers from sports events in their city and students would have to mediate what is on the flyers to their classmates and choose a sporting event to attend. Students might have follow-up questions about sports and culture in the language assistant’s home country that could lead to further interest and motivation. Another activity based on Piccardo and North’s (2021) webinar series on mediation might be to organize a trip for a visitor to tour the local town, recommending local sites for them to visit. In a follow-up class, they could pretend they are visiting the North American Language and Cultural Assistant’s town and read flyers from three different places in the city: a museum, a historical landmark, and a university, to name a few. Then, the students could prepare an email suggesting their top three destinations, taking into consideration a few constraints like time, location, and budget. As indicated, the kinds of

mediation activities recommended in this section are student-centered, require relaying information, co-constructing new meaning, negotiating, and developing intercultural competence.

5.3. Leveraging the Initial Training

The survey results from the language and culture assistants show that they were moderately satisfied with the initial training (3.06/5.0). When asked to rate the overall program, the rating was an average of one point higher and the assistants said that they were very likely to recommend the program to a friend (4.26/5.0). Notwithstanding, many teachers and language assistants wrote specific comments about how to improve the initial training to make it more effective in order to set a positive tone for the rest of the school year. One teacher commented that the initial training could not be considered a “training,” because it was more of an overview of the program. The cooperating teachers seemed to be concerned that the language and culture assistants needed more training in how to teach English as a second language. Multiple teachers commented on the need to train the assistants to use the CEFR levels and framework since they came without knowledge of how to modify their language and adapt their speaking speed and vocabulary to different levels of language learners (i.e., A2, B1, B2, C1, etc.). In the questionnaires for mentor teachers, one of the teacher respondents wrote:

A acollida que a Consellería fai ao principio de curso na Cidade da Cultura non é moi efectiva; demasiadas persoas, moita información e non hai tempo para coñecerse. Todo se transmite en galego, o que dificulta a comprensión ás persoas auxiliares recién chegadas.

[The initial training the Council carries out at the beginning of the semester at the *Cidade da Cultura* isn't very effective; too many people, too much information and there isn't time to get to know each other. All of the information is given in Galician, which is difficult for the newly arrived Language and Culture Assistants to understand.]

The above comment speaks to the need to improve the initial meeting at the *Cidade de Cultura* and provide language assistants with better methodological and pedagogical training from the beginning of their program. One language and culture assistant wrote, “The orientation that the assistants attend is completely useless. It was mainly used as a photo-opt for the ministry.” Another teacher wrote that they did not receive any training, which shows that the initial orientation could be substantially improved. Another language assistant who had done the Fulbright U.S. Student Program before joining NALCAP wrote, “I consider the pedagogical

training from Fulbright to have been much more effective. Additionally, Fulbright also gave region-specific cultural adaption sessions, which was very useful on a practical level.” Therefore, it would be interesting to model the training after other successful models like Fulbright to provide more extensive pedagogical and intercultural training.

When asked about the language proficiency levels of the language and culture assistants in the survey, 71% had an advanced level of Spanish, while only 35% had zero proficiency of Galician and 48% had a beginner level of Galician. Despite these statistics, the initial training is carried out in Galician, which means that the assistants may have a very low comprehension of what is being said. One teacher stated that courses in Galician and Spanish could be offered to assistants before they arrive so that they are more prepared to speak the language. Another option would be to offer the initial training in multiple languages, and perhaps even provide parts of the training in English to make sure the information in the training is clearly relayed and understood. Another interesting factor in the survey results was that some mentor teachers shared that language and culture assistants often feel isolated from their peers and from the culture and would benefit from learning about local resources to take language classes, engage in language exchanges, participate in social and cultural activities, and connect with the local community.

