REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
YILDIZ TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES EDUCATION
ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION PROGRAM

MASTER'S THESIS

THE EFFECT OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION TASKS ON STUDENTS' INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS IN MULTICULTURAL EFL CLASSROOMS

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THESIS ADVISOR
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MAY 2025

Ceren DUMAN tarafından hazırlanan “The Effect of Intercultural Communication Tasks on Students’ Intercultural Awareness in Multicultural EFL Classrooms” başlıklı çalışma, **28/05/2025** tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda oybirliği ile başarılı bulunmuş ve jürimiz tarafından Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Ana Bilim Dalı İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Tezli Yüksek Lisans Programında **YÜKSEK LİSANS** tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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ABSTRACT

THE EFFECT OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION TASKS ON STUDENTS' INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS IN MULTICULTURAL EFL CLASSROOMS

In an increasingly interconnected world, the ability to navigate diverse cultural contexts is a crucial skill for effective communication and collaboration. Intercultural awareness encompasses knowledge, attitudes, and interactional competencies that enable individuals to engage meaningfully across cultural boundaries (Allo, 2018; Porto et al., 2017). In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, where students come from diverse cultural backgrounds, fostering these competencies is essential for both language development and global citizenship (Fantini, 2020; Hoff, 2020). This study examines how intercultural communication tasks influence the intercultural awareness levels of A2 and B2 EFL learners in a multicultural English preparatory program in Istanbul. Adopting a mixed-methods research design, data were collected from 57 students through pre- and post-tests and semi-structured interviews. The quantitative results revealed a significant improvement in students' intercultural awareness following the implementation of the tasks, particularly in areas such as intercultural sensitivity, interaction, and knowledge. However, no significant correlation was found between students' language proficiency and their intercultural awareness levels. Qualitative findings highlighted the role of intercultural tasks in enhancing empathy, fostering openness to diversity, and encouraging deeper cultural understanding. Notably, B2 learners demonstrated more nuanced reflections on the impact of the tasks compared to A2 learners. These findings underscore the importance of integrating intercultural communication tasks into EFL curricula to better prepare students for real-world intercultural engagement.

Keywords: Intercultural Communication, Intercultural Awareness, English Language Teaching, Intercultural Tasks, Multicultural Education.

ÖZET

ÇOKKÜLTÜRLÜ İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETİM SINIFLARINDA KÜLTÜRLERARASI İLETİŞİM GÖREVLERİNİN ÖĞRENCİLERİN KÜLTÜRLERARASI FARKINDALIKLARI ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİ

Günümüzde farklı kültürel bağlamlarda etkili iletişim kurabilme becerisi, küreselleşmenin etkisiyle giderek daha önemli hale gelmiştir. Kültürlerarası farkındalık, bireylerin farklı kültürel gruplarla anlamlı etkileşimlerde bulunmasını sağlayan bilgi, tutum ve etkileşimsel becerileri kapsar (Allo, 2018; Porto vd., 2017). Farklı kültürel geçmişlerden gelen öğrencilerin bulunduğu Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce (EFL) sınıflarında, bu yetkinliklerin geliştirilmesi hem dil öğrenimi hem de küresel vatandaşlık açısından kritik bir rol oynamaktadır (Fantini, 2020; Hoff, 2020). Bu çalışma, İstanbul'daki çok kültürlü bir İngilizce hazırlık programında yer alan A2 ve B2 seviyesindeki öğrencilerin kültürlerarası farkındalık düzeyleri üzerinde kültürlerarası iletişim görevlerinin etkisini incelemektedir. Karma yöntem araştırma deseni kullanılarak yürütülen çalışmada, 57 öğrenciden ön test-son test ve yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yoluyla veri toplanmıştır. Nicel bulgular, kültürlerarası farkındalık düzeylerinde anlamlı bir artış olduğunu göstermiş; özellikle kültürlerarası duyarlılık, etkileşim ve bilgi alanlarında önemli gelişmeler gözlemlenmiştir. Ancak, öğrencilerin dil yeterlilikleri ile kültürlerarası farkındalık seviyeleri arasında anlamlı bir ilişki bulunmamıştır. Nitel bulgular, kültürlerarası iletişim görevlerinin empatiyi geliştirdiğini, farklılıklara açıklığı teşvik ettiğini ve kültürel anlayışı derinleştirdiğini ortaya koymuştur. Özellikle B2 seviyesindeki öğrencilerin, bu görevlerin etkileri üzerine daha derinlemesine değerlendirmelerde bulunduğu görülmüştür. Bu bulgular, öğrencileri gerçek dünyadaki kültürlerarası etkileşimlere daha iyi hazırlamak amacıyla kültürlerarası iletişim görevlerinin EFL müfredatına entegre edilmesinin önemini vurgulamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kültürlerarası İletişim, Kültürlerarası Farkındalık, İngilizce Dil Öğretimi, Kültürlerarası Görevler, Çokkültürlü Eğitim.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my thesis advisor, Asst. Prof. Dr. Gülümser EFEOĞLU, for her invaluable guidance, support, and encouragement throughout this research journey. Her insightful feedback and unwavering patience have been instrumental in shaping this study.

I am also sincerely grateful to the esteemed members of my thesis committee, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Cihat ATAR and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Betül BAL GEZEGİN, whose constructive feedback and academic expertise have helped me refine my research. Their thought-provoking questions and valuable suggestions have greatly enriched this work.

A special thanks goes to my professors and mentors at Yıldız Technical University, whose inspiring lectures and academic discussions have deepened my understanding of my field and motivated me to pursue this study.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the participants of this study, whose willingness to contribute made this research possible. Their time, effort, and insights were invaluable in shaping the findings of this study.

My sincere thanks also go to my dear mother Hülya YEŞİLDAĞ for her continuous encouragement and moral support. Her uplifting words and belief in me helped me stay motivated throughout this journey.

I would like to express my deepest love and gratitude to my husband, Emrecan DUMAN, and my son, Demirhan DUMAN. This thesis has been a journey intertwined with the most profound experience of my life—motherhood. I started writing this thesis while carrying Demirhan, and now, as I complete it, he is a nine-month-old bundle of joy. Demirhan's presence has made this journey even more meaningful.

Finally, this thesis was supported by the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK) under the 2211-A Domestic Graduate Scholarship Program. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to TÜBİTAK for their support.

Thank you all for being a part of this journey.

Ceren DUMAN

May, 2025; İstanbul

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ABBREVIATIONS

AR	:Augmented Reality
CA	:Cultural Awareness
CEFR	:Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CIE:	:Critical Incident Exercises
CIT	:Collaborative Information Technologies
EFL	:English as a Foreign Language
ELT	:English Language Teaching
ICC	:Intercultural Communicative Competence
ICA	:Intercultural Awareness
IT	:Information Technology
L2	:Second Language
PIT	:Personal Information Technologies
SLA	:Second Language Acquisition
VR	:Virtual Reality
ZPD	:Zone of Proximal Development

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter offers an in-depth discussion of the essential principles associated with intercultural awareness in English Language Teaching (ELT). It commences with a review of the importance of intercultural communication in the contemporary globalized world, underscoring the necessity of intercultural competence in a variety of social, academic, and professional settings. The chapter proceeds to analyze the distinct contributions of the current study by emphasizing the possible advantages it brings to the field of foreign language instruction and identifying deficiencies in the existing body of literature. This research presents the fundamental goals that drove the study, as well as the precise research inquiries that direct the investigation. In essence, this chapter establishes the foundation for the research by offering crucial historical information, examining the importance and objective of the study, and situating the research questions within the wider framework of intercultural education.

1.1. Background of the Study

Intercultural communication refers to the exchange of information and ideas between individuals who come from different cultural backgrounds (Guilherme, 2000). This includes factors such as where they live, their social status, age, gender, and beliefs (García, 2013). In the present globalized day, where different cultures often come together, it is of utmost importance (Dhital, 2023). The widespread use of communication and transportation technology in recent decades has led to a significant increase in intercultural communication in our daily lives (Sintawati, 2019). These technologies facilitate convenient and fast intercontinental travel, allowing individuals to engage in face-to-face conversations with others across the globe. Additionally, they contribute to the growth of domestic cultural variety and the globalization of the economy. As a result, the demand for intercultural knowledge and skills, which contribute to the ability to communicate effectively across cultures, is essential for a productive and successful existence in the 21st century. Individuals with a high level of intercultural awareness possess the skills and knowledge to recognize, appreciate,

accept, and incorporate cultural differences. This capacity qualifies individuals to be educated global citizens.

Given the increasing globalization and internationalization, it is crucial to educate individuals on how to peacefully coexist in a heterogeneous community. This process is ongoing and of utmost importance. Therefore, intercultural education now focuses on equipping learners with intercultural competences (Gay, 2010). These competences enable English language learners to effectively navigate diverse social, academic, and professional contexts (Gollnick & Chinn, 2016). The primary objectives of intercultural education are to foster the development of critical thinking abilities, problem-solving skills, nuanced interpretations, and effective participation in cross-cultural interactions (Malazonia et al., 2021).

In ELT, there has been much focus on incorporating intercultural understanding. This is because of the complex connection between language and culture. In the field of social sciences, culture is perceived as a comprehensive entity encompassing the collective knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, and practices that individuals acquire as members of their community (Spencer-Oatey, 2012). Initially, Tylor (1871, as cited in Spencer-Oatey, 2012) defined culture as a whole entity, but this understanding has since developed to encompass the dynamic and concealed factors that shape human behavior and social structures (Hofstede, 1980; Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952).

Language serves as more than a mere tool for communication; it encompasses cultural norms and underlying beliefs that influence social relationships (Hijriani, Rosmala, Halim & Amaluddin, 2023; Kramsch, 1993). This viewpoint has caused a change in language teaching, moving away from structuralist ideas and towards methods that incorporate cultural settings. This change aims to improve students' comprehension and use of language (Baker, 2011; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). According to Byram (2013), it is recommended to prioritize the study of cultures that learners are likely to come across. This will help in promoting successful intercultural communication and the ability to understand and interpret meanings accurately. Adopting an intercultural approach is essential in ELT to effectively handle the sociocultural factors involved in language acquisition. Sociocultural theories propose that language plays a significant role as a semiotic tool that both reflects and influences cultural reality (Geertz, 1973; Halliday, 1979; Lantolf, 2006). This method combines linguistic, sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic, and intercultural elements, acknowledging the importance of a

thorough comprehension of language within its cultural framework (Bourdieu, 1982; Vygotsky, 1962).

Research has demonstrated that including cultural aspects into language instruction can improve students' motivation, involvement, and language skills (Chastain, 1988; Oxford, 1994; Seelye, 1984). Researchers claim that instructing culture has the effect of humanizing and motivating learners, hence promoting global awareness and understanding on an international scale (Byram, 1997; Genc & Bada, 2005). This comprehensive approach provides students with the essential intercultural skills to engage in productive global relationships (Bennett, Bennett & Allen, 2003; Ho, 1998).