In the questionnaire, one of the language and culture assistants wrote, “I think as far as exposure to the surrounding culture goes you get out of the program what you put into it. You have to want to seek out Spanish and Galician speakers to learn.” He went on to explain how positively the language and culture impacted his future career in his industry, “At the same time as being an auxiliar I was able to take Galician classes at the EOI and become fluent in Galician. Now, I work for a Spanish importer and write about Galician products...” This particular North American Language and Culture Assistant could be found and invited to speak to the newly hired assistants to explain how he took advantage of so many opportunities to delve into the Galician culture and learn the language and then drew upon Galician language and culture in his future career. Perhaps the program could consider taking advantage of such interesting profiles of previous participants and requesting them to lead some of the trainings in a hybrid or virtual format. As previously described in the methods section, one teacher commented that it would be useful for the contracts to be for two or three years at the same center to develop and build on their teaching skills and not have to start over every year training a new North American Language and Culture Assistant.

One of the North American Language and Culture Assistants expressed frustration with the lack of appreciation she felt from the students and the need for more training about how to be the best resource for the classroom. As she stated:

I believe that in my experience, I have come into contact with many students who could not care less about whether or not I was present in the classroom, some even roll their eyes when I enter, as they know that the class will be given in English. There are (very) few who do appreciate the work of language assistants, although I think that the majority of the students do not realize that if utilized correctly, the language assistants could be a great help to their English learning experience. On the other side, language assistants should have a bit more training as we all come with different backgrounds and experiences and sometimes do not know how to best be a resource for the classroom.

The above statement shows that it would be beneficial to offer more in-depth training in discourse to mentor teachers and North American Language and Culture Assistants to help them understand cultural and communication differences. In their article, Dafouz and Hibler (2013) convey that language and culture assistants often add to the idiomatic and informal level of the conversation, whereas the formally trained teachers may speak a more academic register. They focus on direct vs. indirect communication and about classroom discipline and intercultural communication in their research study. The researchers suggest providing a training into discourse for teachers and language and culture assistants so that they can have a deeper understanding of cultural differences to enhance cultural appreciation and collaboration in the classroom.

The questionnaire results clearly show a need to strengthen the training and development of the language and culture assistants. Firstly, the initial training could be done before the assistants arrive through a virtual online course such as a MOOC or a MOODLE course getting them ready for the exchange experience. In this online course, they could use videos of previous language and cultural assistants who have had positive experiences and have tips for taking advantage of the cultural and linguistic resources that surround them in Galicia. Then, the initial training at the *Cidade de Cultura* could be carried out in multiple languages to facilitate the understanding of the newly arrived language and cultural assistants who may speak very little Galician. Secondly, the program could take advantage of the opportunity to train the language and culture assistants in some basic fundamental techniques of TEFL (Teaching

English as a Second Language) such as the CEFR descriptors, how to modulate one's language based on the CEFR language levels, and how to manage the classroom in small groups.

A further set of responses to the open-ended questions in the questionnaire highlighted the importance of the active participation of the supervising teachers in the training and development of the language and culture assistants. One teacher expressed her concern over supervising teachers who expect the language and culture assistants to be trained teachers and know how to adapt activities to different language levels. Two other teachers mentioned that the assistants need training in working with small groups and in designing authentic speaking tasks that make communication in the target language necessary to achieve the task. One teacher explained that the assistants are often young and inexperienced and need support and guidance. However, not all language and culture assistants are the same and one teacher noted that each assistant offers different challenges, as some need constant guidance while others take the initiative. Likewise, some assistants are shy while others are outgoing and the supervising teachers discussed the importance of scaffolding support based on the assistants' personalities, strengths, and weaknesses. The evidence presented in the questionnaires points out how crucial the role of the supervising teacher is in providing support, guidance, and structure to the language and culture assistant to help them carry out their role with more confidence

As a final suggestion, pedagogical resources could be presented to language and culture assistants and their mentor teachers as example lesson plans and or templates that they could adjust based on their cultural background. Additionally, they could receive a list of possible ways of drawing upon their cultural heritage through the use of authentic materials in the classroom. Also, they could be introduced to a hands-on mediation activity in Spanish so that they could experience what it is like to be in the students' shoes. There could be more consistent trainings once a month that deal with topics like intercultural awareness, direct vs. indirect discourse, mediation, and sample lesson plans and templates to share with supervising teachers and language and culture assistants. To conclude, the program could also train the supervising teachers to scaffold and support the assistants through clear communication and feedback as they transition into fulfilling their roles successfully.