1.2. Purpose of the Study

This study seeks to investigate the impact of incorporating intercultural communication tasks into the curriculum of multicultural English teaching classrooms on students' intercultural awareness levels. The primary objective of this study is to determine whether the integration of diverse intercultural communication tasks and activities enhances students' understanding and appreciation of different cultures. This study also aims to examine the potential correlation between students' English proficiency levels and their level of intercultural awareness. Specifically, it seeks to explore whether students with higher English proficiency demonstrate superior intercultural awareness compared to those with lower proficiency. Another objective of the study is to record the viewpoints and attitudes of students regarding their experiences with intercultural communication tasks in the classroom. This will provide qualitative data that will enable a comprehensive understanding of how these tasks are interpreted, the perceived benefits they offer, and any challenges or limitations faced by the students. This aids in the identification of optimal methods and possible areas for enhancement in the implementation of intercultural communication activities in ELT. With these objectives, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

1) Does the implementation of intercultural communication tasks affect students' level of intercultural awareness in multicultural English teaching classrooms? If yes, how?

2) Is there a relationship between students' English proficiency levels and their levels of intercultural awareness?
3) What are students' perceptions of their lesson experiences with intercultural communication tasks?

1.3. Significance of the Study

In light of the evolving status of English as a global language, there is a growing need to reconceptualize communicative competence in a way that reflects its use across both local and international contexts. This perspective emphasizes interactions between native and non-native, as well as non-native speakers themselves, and suggests that successful bilinguals with intercultural awareness should serve as pedagogical models (Alptekin, 2002). Building upon this theoretical foundation, this study holds great significance for multiple reasons. Firstly, this study adds to the existing research on intercultural competency in ELT by presenting empirical evidence that demonstrates the effectiveness of intercultural communication tasks in improving intercultural awareness of students. Previous research has emphasized the advantages of including intercultural aspects in language curriculum, emphasizing enhancements in students' enthusiasm, involvement, and general linguistic ability (Bennett et al., 2003; Byram, 1997).

Furthermore, the results of this study have practical implications for language educators and curriculum developers. Through comprehending the correlation between intercultural awareness and language proficiency, educators can develop more efficient pedagogical approaches that cultivate both linguistic and intercultural skills since in the present era of globalization, the ability to communicate effectively with people from different cultures is extremely important. This ability has been emphasized by scholars such as Baker (2011) and Kramsch (1993).

Additionally, the research emphasizes the wider educational objective of cultivating global citizens who possess not just advanced skills in a second language but also a deep understanding and respect for different cultures, enabling them to actively participate in meaningful cross-cultural exchanges. This is in line with the ideas of modern education in the 21st century, which prioritize the acquisition of skills that are essential for students to thrive in a globally linked and culturally diverse society (Baker, 2011; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013).

Although numerous previous studies have investigated intercultural learning in various educational settings worldwide (Hoominian et al., 2021; Ippolito, 2007; Jones, Miles & Gopalkrishnan, 2019; Tran and Duong, 2018; Vromans, Korzilius, Bücker & Jong, 2023), there is a need for additional research on pedagogical intercultural tasks and critical incident tasks that can help intermediate language learners enhance their intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in real English language classrooms (Baker, 2015a; Kiss & Weninger, 2017). Therefore, it is necessary to conduct additional studies in classroom settings to examine the level of learners' involvement in both Personal Information Technologies (PITs) such as using smartphones and tablets and Collaborative Information Technologies (CITs) such as Google Docs, Microsoft Forms, collaborative virtual bulletin boards that enable learners work on documents collaboratively and simultaneously by enhancing interaction. Considering the pedagogical benefits of using technology and digital learning tools—such as increasing classroom interaction, boosting student engagement, and enabling access to learners' interests—this study incorporated various digital platforms, including YouTube, Microsoft Forms, and Padlet, into the instructional materials.

In conclusion, this study seeks to address the lack of research on the practical implementation of intercultural communication tasks in ELT and their influence on students' intercultural awareness. Through this approach, it aims to improve educational methods and foster cross-cultural comprehension in modern language education.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Culture as a Multidimensional Construct

In the social sciences and humanities, culture is considered a key concept which is indicative of the intricacies of human interaction and societal advancement. Numerous approaches have been utilized in studying and defining culture (Spencer-Oatey, 2012). The initial definitions were given by Tylor (1871, as cited in Spencer-Oatey, 2012) who referred to it as a complex whole that includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, morals, customs among other things that people acquire as members of their society. Building upon these basic concepts, contemporary academics maintain that culture is not just about social activities; instead, it lies within the unspoken rules and principles which govern an individual's outlooks and actions. Spencer-Oatey (2012) also states that Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) identified more than one hundred definitions of culture, noting its dynamic nature as well as its being hidden but powerful determinant of human conduct and societal organization. They defined it as patterns of behavior shared by members of a society through symbols and representing mankind's distinctive achievements in all their forms such as technological objects or works of art (Spencer-Oatey, 2012). Also, culture is a very dynamic system. Every time it is transmitted and reinterpreted between generations. According to Hofstede (1980) culture refers to "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another". In this definition, he emphasizes psychological viewpoints towards culture being a set cognitive frames that affect how individuals understand their surroundings. On a more practical note, Spencer-Oatey (2012) explores the implications of cultural awareness in global contexts such as education, business and international relations where knowledge about different cultures can facilitate effective communication among diverse groups by helping them negotiate meaning with each other while showing mutual respect. According to recent academic literature, culture is described as being complex and having multiple dimensions. Culture is defined as the collective set of behaviors,

values, expectations, attitudes, and standards that distinguish certain groups or organizations. It influences how people interact and how information and practices are shared within and between groups (Chatman, Choi, & Doerr, 2022). This viewpoint emphasizes the impact of culture on individual and group identity, actions, and societal frameworks.

In summary, culture is like an iceberg; most parts are hidden beneath the surface. Language rules, rituals, beliefs, norms and values constitute what we see as observable components while tacit understandings make up invisible ones. These aspects determine who we are as groups but also guide our behavior within society. Therefore, if one wants to know why people do things in certain ways or how societies change over time, they must consider both visible and unseen structures of cultures around them.

2.2. Culture and Language

Kramsch (1993) asserts that language is more than just a means of communication because of its close ties to culture, which shapes how individuals understand both themselves and other people. Hijriani, Rosmala, Halim, & Amaluddin (2023) have provided support for this viewpoint, stating that this is the reason language education shifted from the structuralist ideology, which saw language as a set of laws that allowed for communication, to one that saw language as a means of communication within culture. According to this viewpoint, including culture into language teaching environments can help students understand the language better and apply it more effectively. While language embodies cultural norms and assumptions that guide communication and meaning-making in everyday interactions (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013), it is impractical to master all the diverse cultures one might encounter in communicative settings (Baker, 2011). Instead of learning all cultures, Byram (2013) suggests that education should concentrate on studying those cultures which may encounter learners. It is important to recognize this variety when communicating interculturally due to the great number and wide-ranging individualities between people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Each person brings their own cultural background to any given transaction, making them intricate events according to Baker (2009a). Within this framework “acculturation” is presented by Corbett (2003), he defines it as being able to function effectively in another culture

without losing one's sense of self or identity. However, acculturating has its difficulties. For example, an individual who has become fully acculturated may tend to just blend with people from the host community while intercultural learner act as mediator during cultural conflicts (Corbett, 2003). In other words, when dealing with intercultural communication there is a shift from assimilation towards negotiating and mediating across cultures thus showing that what matters most is not how much we look alike but our ability manages these differences.

2.3. Culture in English Language Teaching

In the field of English language teaching (ELT), language and culture are closely related and integral. According to sociocultural learning theories, language acquisition is a major semiotic tool that shapes and reflects cultural realities and is intricately linked to social situations (Geertz, 1973; Halliday, 1979; Lantolf, 2006). This perspective is broadened by Lussier (2011), who describes language as an instrument for the communication and internalization of cultural representations in addition to a linguistic system that must be learnt. Linguistic, sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic, and intercultural components are all included in this process (Bourdieu, 1982; Vygotsky, 1962). A recent development in language teaching has been the adoption of an intercultural approach (Byram, 1997, 2008; Kramsch, 1993, 1998, 2009) and the systematic and transparent integration of culture into the classroom (Baker, 2016), in recognition of its complex role. This connection was also strengthened by the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which holds that language not only conveys but also uniquely creates cultural meanings (Whorf, 1956). Mohammed (2020) also stresses the necessity of integrating cultural components into language education to bridge cultural gaps and enhance linguistic comprehension. According to him, language learning is incomplete without a deep understanding of the associated culture. This perspective was adopted by Kumagai (1994) long time ago, who notes that aspects like silence, conversation topics, and speech-act forms such as apologies and requests are crucial for effective cross-cultural communication, often more than grammar or vocabulary. With the integration of culture into language teaching, educators can foster a more engaging and contextually rich learning environment. This approach not only aids in linguistic proficiency but also equips students with the intercultural competence necessary for global interactions (Mohammed, 2020).

Cultural factors have the potential to enhance and sustain students' motivation and interest, while also fostering their global consciousness and international comprehension (Chastain, 1988). From a pedagogical perspective, instructing students about culture, as stated by Oxford (1994), can enhance L2 learners' awareness of their own learning style and make the process of acquiring a second language more engaging and enjoyable. Integrating cultural factors into language learning might facilitate learners' comprehension of the second language meaning and contribute to achieving a more advanced degree of proficiency in the target language (Seelye, 1984). The method of teaching culture can have a significant impact on language learners by humanizing and inspiring them (Genc & Bada, 2005). Additionally, proponents claim that cultural classes enhance learners' focus on both cultural disparities and commonalities. Some scholars have suggested that incorporating intercultural elements into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) curricula will result in a more efficient and prosperous language education (Bennett, Bennett, & Allen, 2003; Byram, 1997). Ho (1998) argues that L2 learners can acquire a genuine understanding of the world by immersing them in the values, attitudes, and actions of the target language community.

2.4. Intercultural Awareness

Intercultural awareness (ICA) represents the cognitive dimension of intercultural communicative competence, referring to an individual's understanding of cultural conventions, values, and behaviors that shape thought and interaction (Chen & Starosta, 1996). It is built upon the foundational notion of cultural awareness (CA), which focuses on recognizing both differences and similarities among cultures, typically within the context of national identities (Yurtsever & Özel, 2021). While CA emphasizes static knowledge about specific cultures, ICA entails a more dynamic and adaptive perspective—enabling individuals to navigate complex and evolving cultural encounters in multilingual and multicultural contexts (Baker, 2015b; Makhmudov, 2020). This conceptual shift is especially relevant in educational settings, where integrating intercultural perspectives into language instruction fosters empathy, respect, and communicative competence. Several scholars have highlighted the educational value of promoting intercultural awareness. For instance, Springer (2020) found that exposure to diverse cultural perspectives significantly enhances students'

communicative skills and language engagement. Similarly, Dimitrov and Haque (2016) demonstrated that language educators who develop intercultural competencies contribute to more inclusive and effective classroom environments. This view is reinforced by international frameworks such as PISA (Schleicher, 2019), which emphasize the importance of global and cultural perspective-taking as a critical 21st-century skill. Developing ICA requires not only factual knowledge about cultures but also self-awareness and reflective thinking. Intercultural training programs often include cognitive strategies, cultural exploration, and self-assessment to cultivate this awareness (Brislin et al., 1983; Gudykunst et al., 1991). In this context, Chen and Starosta (1998) conceptualize intercultural awareness as comprising three progressive levels, which are essential for fostering successful intercultural communication in both academic and real-world settings.