6. Limitations of the Study

This research study may oversimplify information since the data is based on questionnaire results alone. One of the limitations of the study is the relatively small sample

size, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. While the smaller sample provided valuable insights, a larger-scale study would be necessary to confirm these patterns across diverse groups of language and culture assistants across Galicia. In addition, the survey was sent out only one time. To show changes over time or to track shifts in methodologies, a longitudinal study could be carried out. Furthermore, while surveys gather broad information efficiently, they may not capture the depth of perspectives and experiences that other qualitative methods like classroom observations and longer interviews could achieve. Further research could employ a mixed-methods approach using classroom observations and interviews to complement the survey findings.

7. Conclusion

Through a theoretical lens of intercultural competence, the findings derived from the questionnaires shed light on the research questions that drove the study: 1) What kind of cultural information do language and cultural ambassadors exchange with students in the classroom?, and 2) What are some common methods language assistants use with students?, and 3) Do these methods facilitate intercultural competence? The three initial research questions explored the kinds of cultural information that the language and cultural ambassadors exchanged with their students and the methods that they used to facilitate learning. Additionally, the research sought to understand how the mentor teachers could draw upon the language and cultural assistants' rich cultural backgrounds more fully and comprehensibly.

Based on the results from 64 responses from language and culture assistants and the teachers who supervise them, this research study discovered that the language and culture assistants primarily share about their cultures by presenting information about festivals and holidays, foods and recipes, colloquial slang and expressions, daily routines and lifestyle differences, to name a few. This cultural information is shared primarily through cultural presentations, partner conversations, games, videos, interactive technology, and songs. A whole-class approach was employed more frequently, and assistants acknowledged that they struggled with classroom discipline issues. In the discussion section, the recommendation to change the classroom dynamic to small group work, focusing on placing the students as agents in their learning through mediation, could allow the assistants to be even more effective in facilitating intercultural competence more deliberately. Finally, the flipped power dynamic could increase motivation and decrease classroom discipline issues. It should be acknowledged

that the more traditional teaching methods do not always facilitate intercultural competence, nor do they position the learner as a social agent engaged in an action-oriented learning process.

The quantitative data illustrated certain gaps in resources and instructional methods that are being underutilized and overlooked, like mediation and the use of authentic materials. Also, the questionnaire data indicates that the mentor teachers recognize the many benefits the assistants offer their students, especially giving them the chance to practice authentic communication that goes beyond the bounds of the textbook. Despite the positive outcomes, the mentor teachers expressed a great need to provide the assistants with more in-depth training in how to teach English as a second language. Further, the mentor teachers outlined the importance of increasing opportunities for the assistants to learn Galician and Spanish before their arrival and during their exchange period in Galicia. Thus, the initial training could more effectively tackle these challenges and prepare language and culture assistants to understand how to leverage their cultural and linguistic repertoire to more effectively carry out their role in the classroom. Finally, the research reveals the importance of the mentor teachers as active agents in supporting the development of the language and culture assistant as they navigate a new role with often little teaching experience.

Mentor teachers and language assistants can consider innovative and engaging methods that take advantage of the motivating factor of small-group work and real-world scenarios. In the discussion section, three recommendations are provided: 1) Leverage authentic materials, 2) Leverage mediation activities, and 3) Leverage the initial training. These suggestions would undoubtedly improve the overall success of the program. In addition, the pedagogical shift would integrate important cultural, linguistic, and social elements into the language learning process that place the learner as a social agent and the language and cultural assistant as a mediator, guide, and facilitator of learning. This research calls for an action-oriented approach that is creative, strategic, and aligned with the current educational models and laws.

The end goal of this research study is to improve NALCAP so that students are engaged and motivated in democratic, intercultural, and inclusive language classrooms. The NALCAP in Spain is an innovative initiative that has successfully enhanced language education while promoting cross-cultural understanding. Through the program, thousands of language and cultural assistants in Spain have had the opportunity to improve their language skills and broaden their cultural horizons, while at the same time gaining teaching experience and a deep connection to Spanish culture. As it continues to expand in diverse regions, the program plays an increasingly important role in promoting multilingualism, intercultural competence, and

global citizenship. In summary, this thesis has proved that, as NALCAP develops and flourishes, it is essential to focus on practical and effective ways of leveraging dynamic, diverse, and contemporary methods to promote intercultural competence.

This research thesis contributes to the body of knowledge about language and culture assistants and intercultural competence. Beyond that, it has also allowed for the development of competencies that are essential to this Master's degree, namely research and innovation. The research process, which involved carrying out a literature review, writing research questions, conducting quantitative research, analyzing data, and forming conclusions are all necessary skills for future educators. If carried out systematically and consistently, educational research allows teachers to innovate solutions, stay up to date with the latest laws and trends, and contribute to and further research in the field. Consequently, programs such as NALCAP benefit from the findings. Likewise, solutions to challenges can be implemented based on the results. The teacher/researcher realizes the positive impact research can have on their students, schools, and university community while at the same time enhancing their competencies in research and innovation, key skills that are fundamental to this Master's degree.

8. References

- Albert Gómez, M. J. (2007). *La investigación educativa: Claves teóricas*. [Educational research: Theoretical keys]. McGraw Hill.
- Arasaratnam-Smith, L. A., & Dearsdorff, D. K. (2023). *Developing Intercultural Competence in Higher Education: International Students' Stories and Self-Reflection*. Routledge.
- Buckingham, L. R. (2018). Defining the role of language assistants in the bilingual classroom. *Tecnología, Ciencia y Educación*, 9, 38–49.
- Buckingham, L. R. (2019). Auxiliares de conversación: Una oportunidad para desarrollar la competencia intercultural en el aula. [Language assistants: an opportunity to develop intercultural competence in the classroom]. *Padres y Maestros/ Journal of Parents and Teachers*, 378, 19–23. <https://doi.org/10.14422/pym.i378.y2019.003>
- Byram, M., Gribkova, B., & Starkey, H. (2002). *Developing the intercultural dimension in language teaching: A practical introduction for teachers*. The Council of Europe.
- Chiappini, R., & Mansur, E. (2021). *Activities for Mediation: Building Bridges in the ELT Classroom*. Delta.
- Coste, D., & Cavalli. (2015). *Education, mobility, otherness: The mediation functions of schools*. The Council of Europe.
- Council of Europe. (2001). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*. Council of Europe. <https://rm.coe.int/common-european-framework-of-reference-for-languages-learning-teaching/16809ea0d4>
- Council of Europe. (2020). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (Companion Volume)*. Council of Europe.
- Council of Europe. (2025). Mediation. Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/mediation>.