2.4.1. Level 1: Recognition of Cultural Differences

The initial stage entails acknowledging the substantial differences in thought and behavior that exist between one's own culture and other cultures. This awareness is fundamental, as it recognizes the presence of cultural difference and its influence on communication. This level of awareness is typically incomplete and superficial. Sources of information on culture include textbooks, travel guides, literature, and first impressions. People usually make assumptions about a culture or its members based on what is most obvious to the group as a whole. Foreigners perceive Americans, for instance, to be sociable, energetic, diligent, extravagant, and rich (Kohls, 2011).

2.4.2. Level 2: Understanding of Cultural Differences

At this second stage, people start to notice these cultural differences and start to comprehend the reasons behind them. This entails comprehending the fundamental principles, charges, and actions that influence diverse cultural standards and customs. At this point, individuals have the ability to identify and acknowledge stereotypes and biases. Through first-hand or second-hand experience, individuals start to recognize important and subtle cultural characteristics that are distinctly different from their own at the second level of intercultural awareness. There are two phases to this level. Situations involving conflicts between cultures are used to foster intercultural awareness in the first phase, while intellectual analysis is used in the second. Individuals do not truly feel or understand the true significance of cultural distinctions

until they have any kind of contact with members of different cultures, even when textbooks or the media may present knowledge that differs from their own. This degree of cultural tension can cause sadness, hostility, and anxiety, but it also gives them an opportunity to better appreciate and comprehend the cultures of others. Culture shock and this experience are similar (Oberg, 1960). At the second phase, cultural distinctions can be justified from the viewpoint of the other culture through logical and intellectual analysis. Cultural diversity is recognized and accepted as a reason to value and respect emerging cultures and to cultivate an awareness of cultural differences (Thomas & Althen, 1989).

2.4.3. Level 3: Appreciation of Cultural Differences

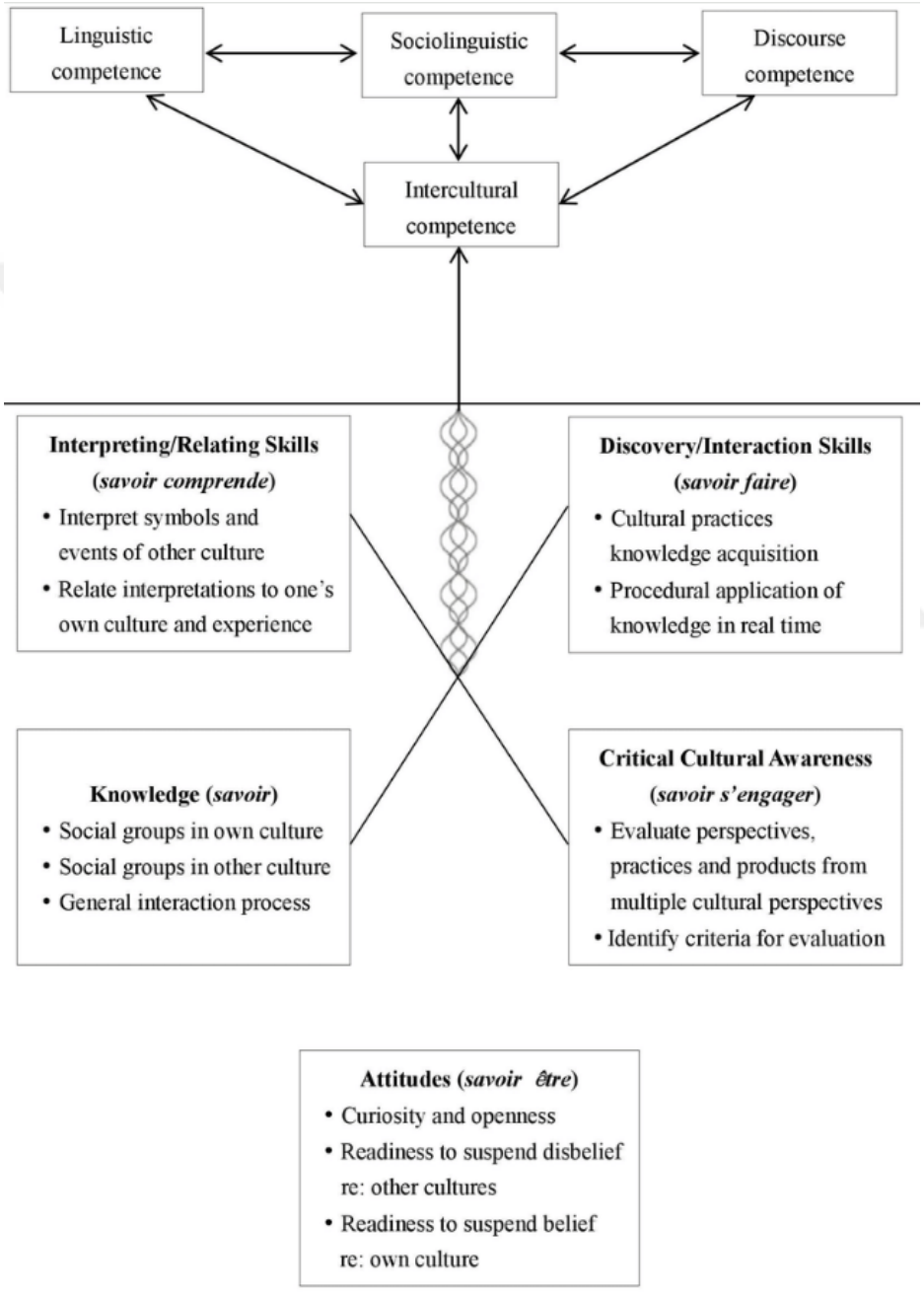
The highest degree of intercultural awareness incorporates a respect for cultural differences in addition to understanding them. At this level, individuals appreciate diversity and recognize the value of different cultural viewpoints, which improves their capacity to engage proficiently across cultural barriers. Empathy is a necessary skill for the third degree of intercultural awareness since it allows individuals to view the culture from the inside out. Subjective acquaintance with this greatest level and intellectual analysis both improve skill at the second level (Hanvey, 1987). People are aware that different languages and ethnic groups can have quite different cultural standards and communication styles. They recognize that cultural norms and language use can change over time and vary based on the situation, from formal contexts to casual social encounters. However, according to Chen and Starosta (1998), it is not certain to achieve this level of intercultural awareness fully.

2.5. Intercultural Awareness in English Language Teaching

Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) has evolved significantly as a conceptual framework in English Language Teaching (ELT), driven by the pioneering work of Michael Byram. Since its introduction in 1997, Byram's ICC model has played a significant role in guiding curriculum innovations in a variety of educational situations by emphasizing the connection between language acquisition and cultural comprehension (Byram, 1997). His model demonstrates that intercultural competence is not merely a fixed collection of information but rather encompasses the dynamic interplay between various competences. The abilities to understand and use language,

navigate social interactions, and engage in meaningful conversations are intertwined with the capacity to successfully and appropriately communicate across different cultural contexts. The skills, knowledge, critical cultural awareness, and attitudes mutually enhance and support one another, fostering a comprehensive approach to intercultural competence.

Figure 1. Intercultural Communicative Competence Model by Byram (1997)



Source: Bingzhuan, 2018, p. 32

The model consists of the following essential elements:

Linguistic competence: the capacity to utilize language with accuracy and appropriateness across different situations.

Sociolinguistic competence: the ability to comprehend and navigate the social settings in which language is employed, encompassing cultural norms and traditions.

Discourse competence: the capacity to generate articulate and well-connected oral or written communication.

Interpreting/Relating skills (Savoir Comprendre): the capacity to interpret and make connections between symbols and events originating from different cultures, and to apply these interpretations to one's own cultural background.

Skills in discovery and interaction: The capacity to obtain information about cultural customs and utilize this information in immediate social exchanges.

Knowledge (Savoir): Comprehending social collectives and their cultural aspects, encompassing both one's own culture and other cultures, along with the broader dynamics of social interaction.

Critical cultural awareness (Savoir S'engager): the capacity to assess and contemplate cultural ideas, practices, and products from various positions, while also identifying the criteria used for such evaluations.

Attitudes (Savoir Être): Demonstrating a sense of curiosity and receptiveness towards different cultures and being willing to temporarily set aside preconceived notions about cultural norms and customs, while simultaneously critically examining and reflecting upon one's own cultural preconceptions.

Due in large part to its use in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and other contexts, this paradigm has generated a great deal of debate and modification (Byram, 2008). Byram's model has been improved and developed further as a result of recent criticisms. Byram's paradigm was revolutionary, but others contend that it has to be updated to take into account the complexity of contemporary multicultural communication. From a broader intercultural perspective, Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) propose a set of principles for language learning.

- Active construction
- Making connections

- Building social contact
- Reflection
- Responsibility

One of the principles is active construction, which primarily involves the process of creating meaning through interpreting information during interactions with others. This approach entails raising students' awareness of the inherent connection between culture and language and providing them with opportunity to formulate their own perspectives. Once students have established their own interpretations, it is crucial for them to establish connections between this newfound information and their existing knowledge. They are expected to establish connections by identifying the similarities and differences between the new and old ones.

In order to achieve success in this cognitive process, it is imperative for students to engage in interactions with their peers. While attempting to moderate and negotiate in this process of social contact, individuals consistently cultivate their own intercultural comprehension. This social connection is expected to impact on the students emotionally and cognitively. Reflection plays a crucial part in language acquisition from an international viewpoint as it offers an opportunity to build a knowledge of one's own and others' attitudes and preconceptions. Responsibility is another fundamental component in this intercultural perspective. In order to adhere to these ideals, students must demonstrate respect for others and acknowledge their own responsibility in cultivating their own multicultural sensitivity and understanding.

Although these models and principles provide educators with a framework to emphasize the significance of intercultural communication in a classroom setting, translating this theoretical knowledge into practical application remains challenging in teaching practice. Therefore, Baker (2011) presented a series of suggestions on the implementation of ICA:

- Exploring local cultures
- Analyzing language-learning resources
- Exploring traditional media and arts using English
- Exploring IT/Electronic media using English
- Exploring cultural sources of information

- Having in-person intercultural communication (especially with non-native English teachers)

These criticisms and revolutionary suggestions highlight the necessity of developing models that take into consideration both static and dynamic cultural knowledge as well as interactions (Hoff, 2020). This viewpoint is in line with the movement to redefine cultural competency as the capacity to participate actively and morally in cross-cultural settings, rather than only knowing about other cultures. Hoff (2020) also addresses the need to rethink ICC in order to better represent the reality of international interaction in the twenty-first century. The discussion emphasizes the importance of intercultural education in promoting global citizenship and says that a necessary component of an effective ICC should be the capacity to negotiate and mediate across divergent cultural values and norms. This is in line with Byram's later writings, which support a holistic approach that equips students with critical cultural awareness along with language proficiency, enabling them to participate actively in a variety of communities and communicate effectively (Byram, Golubeva, Hui & Wagner, 2017).

Intercultural awareness plays a critical role in English language teaching, as recent research has shown. It is crucial for promoting effective communication in a society where communication is mediated by global connections. For instance, Cakır's (2006) paper explored how language is not only a tool for communication but also a creation of culture, and that in order to completely comprehend language, it must be comprehended in the context of culture (Cakır, 2006).