- Dafouz, E., & Hibler, A. (2013). “Zip your lips” or “Keep quiet”: Main teachers’ and language assistants’ classroom discourse in CLIL settings. *The Modern Language Journal (Boulder, Colo.)*, 97(3), 655–669.
- Deardorff, D. K. (2019). Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 10(3), 241–266.
- Decreto 81/2018, de 19 de xullo, polo que se establece o currículo dos niveis básico A1, básico A2, intermedio B1, intermedio B2, avanzado C1 e avanzado C2 das ensinanzas de idiomas de réxime especial na Comunidade Autónoma de Galicia. Consellería de Cultura, Educación e Ordenación Universitaria, Núm. 154, DOG [Diario Oficial de Galicia], 13 de agosto de 2018. [Decree 81/2018, of July 19, which establishes the curriculum for the basic levels A1 and A2, intermediate levels B1 and B2, and advanced levels C1 and C2 of special-regime language education in the Autonomous Community of Galicia. Ministry of Culture, Education and University Planning, No. 154, Official Publication of Galicia (DOG), August 13, 2018]
- DECRETO 156/2022, do 15 de setembro, polo que se establecen a ordenación e o currículo da educación secundaria obrigatoria na Comunidade Autónoma de Galicia. [Decree 156/2022, of September 15, which establishes the organization and curriculum of compulsory secondary education in the Autonomous Community of Galicia].
- Fernández López, S., & Navarro Blanco. (2010). *Enfoque por tarefas: Propostas didácticas*. [Task-based learning: proposed activities]. Ministerio de Educación.
- Galicia@Press. (2024, May 27). *Más de 650 auxiliares de conversación extranjeros llegarán al sistema educativo gallego para el próximo curso*. [More than 650 language assistants from abroad will join the Galician education system in the upcoming academic year]. <https://www.galiciapress.es/articulo/ultima-hora/2024-05-27/4846192-650-auxiliares-conversacion-extranjeros-llegaran-sistema-educativo-gallego-proximo-curso>
- Gilmore, A. (2007). Authentic materials and authenticity in foreign language learning. *Language Teaching*, 40, 97–118. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444807004144>
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2014). Culturally Relevant Pedagogy 2.0: A.k.a. The Remix. *Harvard Educational Review*, 84(1), 74–135.

- Ley Orgánica 3/2020, de 29 de diciembre, por la que se modifica la Ley Orgánica 2/2006, de 3 de mayo, de Educación. [Organic Law 3/2020, of December 29, which amends Organic Law 2/2006, of May 3, on Education].
- Litzler Frances, M. (2020). Native English Speaker's in Madrid's classrooms: Difficulties reported by Assistants/ Hablantes nativos de inglés en las aulas de Madrid: Dificultades señaladas por auxiliares. *Tejuelo. Didáctica de La Lengua y La Literatura. Educación*, 31, 47–76.
- López Medina, B., & Otto, A. (2020). Language Assistants' Expectations Towards their Role and Main Functions: The Case of Madrid's Bilingual Schools. *Porta Linguarum: Revista Internacional de Didáctica de Las Lenguas Extranjeras*, 33, 95–109. <https://doi.org/10.30827/portalin.vi33.18127>
- McDonogh, J., & McDonough, S. (1997). *Research methods for English language teachers*. Arnold.
- Ministerio & de Educación, Formación Profesional y Deportes. (2024). *Auxiliares de conversación extranjeros en España: Guía 2024-2025*. [Foreign language assistants in Spain: Guide 2024-2025]. Ministerio de educación, formación profesional y deportes.
- Palacios Martínez, I. (2014). La motivación en el aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera. ¿Qué podemos hacer con alumnos desmotivados? [Motivation in learning a second language. What can we do with unmotivated students?] *Mosaico*, 32, 20-28.
- Pérez, I. D., & Cerqueiro, F. F. (2024). Language assistants in the Primary Education classroom: Teachers' and assistants' perspectives in Galicia (Spain). *Didáctica-Lengua y Literatura*, 36(SI), 179–189.
- Piccardo, E. (2022). Mediation and the Plurilingual/ Pluricultural Dimension in Language Education. *Italiano LinguaDue*, 2, 1–22.
- Piccardo, E., & North, B. (2021). *Action-oriented plurilingual mediation in collaborative tasks*.
- Tobin, N. A., & Abello-Contesse, C. (2013). The Use of Native Assistants as Language and Cultural Resources in Andalusia's Bilingual Schools. In *Bilingual and Multilingual Education in the 21st Century: Building on Experience* (pp. 203–230). Multilingual

Matters. <https://doi.org/doi:10.21832/9781783090716-014>

Trujillo Sáez, F. (2005). En torno a la interculturalidad: Reflexiones sobre cultura y comunicación para la didáctica de la lengua. [Surrounding interculturality: Reflections on culture and communication in language teaching]. *Porta Linguarum*, 4.