Singhal (1998) argues that integrating cultural capsules and cultural problem-solving into curriculum can provide students with intercultural knowledge. To achieve this, information and communication technologies are widely used in language teaching classrooms. Computer-based instructional technologies (CITs) can help learners gain a deeper understanding of different cultures, especially when the design of CITs include components from other cultures that may lead to cultural conflicts (Apedaile & Schill, 2008, Fowler & Blohm, 2004, Snow, 2015).

Integrating intercultural awareness in English Language Teaching (ELT) not only promotes language acquisition but also improves students' global capability. Through the implementation of teaching tools like cultural capsules and CITs, educators may adequately equip students with the necessary skills to navigate the intricacies of global

communication by acknowledging and addressing cultural differences and commonalities. This method promotes a more profound comprehension and admiration of many cultural viewpoints, which is crucial in the present interconnected global society. The continuous development of frameworks for intercultural communicative competence highlights the continual evolution of cultural relations and emphasizes the necessity for educational approaches that can adapt to these transformations. In the end, by fostering a strong understanding of different cultures, English Language Teaching (ELT) can greatly aid in the development of individuals who are more compassionate and skilled in navigating global issues.

2.6. Integrating Sociocultural and Second Language Acquisition Theories in Intercultural Communication

The literature in language education emphasizes the significance of a sociocultural framework, specifically the theories put forward by Vygotsky, in comprehending the cognitive processes associated with language acquisition in international settings (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Vygotsky argues that higher cognitive functions primarily develop through social interaction, emphasizing that language acquisition is a culturally and contextually dependent process (Vygotsky, 1978). This viewpoint is in accordance with Krashen's theories on second language acquisition, particularly the Comprehensible Input Hypothesis. According to this hypothesis, language learners acquire language most efficiently when they are exposed to input that is slightly more advanced than their current level of proficiency, and this input is presented in a context that allows them to understand it (Krashen, 1982).

The affective filter theory enhances intercultural communication frameworks by highlighting the impact of emotional elements, such as anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence, on the process of language acquisition (Krashen, 1982). Elevated levels of anxiety, commonly observed in intercultural interactions, might heighten the affective filter and impede the process of acquiring language. Nevertheless, engaging in intercultural exchanges that provide assistance can reduce this barrier, so promoting more effective learning and fostering a more profound comprehension of different cultures (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015).

Additionally, Vygotsky's notion of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is essential for comprehending how learners navigate unfamiliar linguistic and cultural

environments with the aid of those who possess greater knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978). Krashen's emphasis on scaffolding is reflected in the idea that appropriate input should be provided to meet the learner's developmental stage (Long, 1996). These ideas indicate that in order to have successful intercultural communication education, it is important to emphasize not only language proficiency but also cultural competency. This means helping learners develop the skills to communicate with and adjust to other cultural norms and values effectively (Byram, 1997).

Recent educational methods have adopted a more comprehensive approach to teaching intercultural communication by incorporating theoretical insights. This approach combines linguistic skills and cultural awareness to improve learners' global competency (Deardorff, 2006). This comprehensive approach acknowledges the interconnected relationship between language and culture, emphasizing that a thorough comprehension and admiration of the cultural environment in which a language functions are essential for achieving full proficiency in linguistic features (Kramsch, 1993). By incorporating Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and Krashen's SLA principles, educators can create intercultural communication programs that are more efficient in developing linguistic skills and promoting sophisticated comprehension and interaction with various cultural viewpoints (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013).

2.7. Studies on Intercultural Awareness

Research has increasingly focused on intercultural competence in educational settings, particularly due to the impact of global interconnection on tertiary education. This literature review combines findings of recent international and then national studies that examine various approaches and educational frameworks with the goal of improving intercultural competency. The studies included in this literature review were chosen according to specific criteria. These criteria include: being conducted between 2012 and 2024, focusing on educational contexts in Türkiye and other relevant regions, examining the development of intercultural awareness through different educational interventions, using rigorous methodologies especially experimental studies and studies that include critical incident tasks, being relevant to language learning, specifically English as a Foreign Language (EFL), and demonstrating the influence of intercultural awareness on educational outcomes.

These criteria will ensure the review encompasses the most relevant and influential research in the field of intercultural education.

Liu and Fang (2017) examined the influence of domestic culture on intercultural communication among Chinese university students. The researchers discovered that students' self-belief of their cultural backgrounds significantly impacts their techniques for intercultural communication. This emphasizes the importance of educational interventions that specifically target these perceptions in order to promote more successful intercultural encounters (Liu & Fang, 2017). The driven conclusion was supported by previous studies conducted in a Turkish educational setting as well. Çetinavcı (2012) examined the significance of intercultural communicative competence in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT). They argued in favor of including cultural elements into curricula to improve communication abilities. The study highlights the importance of comprehending intercultural differences in addition to linguistic competence in global communication settings (Çetinavcı, 2012). Similarly, a notable study conducted by Öğüt and Olkun (2018) at Selçuk University examined the intercultural sensitivity levels of Turkish and international university students. The study, utilizing the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale by Chen and Starosta (2000), demonstrated that students' intercultural sensitivity differed according to gender, nationality, exposure to foreign media, and proficiency in foreign languages. The findings highlighted the importance of linguistic proficiency and global engagement in improving intercultural sensitivity, indicating that educational efforts targeting these domains can provide benefits.

Currently emphasizing the positive effect of educational interventions, similar to the previous studies, Mu and Yu (2023) documented novel pedagogical approaches employed in China to cultivate intercultural proficiency among undergraduate business English learners. According to Mu and Yu (2023), this research provides evidence that specific teaching practices can improve students' intercultural skills, which are essential for effectively navigating the global corporate landscape. Sabet and Chapman also (2023) provide a comprehensive analysis of the future prospects of intercultural competency in higher education in their narrative review. The statement emphasizes the continuous requirement for inventive educational methods that equip pupils for a varied and multicultural global society (Sabet & Chapman, 2023).

Use of media-rich materials such as digital photographs can be considered as one of the essentials of educational practices in the classroom. In their study, Kusumaningputri and Widodo (2018) investigated the effectiveness of using digital photographs to facilitate intercultural tasks in order to promote critical intercultural awareness among university students in Indonesia. Their research determined that media-rich assignments greatly improve students' capacity to critically analyze intercultural material, fostering a more profound comprehension and admiration for diverse cultural viewpoints (Kusumaningputri & Widodo, 2018).

Contributing to diversity of media-rich materials, Çakır (2022) examined the methods by which Turkish students learning English as a foreign language could improve their ability to communicate across cultures by actively watching TV series and movies. According to the study of Çakır (2022), media can be a useful and captivating medium for teaching intercultural subtleties and enhancing language proficiency in a pleasant and relatable way. Similarly, Susilo, Yang, and Qi (2023) examined the effects of using video clip-assisted intercultural tasks on the development of critical intercultural awareness. The study conducted by Susilo et al. (2023) emphasizes the efficacy of utilizing media to replicate genuine intercultural exchanges, resulting in a substantial enhancement of students' capacity to assess and comprehend cultural differences.

Snow (2015) reviewed and theoretically analyzed existing literature on critical incident exercises and their impact on intercultural competence in language teaching contexts. The findings showed that the integration of CIEs into English language courses as means to achieve more comprehensive educational outcomes improved intercultural competence. The researcher suggests that such exercises not only assist in language acquisition but also prepare students for real-world intercultural interactions by promoting critical thinking and deeper understanding of cultural dynamics. Esmaeili and Kuhi (2023) also highlighted the significance of using pedagogical intercultural tasks and critical incident exercises in Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) courses. Their research supports the inclusion of these activities in educational programs to improve the intercultural skills of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, which are crucial for efficient communication in a globalized society (Esmaeili & Kuhi, 2023).

Uygur (2019) examined the level of intercultural awareness among stakeholders involved in middle school English sessions, including students, teachers, and parents.

The research emphasizes the advantages that the integration of intercultural education into school curricula brings to the entire community, by fostering a complete educational approach (Uygur, 2019). As another example to educational intervention, Zorba and Çakir (2019) conducted a case study that examined the intercultural awareness of lower secondary school pupils in Türkiye. The study demonstrated how early educational interventions can foster a fundamental comprehension of cultural variety (Zorba & Çakir, 2019).

Liao and Li (2023) provided additional evidence to emphasize the significance of culturally responsive teaching by showing that implementing such methods in spoken English classrooms greatly enhances the intercultural competency of Chinese EFL learners. Liao and Li (2023) propose that culturally responsive instruction facilitates the connection between linguistic proficiency and cultural comprehension.

Literature is also regarded as an effective teaching material in language education contexts. For example, Civelekoğlu and Saka (2018) illustrated the ability of poetry to enhance intercultural understanding in EFL classrooms. Engaging with distinct cultural expressions through poetry allows pupils to cultivate a sophisticated understanding of various cultural viewpoints (Civelekoğlu & Saka, 2018). Likewise, Tural and Çubukçu (2021) examined the efficacy of utilizing brief narratives for instructing intercultural consciousness in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) courses. The research conducted by Tural and Çubukçu (2021) indicates that literature serves as a potent means of introducing pupils to intricate cultural matters, consequently augmenting their capacity for empathy and comprehension.

In some studies, educational mobility programs are also investigated whether they have an effect on students' intercultural awareness level. In a study conducted by Arslan, Günçavdı, and Polat (2015), the researchers investigated the effects of a peace education program implemented at a university in Türkiye. The study found significant enhancements in students' intercultural sensitivity as a result of the program. The study by Arslan, Günçavdı, and Polat (2015) highlights the efficacy of structured educational programs in fostering respect and empathy among students with different cultural backgrounds. Similarly, İlter (2016) examined the impact of mobility programs on the development of intercultural awareness among international university students. According to the findings, it was discovered that these programs greatly enhance students' awareness and comprehension of cultural distinctions by immersing them in

different experiences. This implies that being directly exposed to multiple cultures promotes a more profound intercultural understanding. Supporting the findings of the previous studies, Bekiroğlu and Balcı (2014) conducted a study at Selçuk University's Communication Faculty, examining the intercultural communication sensitivity of students. This study emphasized the influence of engagement in exchange programs such as ERASMUS, the regularity of consuming international media, and interactions on social media with individuals from other cultural backgrounds. The results demonstrated that these encounters considerably enhanced students' multicultural awareness and communication abilities. Similarly, Çelik, Kazazoğlu, and Karaca (2013) explored the experiences of nine international students in Türkiye who participated in the Erasmus program, shedding light on the challenges and opportunities associated with such mobility initiatives. Their findings indicate that while students generally held positive attitudes toward Turkish culture, limited language proficiency hindered their ability to fully engage with it. As a result, students primarily interacted with other international peers, using English or their native languages instead of Turkish. This study underscores the importance of language preparation and structured intercultural interactions in mobility programs to maximize their potential for fostering intercultural awareness. Chen and Hu (2023) also contributed to the findings of the previous studies by discovering students who had participated in intercultural communication courses or traveled abroad demonstrated higher intercultural sensitivity. Another study conducted by Pham and Pham (2022) revealed that students in private institutions demonstrated higher intercultural competence attributed to extensive exposure to international environments and resources. This highlights the inequalities in intercultural education and the necessity for standardized curriculum development across educational institutions. Sharing similar implications, Tıkız Ertürk, Demiröz, and Ata (2023) investigated the importance of intercultural competency for EFL preparation students in Türkiye and their research revealed high levels of intercultural competence and sensitivity among students, with no significant differences related to demographic factors. This indicates that intercultural awareness may be cultivated efficiently through structured educational initiatives, regardless of one's background.

The relationship between intercultural sensitivity and academic achievement has formed the scope of some studies. For example, Çiloğlan and Bardakçı (2019)

examined the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and English language proficiency among EFL students in Türkiye. The research revealed a positive correlation between higher language proficiency and higher intercultural sensitivity, indicating that as students' language abilities advance, their capacity to navigate and recognize cultural distinctions also improves. Similarly, Özşen (2022) established a significant correlation between intercultural awareness and academic success among students in university preparatory classes. The study found that increased cultural awareness is associated with improved academic performance. This thesis emphasizes the educational advantages of intercultural competency (Özşen, 2022). Liao and Li (2023) also discovered there is a connection between linguistic proficiency and cultural comprehension after implementing responsive teaching methods. In China, Chen and Hu (2023) also discovered that there is a positive correlation between higher language proficiency and higher intercultural sensitivity level among university students.

Similarly, Basarkod et al. (2024) conducted a comprehensive study to examine the correlation between intercultural education, attitudes, and student wellbeing in different nations participating in the PISA assessment. The researchers found that there is a significant connection between favorable attitudes towards intercultural education and better social results and overall student wellbeing. This indicates that having intercultural competency is essential for students to succeed academically and in their personal lives.

These studies collectively present strong evidence that educational interventions, such as mobility programs and the usage of literature and media, can greatly improve intercultural awareness among students in language teaching settings. Incorporating cultural components into educational frameworks enhances both communication skills and comprehension of global cultural variety, equipping students for effective engagement in progressively multicultural and multinational settings. These valuable observations are essential for educators and policymakers who seek to integrate more efficient intercultural skills into the current educational system.

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter aims to delineate detailed information about the implementation of the research method by presenting details of research design, setting, participants, data collection procedures and instruments, data analysis procedure and validity and reliability of the research procedures. Through these procedures, this study aims to seek answers to the following research questions:

1) Does the implementation of intercultural communication tasks affect students' levels of intercultural awareness in multicultural English teaching classrooms? If yes, how?
2) Is there a relationship between students' English proficiency levels and their levels of intercultural awareness?
3) What are students' perceptions of their lesson experiences with intercultural communication tasks?

3.1. Research Design

To achieve the objectives of this study, a sequential explanatory mixed methods research design was adopted, integrating both qualitative and quantitative data collection procedures. A sequential explanatory mixed methods design involves a structured approach in which researchers initially gather and analyze quantitative data, followed by a second phase that is informed by the outcomes of the first. In this subsequent phase, qualitative data are collected and examined to provide further clarification or a deeper understanding of the quantitative findings. This design effectively integrates the strengths of both methodologies—yielding broad, generalizable insights through quantitative analysis and enriching them with nuanced, context-specific interpretations derived from qualitative inquiry (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2010). Specifically, within the quantitative strand, a one-group pretest-posttest design was employed to measure the impact of the intercultural communication tasks on students' intercultural awareness. The study was conducted in an authentic academic environment, with intercultural awareness lessons embedded

into the institution's pre-existing curriculum over the course of an eight-week modular system. The decision not to include a control group was based on ethical and pedagogical considerations; withholding a potentially beneficial educational practice from a group of students was deemed inappropriate given the study's educational context. Therefore, a one-group design was considered both ethically sound and practically feasible for measuring the intervention's effectiveness within a real classroom setting. It can also be considered as an empirical study that looks at a modern phenomenon in its true, real-world environment, especially when it's difficult to draw clear distinctions between the phenomenon and its surroundings (Yin, 2003). It can be difficult to separate circumstances in our daily lives from the context in which they exist. Especially, topics addressing social and cultural relationships, intercultural communication is the primary facilitator of social and cultural ties between individuals (Kim & McKay-Semmler, 2013), and it is essential to the world's ongoing development (Chen, 1990). This study design also provides an opportunity to collect data from multiple types of data sources to gain in depth understanding of the phenomena through interviews and a questionnaire. After quantitative data were collected through a questionnaire used in a test-retest design, qualitative data was gathered through semi-structured interviews to explain the results of the questionnaire in a descriptive and detailed way.

3.2. Setting

The study was conducted in an English preparatory school of a foundation university in Istanbul, Türkiye during the academic year of 2023-2024. There are approximately 1200 students in the school. The multicultural student profile of the university was the reason why the school was found suitable to conduct such investigation in the field of intercultural awareness level of students in higher education. It has a goal-oriented internationalization policy in higher education and with this mission, it carries out bilateral exchange agreements between some countries. The school has students from diverse cultural backgrounds including both Turkish and international. Turkish students constitute the 60% of the student population while the rest of it is constituted by students coming from Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Russia, Palestine and some other Middle Eastern countries. Similarly, Turkish students also come from diverse cultural backgrounds rooted from their hometowns ranged from Gaziantep,

Hatay, Diyarbakır to Edirne. In this context, students study for improving basic English language skills in English as a foreign language classes before they start studying in their departments. In addition to this goal, students at the university are now immersed in a context which requires use of English to communicate, proceed their daily conversations and create social bounds with peers around.

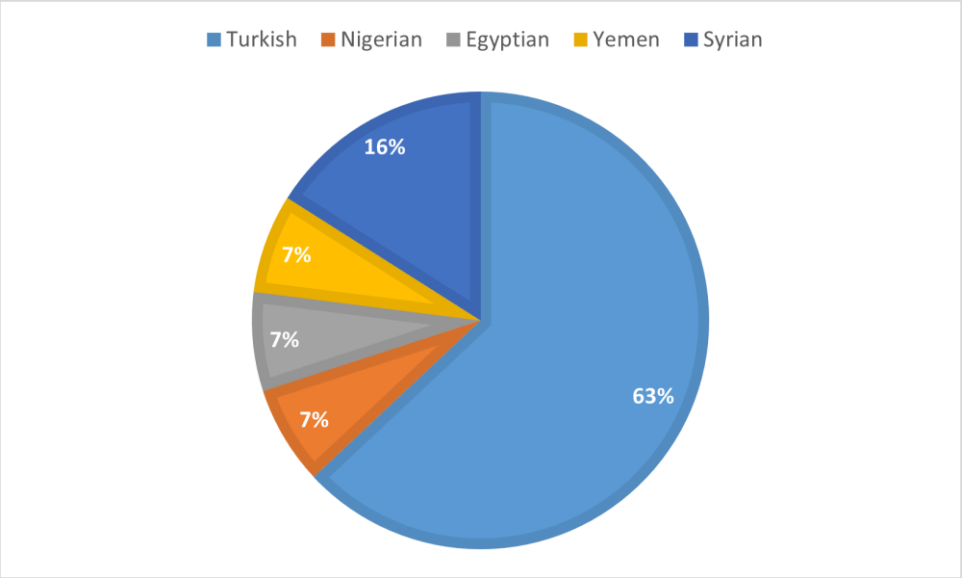
In this multicultural EFL context, students are studying in a modular system which includes generally an eight-week period. There are four English language levels structured in the standards of CEFR from A1 level to B2 level. Students have twenty-five hours of lessons each week. Lessons are both held for three days face-to-face and two days online with two different instructors. While face-to-face lessons are conducted with an advisor teacher who is responsible for teaching essentials of language and tracking students' progress in detail, online lessons are held with a co-teacher who is responsible for developing productive language skills of learners. The school's operation has an eligibility system in which students are required to reach the minimum eligibility score through formative assessment tasks and quizzes throughout the module. With the minimum eligibility score, students are granted to become eligible to sit the final exam. If students become successful and get a passing grade, 60 out of 100, from the final exam, they can successfully complete a language level. Students must success B2 level English in order to start studying in their departments. If students cannot get a passing grade from the final exam or cannot reach the minimum eligibility score, they have to repeat the same level. While the school has formative assessment tasks to improve students' academic and linguistic skills, each module there is a different class project in which students as a whole class work on a project such as community problem solving, international day, short-film festival and so on. These projects both aim to contribute to students' academic skills and enhance social relationships among peers.

3.3. Participants

The study was conducted with a single group consisting of 57 students from A2 level and B2 level classes. Since the focus of this study is on exploring new areas of inquiry within a case, one single group design with embedded qualitative data was employed to enrich the understanding of the impact of intercultural awareness lesson implementations. Participants were initially drawn from a conveniently accessible

pool of students at a private university's English preparatory school. However, within this group, A2 and B2 proficiency level students were purposively selected to represent distinct stages of language development—elementary and upper-intermediate—allowing for a meaningful comparison of how learners with differing linguistic competencies engage with and benefit from intercultural communication tasks. Learners at intermediate proficiency levels, such as A2 or B2, may display more observable progress in skill-based development, which aligns with the assumptions of the Threshold Hypothesis (Cummins, 1976). In the study context, A1-level students were excluded due to both linguistic and practical constraints: at this level, language and communication barriers often hinder active participation in reflective classroom tasks, and frequent student turnover within the module compromises sample stability. Similarly, B1-level students were not included, as their language proficiency and communicative abilities closely resemble those of A2-level learners, which could limit the clarity of group-based distinctions. Therefore, a combination of convenience and purposive sampling strategies was employed to ensure both practical feasibility and alignment with the study's research objectives. The ages of the participants varied from 18 to 25. Domestic students who are constituted approximately 63% of the group while 37% of the participants are non-domestic students who are coming from Middle Eastern countries for educational purposes. The term "domestic" was used to categorize participants who have been residing in Turkey for at least 10 years, as this duration reflects a significant level of integration into the local cultural, social, and linguistic environment. Regardless of their nationality, the participants who are residing any other countries were categorized as "non-domestic". Figures 2 and 3 show the illustration of the nationality distribution of participants in both groups.

Figure 2.Nationality Distribution of Participants



The participants' demographics including gender, nationality, oversea experience, purpose of travel and duration, foreign languages they know and if they have foreign friends were collected through the questionnaire's first section. Table 1 illustrates the demographics of the participants in detail.

Table 1. Demographics of the Participants

Categories	Group	N	%
Language Level	A2	20	35.08
	B2	37	64.91
Gender	Female	23	40.35
	Male	34	59.64
Nationality	Domestic	36	63.15
	Non-Domestic	21	36.84
Oversea experience	Yes	21	36.84
	No	36	63.15
Foreign languages	Yes	50	87.71
	No	7	12.28
Foreign friends	Yes	46	80.70
	No	11	19.29
	Total	57	100.0

The participants who had oversea experience expressed that they either traveled abroad for a short period of time such as two weeks or they traveled for the purposes of education for a longer period. No domestic participant had been abroad for educational purposes. 20 students claimed that they knew a foreign language, yet almost all of the domestic students explained they knew English and one of them also added Kurdish and German to the foreign languages they knew. On the other hand, two non-domestic students explained that they knew English, Russian and Turkish. Even though the school has multicultural population, eight students whose nationality is Turkish explained that they did not have any foreign friends. The rest of the participants who have friends from other countries or cultures explained that they kept their contact through social media or face-to-face communication.