Xunta de Galicia. (2024, October 2). *Román Rodríguez da la bienvenida a 665 auxiliares de conversación de 24 países de los 5 continentes que trabajarán en las aulas gallegas este curso*. <https://www.xunta.gal/es/notas-de-prensa/-/nova/005812/roman-rodriguez-bienvenida-665-auxiliares-conversacion-24-paises-los-5-continentes>

Yazdanpanah, R. (2019). Exploring and Expressing Culture through Project-Based Learning. *English Teaching Forum*, 57(3). <https://americanenglish.state.gov/resources/english-teaching-forum-2019-volume-57-number-3#child-2526>

9. Attachments

9.1. Questionnaire for the Language and Culture Assistant (Auxiliar)

- 1) Consent form and signature
- 2) How old are you? (Drop down list: 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, Other)
- 3) Education (highest qualification or current program of study)
 - a) Vocational training
 - b) University graduate
 - c) Master's degree
 - d) Doctorate
 - e) Other _____
- 4) What is your nationality?
- 5) What kind of institution did you work in or are you currently working in as a Language Assistant?

A High School (IES), An Official Language School (EOI), A Vocational Training School (FP)
- 6) During which school year did you serve as a Language Assistant:

2024-2025, 2023-2024, 2022-2023, 2021-2022, other
- 7) How would you rate the training you received to fulfill your roles and responsibilities as a Language and Cultural Assistant in Galicia? (out of 5 stars)
- 8) Do you speak Galician?

yes/no
- 9) What is your level? (zero proficiency, beginner, intermediate, advanced)

10) Do you speak Spanish?

yes/no

11) What is your level? (Zero proficiency, beginner, intermediate, advanced)

Section 2: Teaching and Intercultural Awareness

12) Before becoming a Language and Culture Assistant, did you have previous teaching experience? (yes/no)

13) In this role, do you identify more as:

-A cultural ambassador

-A language ambassador

-Both a language and cultural ambassador

-Other:

14) How often do you teach and share the following topics to your students? (Scale: Often, sometimes, rarely, never):

-Holidays and traditions

-Typical foods and recipes

-Music and pop culture

-Appropriate language for daily life, Slang, idioms, and popular sayings

-News stories

-Regional and ethnic diversity

-Stereotypes

-Taboos

15) How frequently do you use the following methods and strategies to teach English? (Often, sometimes, rarely, never)

-partner speaking tasks

-role plays

-games

-cultural presentations

-video clips

-songs and musical lyrics

-authentic materials like pamphlets, maps, menus, greeting cards, bus schedules...etc

-traditional dances

-exam practice

-interactive activities using technology

-other

16) How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following:

Strongly disagree/ disagree/ no opinion/ agree/ strongly agree

-I am open-minded about other cultures

-It is important for me to learn about Galician culture and language

-When teaching about my culture, I ask students about their cultures

-My students have developed a greater understanding of my culture and country of origin

-I have come to new realizations about my own country while living and working abroad

17) What is/was the best part of working as a Language and Cultural Assistant? (Select all that apply)

-Living and working abroad

-The school environment and students

-Improving Galician language skills

-Learning new teaching methods

-Improving Spanish language skills

-Other

18) What is/was the most challenging part of working as a Language and Culture Assistant?

(Select all that apply)

-A complicated schedule with too many classes

-Not enough time to plan with the teaching staff

-Discipline problems in the classroom

-Clashes in methodology with the teaching staff (traditional vs. Innovative)

-Other

19) In your opinion, what are some things you would change about the Auxiliares program if you could?

-More training in teaching English as a second language

-More classroom management training

-More opportunities to learn Galician and Spanish

-More ideas of ways to bring my culture to the classroom

-Other

20) How likely are you to recommend the program to a friend? (a scale/5 options/ 1=unlikely/ 5=very likely)

21) What are your future plans and how has being a Language and Cultural Assistant impacted your future career path? (open-ended)

22) Additional Comments: Anything else you would like to add?

9.2. Questionnaire for the Mentor Teacher

Enquisa para os docentes que traballan cos/coas auxiliares. Tempo estimado: 10-15 minutos.