The study was conducted in the 4th module of the academic year. At the beginning of the module, students took an achievement test which was developed by the Testing and Assessment Unit of the school to identify their language level and as a result of the exam, they were placed in these levels. Before conducting the study and collecting data, all participants were informed about the aims and procedures of the current research and their consent was taken in which they stated they voluntarily participated in the research, their data would be kept confidential and they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time. With ethical considerations, ethical approval was received from the ethical committee of the institution before the implementation process of the study.

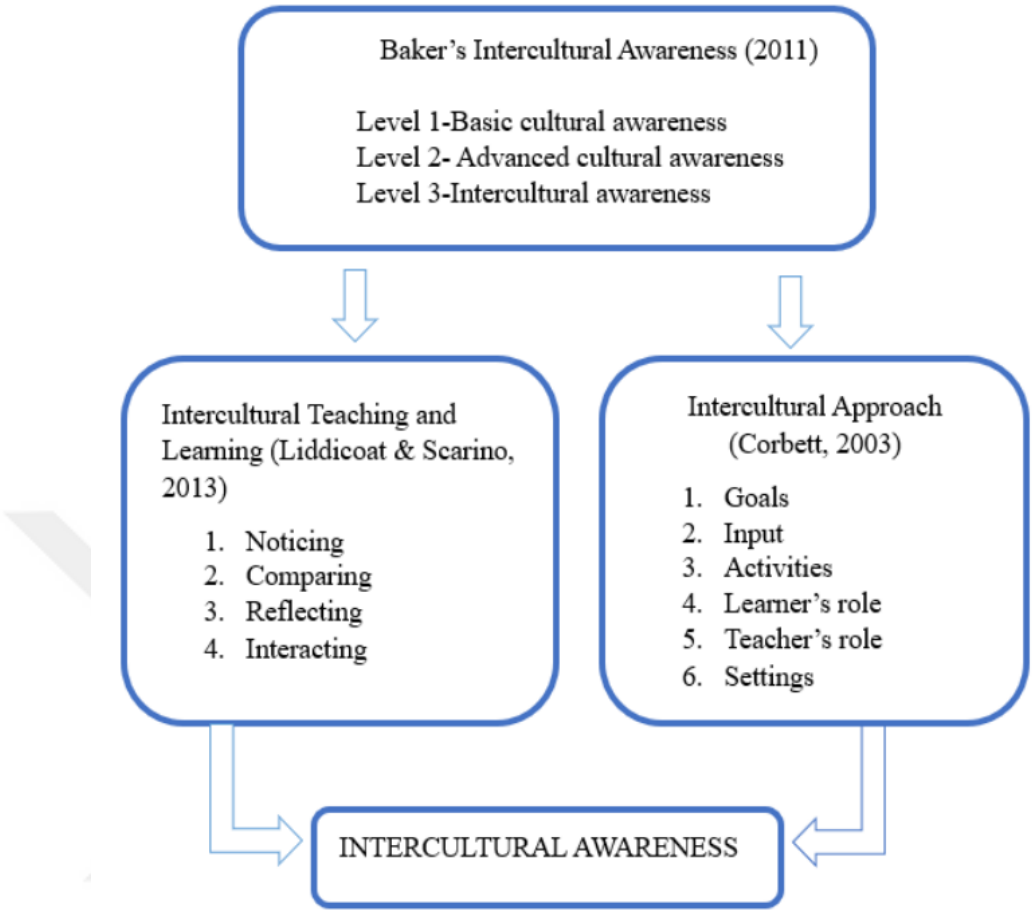
3.4. Procedures

This study was conducted in the fourth module of the 2023-2024 academic year with a group consisting of 57 students. As a part of an eight-week modular system. The study with its data collection and lesson implementation procedures took six weeks since Midterm and Final exam weeks were excluded from the study in order not to interrupt the ongoing implementation process. In the first week of the module, the questionnaire developed by Zorba (2019), which investigates the intercultural awareness level of students, was administered to the participants to assess their current level of intercultural awareness. The questionnaire combined of five dimensions and was developed in a similar context in Türkiye. Prior to conducting the study and

collecting data, the questionnaire items were rephrased and validated by three experts one of whom had expertise in cultural issues within ELT. Due to these reasons, the questionnaire was adopted in this study.

Starting from the second week until the fifth week, participants received lessons with intercultural communication tasks for three weeks as a 60-minute-period lesson. Each lesson and activities were designed by following the phases of the intercultural learning and teaching framework (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). Two lessons were developed for each level of Baker's Intercultural Awareness (2011). According to Baker, Level 1 includes basic awareness of culture as a set of common beliefs and behaviors. While Level 2 is more related to gaining an understanding of complexity of diverse cultures and having the awareness of negotiation of conflicts and stereotyping. Lastly, Level 3 requires an awareness and ability of managing dynamic nature of cultures such as overcoming conflicts or stereotyping and sustaining collaborative communication in culturally diverse environments. Lessons always followed the same scope by including intercultural communication tasks and activities that encourage students to go through phases of noticing cultural diversities, comparing their own culture to other cultures, reflecting their ideas on cultural diversities, interacting with peers on their opinions by exchanging ideas and producing writing tasks. For a qualified and smooth lesson process, instructors who were going to conduct these lessons were provided with detailed lesson plans and materials so that they could be informed about the dynamics of Intercultural Approach (Corbett, 2003) and they were trained by the researcher on the operation of these lessons before the implementation process with weekly meetings.

Figure 3. Conceptual Framework of the Lesson and Activities Design



Source: Çoşkun, 2023, p. 38

Considering the frameworks above, each lesson was conducted by using slides that include authentic images and videos. The lesson themes and activity sequence were adapted from the course book titled "Mirrors and Windows" which was developed by Huber-Krieger, Lazar and Strange (2003) specifically to train intercultural sensitivity. Lessons generally started with an image and discussion question to activate students' background cultural knowledge. Through authentic videos and thought-provoking questions, they were motivated to compare cultural differences and reflect on their own ideas. In addition to improving speaking skills as a sub-aim of these lessons, students were asked to produce written works by the end of each lesson. They explained their opinion after reading some vignettes and wrote what they would do in a kind of a situation specified in the vignettes. By doing that, they could also practice productive writing skills. For productive tasks, online collaborative tools were utilized which both enriched the lesson content by raising interactivity of the lessons and

maintained students' productions permanently through open-access feature. Since these lesson materials were used in both A2 and B2 level classes, the language was set according to pre-intermediate level English. Still, some words that would be above the level had been detected before the lesson implementation and they were given in the Warm-Up Vocabulary slides so that students were given some time to search for the meanings of these words and increase familiarity before they were presented with the content. Instructors were reminded that improving vocabulary knowledge was not one of the sub-aims of these lessons. Warm-up vocabulary parts were only designed to prepare students for the upcoming content. Therefore, students were allowed to use any translation tools to understand the meanings of these words and instructors were asked to guide students to achieve this aim.

While the first parts of each lesson aimed to raise an awareness towards the target intercultural awareness level, the second part of the lessons focused more on putting theory into practice through raising empathy, generating solutions to conflicts and managing cultural negotiations. The lesson themes were inspired by the students' essentials lesson book content (Language Hub) and adapted for the purposes of intercultural communication tasks. Figure 4 and Figure 5 below contain sample visuals of lesson plans and materials.

Figure 4. A Sample Intercultural Communication Lesson Plan

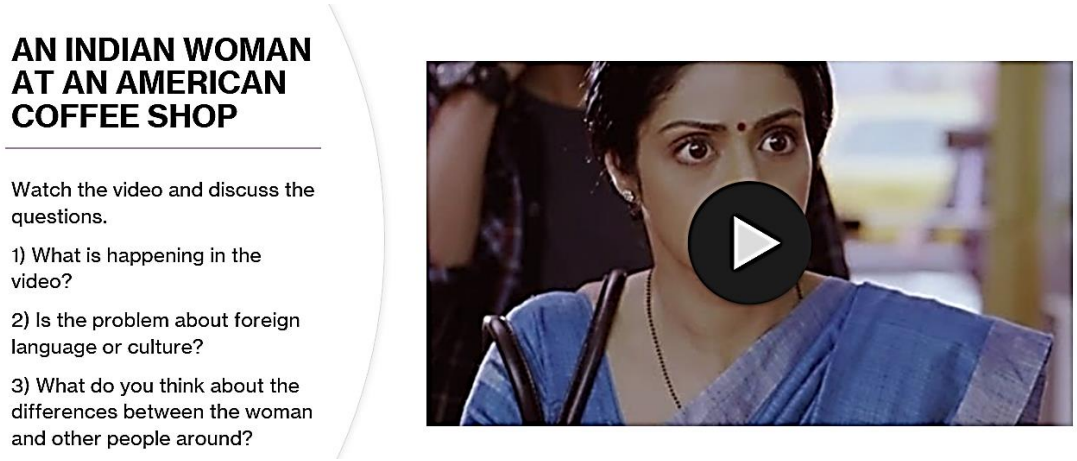
Lesson:	Lesson 2.1 Stereotypes and Intercultural Communication	**Date:**	**03.05.2024 (The last 2 class hours)**
Level:	A2 – B2		
Lesson Aims	**By the end of the lesson, the students will be able to … / will have …:** **Students will be able to gain an understanding of the complexity of cultures which requires negotiation of the conflicts and mediation between differences by overcoming biases and stereotyping through realizing if they have biases and where their stereotyping come from in addition to discussing on an authentic video content to differentiate everyday problems related to culture and language and reflecting their opinion by raising empathy in a similar situation in an opinion paragraph.* **Sub-aim: Students will have improved their speaking and writing skills by reflecting their ideas on stereotyping and overcoming biases.*		
	The activities in this lesson are prepared in accordance with the components of Intercultural Teaching and Learning framework (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). 1. Noticing 2. Comparing 3. Reflecting 4. Interacting		

LESSON PROCEDURE

	Duration for Learning Activities	Learning Activity	Procedure	Interaction Pattern
1	5 mins.	Imagined India	Teacher will copy the Padlet for his/her own class. Then, share the new Padlet link. Students will make a list of adjectives about their imagined India and Indian people. There is no word limit to write adjectives.	T→Sts
2	5 mins.	Imagined England	Teacher will copy the Padlet for his/her own class. Then, T will share the new Padlet link. Students will make a list of adjectives about their imagined England and English people. There is no word limit to write adjectives.	T→Sts
3	10 mins.	Students' Images of Countries and Cultures in Stereotyping	Teacher will reinforce students to think and express their ideas on why they imagine India/Indian people and England/English people like this. Where do those images of countries or people come from? (i.e., school education, social media, movies etc.). Teacher will also let students compare their imagined figures and discuss aloud.	T→Sts Sts→ Sts
4	5 mins.	Warm-up Vocabulary	Teacher will let students use online dictionaries or translation tools to look up the meanings of the key words which are included in the upcoming content.	T→Sts
5	10 mins.	An Indian Woman at an American Coffee Shop	Students will check the questions first. Then, they will watch the video to find answers to the questions. Please encourage students to express their ideas mostly on Question 2 and 3. Students can discuss their answers with each other.	T→Sts Sts→ Sts
6	5 mins.	Imagined Indian People vs. The Woman in the Video	Teacher will ask students to compare their imagined Indian people with the woman in the video. Then, students will	T→Sts Sts→ Sts

Each lesson plan concludes with a productive and collaborative task. For example, the final activity of the lesson involves writing an opinion paragraph in which students imagine what they would do if placed in a similar situation. Following this, students engage in discussions, interacting with one another to share their ideas on the importance of culture and cultural diversity in communication. Figure 5 shows a part of the lesson material related to this lesson plan.

Figure 5. A Part of the Lesson Material Related to Stereotyping



While the sample lesson plan belongs to the second phase of the intercultural awareness level (Baker, 2011), the one below was conducted primarily since it requires the basic intercultural awareness level which aims to activate students' background knowledge about Christmas celebration concepts and make them realize how celebrations differ around the world.

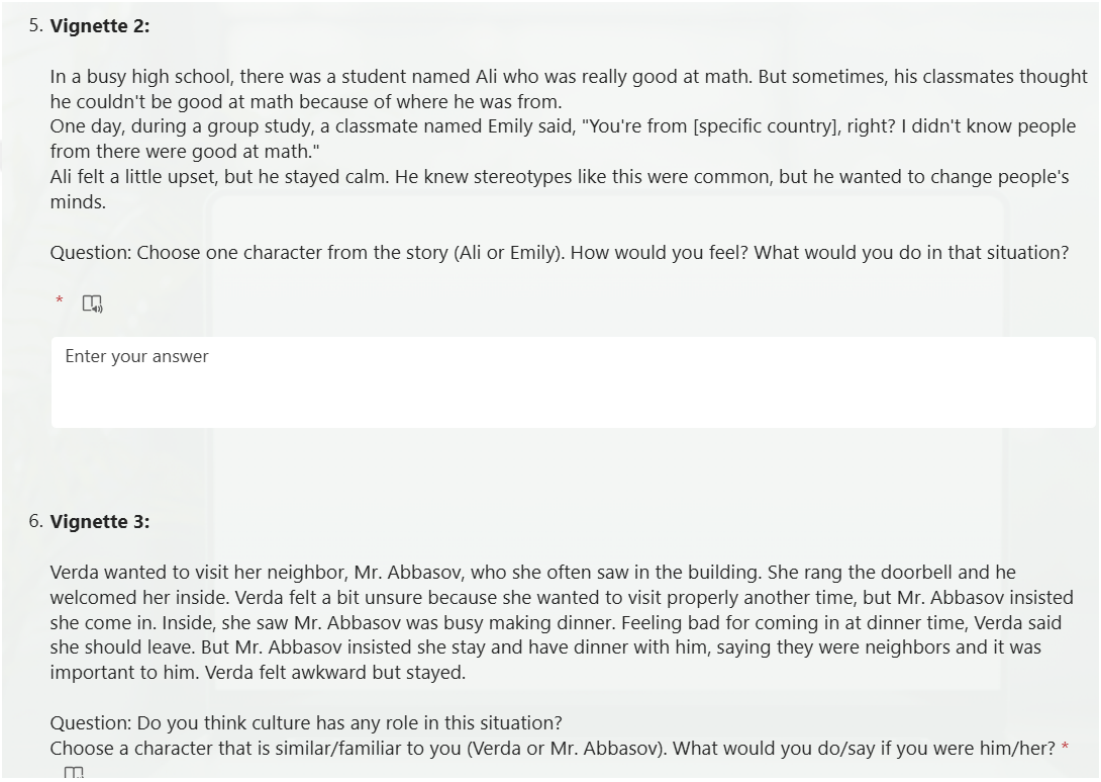
Figure 6. A Part of the Lesson Material Related to Christmas Celebration Around the World



The lesson begins with students identifying foods from various countries, fostering recognition of cultural diversity. This is followed by a series of video activities featuring Turkish and Lebanese foods and Christmas traditions globally, encouraging students to compare and reflect on cultural similarities and differences. Vocabulary support is integrated through online tools, ensuring accessibility. A significant portion of the lesson involves interactive activities such as posting favorite Christmas cards on

Padlet and sharing reflections. The final task prompts students to write an opinion paragraph about Christmas celebrations, engaging them in peer discussions. The lessons are structured into two sessions. The objective of the first sessions is to foster awareness and promote the development of critical thinking skills related to the topic. The second sessions incorporate interactive and productive activities, featuring critical incident tasks (vignettes) conducted through Microsoft Forms. Figure 7 below illustrates examples of these critical incident tasks.

Figure 7. Sample Critical Incident Tasks



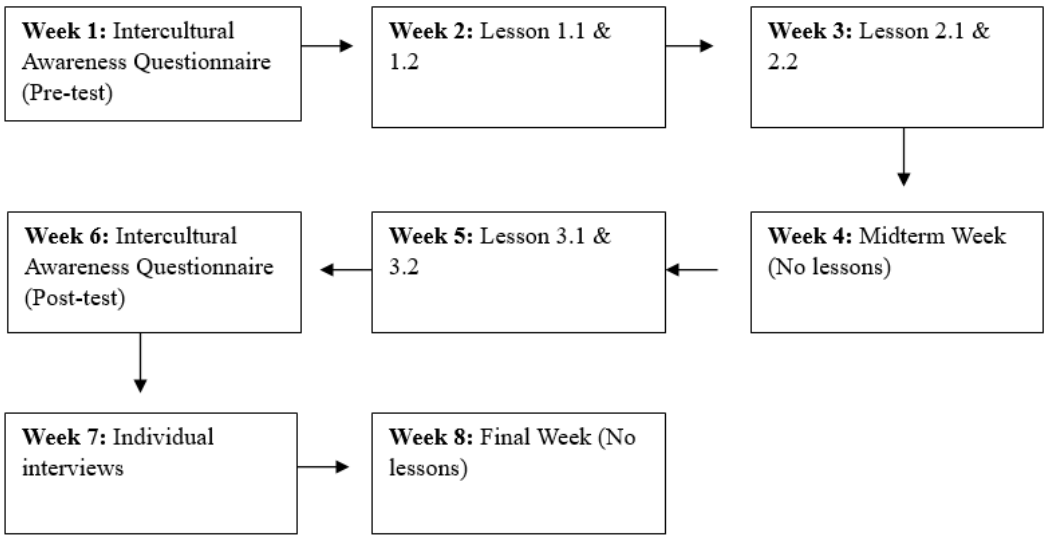
These lesson plans highlight the importance of fostering intercultural awareness while enhancing students' speaking and writing skills through collaborative and reflective tasks. For overall information on the intercultural communication lessons, Table 2 can be seen below.

Table 2. Information on the Intercultural Communication Lessons

Week	Theme of the Lesson	Intercultural Awareness Level of the Lesson
Week 2 (26.04.2024)	1.1 Food & Culture	Level 1-Basic Cultural Awareness (Identification & Comparison)
Week 2 (26.04.2024)	1.2 Gestures & Culture	Level 1-Basic Cultural Awareness (Reflection & Production)
Week 3 (3.05.2024)	2.1 Stereotypes & Intercultural Communication	Level 2- Advanced Cultural Awareness (Identification & Comparison)
Week 3 (3.05.2024)	2.2 Stereotypes & Intercultural Communication	Level 2-Advanced Cultural Awareness (Reflection & Production)
Week 5 (17.05.2024)	3.1 Culture is dynamic	Level 3-Intercultural Awareness (Identification & Comparison)
Week 5 (17.05.2024)	3.2 Culture is dynamic	Level 3-Intercultural Awareness (Reflection & Production)

Following the intercultural communication lesson implementations, students were given the beforementioned Intercultural Awareness Questionnaire adapted from Zorba (2019) as a posttest to investigate if students' responses and intercultural awareness level changed after these lesson practices in Week 6. One week later, students who were willing to express their opinions in detail were invited to semi-structured interviews which would help deepen the outcomes of this study. Figure 8 illustrates how the implementation and data collection processes were carried out within the research setting, which followed an 8-week modular system. It should be noted that no intercultural awareness lessons were conducted during Week 4 and 8, as these weeks were allocated exclusively to the administration of the midterm and final examinations.

Figure 8. Timeline of the Study Procedure



3.4.1. Data Collection Instruments

Quantitative aspects of the data collection proceeded with the implementation of a questionnaire while qualitative aspects of the data were gathered from individual semi-structured interviews. Participants' data gathered from the intercultural lesson tasks were not aimed at being used for the investigation of this study as they were not planned as a treatment procedure.

3.4.1.1. Questionnaire

An intercultural awareness questionnaire developed by Zorba (2019) was used to investigate the intercultural awareness level of the participants. As Zorba stated, the pilot study was carried out with 104 participants, no factor analysis test was administrated to test construct validity of the questionnaire. Yet, according to the results of the item-total statistics, some items were rephrased or excluded by Zorba. The reliability value of the final version of the questionnaire was found .900. The questionnaire consisted of two parts and 31 close-ended items. The items were categorized according to concepts of intercultural awareness: *Intercultural knowledge (8 items), Intercultural skills (6 items), Intercultural sensitivity (7 items), Intercultural interaction (5 items), Intercultural interest (5 items).* The duration of completing the survey was approximately 15 minutes. As the study setting and aims were very similar to the study conducted by Zorba (2019), the questionnaire items were not adapted yet

piloted with similar participants in this study's setting in case of any revisions or eliminations. Another reason for utilizing the questionnaire was the high Cronbach-Alpha reliability coefficient value which was calculated to be ".900". When it was piloted in the current study context with 29 students consisted of both A2 and B2 levels, the reliability value was tested as ".925" and that score guided the choice of this questionnaire in this study.

Table 3. The Reliability Statistics of the Questionnaire

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.925	.927	31

The questionnaire was administered via Microsoft Forms, which was the school's institutional information and technology system that participants were familiar with. Before filling in the questionnaire, participants were informed about the aims of the study, duration of the questionnaire and contact details if they would like to ask questions to the researcher or withdraw from the study. They were also provided with an informed consent form at the beginning of the questionnaire on the first page. Unless participants marked "I agree" option, they were not allowed to participate in the questionnaire. Following that page, the first part asked for demographic information of the participants including their English language level, gender, nationality, overseas experience with its reason and duration, information regarding native and foreign language knowledge and lastly information regarding social relationships investigating if they have any friends from other cultures/countries and medium of communication. This part aimed to collect information about the participants' personal details to get to know them better as these types of information might give insights into the research results. The second part of the questionnaire consisted of 31 items including statements investigating intercultural awareness level of students. Participants were asked to carefully read the statements and respond based on their initial impressions. They were asked to show their responses by choosing a number from 1 to 5, indicating the number that best describes their thoughts. Participants were informed that there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers in this scale and encouraged to provide sincere responses as much as possible. Even though participants were allowed to use translation tools to understand the questions and

statements better, the second part of the questionnaire were formed in both English and Turkish languages. In order to test internal consistency and inter-item correlations, further reliability analysis was conducted.

Table 4. Summary Item Statistics

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Max. / Min.	Variance	N
Item Means	4.23	3.81	4.56	0.75	1.20	0.03	31
Item Variances	0.42	0.22	0.73	0.51	3.32	0.02	31
Inter-Item Covariances	0.20	0.03	0.51	0.48	15.45	0.01	31
Inter-Item Correlations	0.47	0.10	0.91	0.81	9.42	0.02	31

Table 5 illustrates the reliability statistics of each dimension in the questionnaire.