1) Consentimento

2) Cantos anos de experiencia tes como docente

(entre 1 e 5) (entre 5 e 10) (entre 10 e 15) (máis de 15)

3) Traballas nun/ha 1) EOI 2) Instituto 3) Centro de FP

4) Con cantos/as auxiliares de conversa traballaches? (entre 1-4, entre 4-8, entre 8 e 12)

5) Dende o teu punto de vista, o rol principal dun/ha auxiliar de conversa é ser:

-un/unha embaixador/a de cultura

-un/unha embaixador/a lingüístico/a

-un/unha embaixador/a de lingua e cultura

-Outro:

6) Que beneficios culturais podería achegar un auxiliar de conversa ao alumnado? (Escolle as que mellor se adapten a túa experiencia):

-O alumnado aprende sobre a cultura e tradicións do auxiliar

-O alumnado motívase para falar en inglés co/a auxiliar

-O alumnado explícalle as súas tradicións galegas ao/á auxiliar fomentando o intercambio entre culturas e tradicións

-Os/as docentes intercambian cultura e lingua co auxiliar

-Outro:

7) Cal é a frecuencia coa que o/a auxiliar de conversa ensina os seguintes temas na túa clase:

- Festivos e tradicións
- Comida típica e receitas
- Música e cultura popular
- Expresións para actividades rutineiras como ir de compras, ir ao supermercado ou a un museo, ou utilizar o transporte público
- Frases feitas, xerga, ou expresións coloquiais
- Diversidade rexional ou étnica
- Estereotipos
- Os tabús

8) Que tipos de actividades leva acabo o/a auxiliar de conversa na túa aula? (Preme todas as opcións que sexan verdadeiras para ti):

- Interacción oral entre compañeiros
- Xogo de rol (role play)
- Presentacións culturais
- Xogos
- Actividades interactivas de multimedia
- Cancións
- Clips de vídeo
- Materiais auténticos como mapas, billetes de tren, panfletos ou cartas de - restaurantes
- Bailes tradicionais
- Práctica de exame

9) Como aproveitarías a cultura do/a auxiliar de conversa nas materias impartidas na clase? (Escolle as que mellor se adaptan ao teu caso)

- Práctica da pronunciación
- Aprendizaxe sobre as tradicións do seu país.
- Preparación do alumnado para os exames
- Deseño de materiais didácticos e audios para reutilizar cada ano
- Outro:

10) Cales son algúns dos aspectos positivos de ter un/ha auxiliar de conversa no teu centro (Escolle as opcións que che resulten máis axeitadas)

- Crear oportunidades para facer charlas e obradoiros culturais co/a auxiliar
- Aportar outra perspectiva distinta ao centro
- Poder usar o seu tempo para facer actividades innovadoras co alumnado
- Ofrecerlle ao alumnado a posibilidade de conversar na lingua estraxeira cunha persoa nativa
- Outro: _____

11) Describe as principais dificultades de traballar co auxiliar de conversa (Preme as opcións que sexan verdadeiras para ti):

- Supón unha carga adicional de traballo
- A barreira lingüística
- O auxiliar ten pouca experiencia na docencia e non ten estratexias para xestionar a clase
- Pode supoñer un reto para o alumnado entender o auxiliar porque fala rápido
- Outro: _____

12) Na túa opinión, como se podería mellorar o programa de auxiliares de conversa? (Preme as opcións que sexan verdadeiras para ti):

- Formar mellor ao/ás auxiliares na metodoloxía do ensino de linguas estranxeiras
- Formar mellor ao/á auxiliar na comunicación intercultural
- Ofrecerlle oportunidades para aprender galego/castelán no centro ou facer tandems lingüístico.
- Outro

13) Nunha escala do 1 ao 5, que tan satisfeito/a estás co programa de auxiliares de conversa
(1=decepcionado/a e 5=moi satisfeito/a)

14) Hai algo a maiores que che gustaría engadir sobre o programa de auxiliares de conversa?