Table 5. Reliability Statistics of Dimensions

Dimension	Cronbach's Alpha	The Number of Items
Intercultural Knowledge	.873	8
Intercultural Skills	.829	6
Intercultural Sensitivity	.850	7
Intercultural Interaction	.782	5
Intercultural Interest	.925	5

As expressed earlier, this questionnaire aimed to investigate the intercultural awareness level of participants before and after the implementation of the lessons with intercultural communication tasks. Thus, the questionnaire was employed as a pre-test and post-test in the 2nd week and 6th week of an eight-week module.

3.4.1.2. Semi-Structured Interviews

According to the most, data collection procedures are essential because they affect the quality and reliability of qualitative research (Kitto et al., 2008), which can have a significant impact on the findings (Gibbs et al., 2007). Since semi-structured interviews are thought to be both adaptable and fruitful in providing insights and detailed opinions of participants, they are frequently used to collect qualitative data (Kallio et al., 2016). Considering this contribution, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 14 voluntary participants during the 7th week of the study. Of these participants, nine were categorized as domestic students, having resided in Turkey for at least 10 years, while the remainder were classified as non-domestic students, originating from countries such as Syria, Yemen, and Egypt. A total of nine participants at A2 language proficiency level and five participants at B2 level took part in the semi-structured interviews. The interview had 13 questions aiming to investigate the participants' intercultural sensitivity in detail and their perceptions regarding their experiences of intercultural communication lessons. The interview questions were adapted by another study conducted in a similar setting (Çoşkun, 2023) and administered in both Turkish and English according to participants' preference. Each voluntary participant was interviewed individually and their responses were recorded and transcribed on a computer by the researcher.

3.4.2. Data Analysis Procedure

The quantitative aspect of data which was gathered through the questionnaire before and after the lesson implementations was analyzed on IBM SPSS Statistics 22 running descriptive statistics such as mean, median and standard deviation. The aim was to measure the central tendency and variability of the data. To check whether the data meets the assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variances, tests of normality and homogeneity were conducted. In order to evaluate the normality and homogeneity of the data in the context of this study, which includes one group of 57 individuals, skewness and kurtosis values were employed. This methodology is supported by

existing literature as an effective means of assessing distribution characteristics, especially in social science studies with small to moderate sample sizes. George and Mallery (2010) claim that skewness and kurtosis values between -1 and +1 (or more conservatively between -2 and +2) indicate a roughly normal distribution, indicating that parametric tests may be conducted without violating essential assumptions. In contrast to the Shapiro-Wilk test, which is too sensitive to slight deviations from normality, skewness and kurtosis provide a more robust and comprehensible measure, thus minimizing the probability of errors in smaller samples (Field, 2013). In social science research, where data frequently originate from varied populations and may display innate asymmetries, skewness and kurtosis serve as effective instruments for detecting possible anomalies (Kline, 2011). This approach corresponds with the adaptability of parametric tests, which can tolerate moderate deviations from normality, so maintaining methodological consistency. This study, therefore, employs skewness and kurtosis to provide a balanced data analysis strategy, addressing the complex nature of real-world social science data.

Skewness and kurtosis values within the acceptable range (-1 to +1) indicated that the data followed a distribution sufficiently close to normal. Table 6 shows the skewness kurtosis values of overall test and each dimension.

Table 6. Skewness and Kurtosis Values

Group	Skewness	Kurtosis
Pretest Overall	-0.74	1.72
Posttest Overall	-0.48	0.38
Intercultural Interest Pretest	-1.27	4.08
Intercultural Interest Posttest	-0.95	1.83
Intercultural Interaction Pretest	-0.63	0.97

Intercultural Interaction Posttest	-0.39	0.00
Intercultural Sensitivity Pretest	-0.45	1.63
Intercultural Sensitivity Posttest	-0.61	0.30
Intercultural Skills Pretest	-0.73	0.97
Intercultural Skills Posttest	-0.23	0.10
Intercultural Knowledge Pretest	-0.63	0.96
Intercultural Knowledge Posttest	-0.19	-0.33

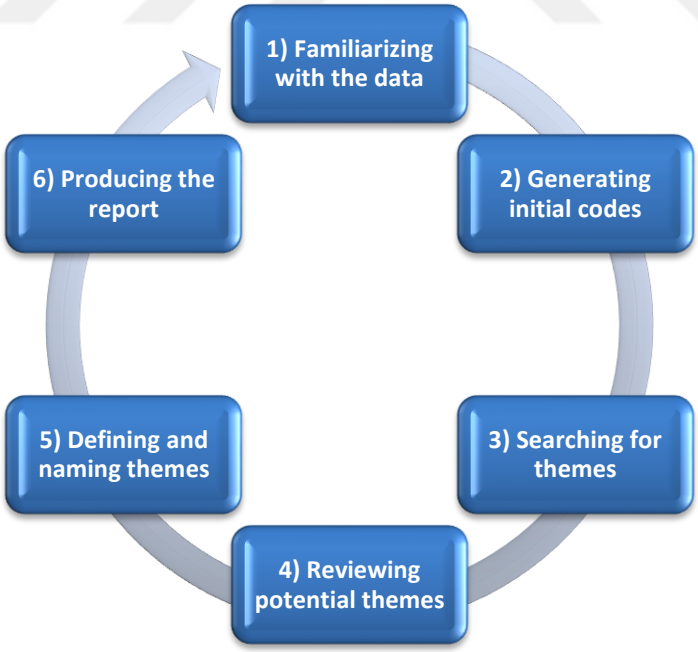
Consequently, a paired samples t-test was employed to investigate the first research question: “Does the implementation of intercultural communication tasks affect students' levels of intercultural awareness in multicultural English teaching classrooms? If yes, how?” The paired samples t-test compared pretest and posttest scores to determine whether the difference between the two tests was statistically significant. Additionally, each dimension of the intercultural awareness scale (e.g., Intercultural Knowledge, Skills, Sensitivity, Interaction, and Interest) was analyzed individually to provide deeper insights into the specific areas of growth.

To address the second research question: “Is there a relationship between students' English proficiency levels and their levels of intercultural awareness?”, a correlation analysis was conducted to explore the relationship between language proficiency (A2 and B2) and intercultural awareness levels. The correlation analysis examined if proficiency levels influenced awareness levels, highlighting potential differences between the two language groups.

Semi-structured interviews contributed to the research with qualitative aspect of the data aiming to investigate participants’ perceptions of their lesson experiences with

intercultural communication tasks. The interviews were conducted with 14 voluntary students and the total duration of all individual interviews was approximately 130 minutes. The participants' responses to the interview questions were transcribed and coded by the researcher on an electronic device. A subject matter expert involved in the coding process independently and the codes were compared in order to assess the consistency of the interpretations of data. This study employed thematic analysis to investigate students' perspectives of their experiences with intercultural communication tasks. The six-step techniques established by Clarke and Braun (2021) followed to begin with data familiarization and moving through coding, theme creation, and refinement. This methodology enabled the researcher to explore the depth of participants' responses while meticulously identifying reoccurring themes and different viewpoints. Themes were derived directly from participants' statements, providing true representation of their views. The method's adaptability and ability to incorporate different points of view correspond effectively with the study's objective of investigating the complex nature of intercultural learning experiences. Figure 9 below demonstrates the process of thematic analysis of the data.

Figure 9. Process of Thematic Analysis



This approach also offers a structured yet adaptable framework for recognizing, interpreting, and presenting patterns within qualitative data, enabling researchers to derive comprehensive and nuanced understandings from complex datasets (Braun et al., 2019). In contrast to more rigid methods, thematic analysis is not bound by

stringent theoretical frameworks, making it especially effective for exploratory research that aims to examine varied viewpoints and uncover unanticipated findings (Nowell et al., 2017). After following the steps of the thematic analysis procedure, the gathered and compared data was categorized and three main themes emerged: (1) development of intercultural awareness, (2) influence of language proficiency on intercultural awareness, (3) students' perceptions of lesson experiences with intercultural communication tasks. Interview results and details regarding themes, excerpts and coding frequency will be discussed in the findings section.

In the semi-structured interviews, participants' identities were anonymized to protect their personal data. Participant codes were created to ensure anonymity while allowing for systematic reporting of responses. These codes were generated based on two criteria: the participants' cultural background (domestic: the ones who have been living in Türkiye for at least 10 years or non-domestic) and their language proficiency level (A2 or B2), as well as the sequence in which they completed the survey.

For example:

- **DA22**: This code represents a participant categorized as Domestic (D), with an A2 proficiency level (A), and who was the 22nd participant to complete the survey.
- **NB118**: This code denotes a participant categorized as Non-domestic (N), with a B2 proficiency level (B), and who was the 118th participant to complete the survey.

This coding system facilitated the organization and analysis of data while maintaining the confidentiality of participants' personal information. It also allowed for patterns and insights to be drawn based on cultural background and language proficiency levels without compromising the anonymity of the individuals involved. The use of such systematic coding practices aligns with ethical guidelines for qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018), ensuring that participant identities remain protected while enabling the exploration of meaningful patterns within the data.

3.5. Reliability and Validity

Joppe (2000) defines reliability as the consistency of results when a study is replicated using similar methodologies over time, highlighting the trustworthiness of the research

tools used. This consistency is essential because it allows researchers to generalize the findings on similar situations. On the other hand, validity is concerned with how accurately measurement tools assess what they are intended to measure, as Golafshani (2003) notes. Both validity and reliability are closely linked and play a crucial role in enhancing the credibility of the research methods and extending the longevity of the study's findings. There are various aspects to achieve reliability and validity in research such as triangulation of data, dual-coding, researcher's position, piloting the study and data collection instruments and so on. In this study, the intercultural awareness questionnaire that was used to collect quantitative data was proven to have high reliability value and it was preferred in similar studies in the literature (Çoşkun, 2023; Demiryürek & Erdoğan, 2022; Tural & Çubukçu, 2021; Zorba, 2019). Still, the researcher of this study piloted the questionnaire with a similar group of participants to retest the reliability. While piloting the data collection instrument strengthened reliability, anticipated problems that might occur during the actual data collection process were detected and prevented. Additionally, the intercultural awareness lesson materials and plans were developed by two subject-matter experts one of which was the researcher herself who received training with a certificate on the topic for three months. In order to enhance content validity, another subject-matter expert who was working as an English instructor and material developer at another multicultural university examined the materials and plans to increase the quality of the materials.

According to Marriam (1998), it has often been believed that being an insider in research provides effortless intervention, the capability to pose deeper questions, and interpret non-verbal signals, and crucially, to convey a more genuine and accurate perception of the studied culture. On the other hand, insiders have been criticized for having inherent biases and being too immersed in the culture to sufficiently detach and ask challenging, thought-provoking questions. The researcher in this current study acted as both insider and outsider as she was coordinating the language level in the same setting, yet was not giving lectures and in contact with participants directly. This position enabled the researcher to have adequate knowledge of the school's system but did not have biases towards participants since she did not know them closely. The lessons and the questionnaire were conducted by the advisor teachers of the classes but the interview was conducted by the researcher herself so that participants could express their opinion in an objective setting without having concerns about grades.

Triangulation involves exploring the intricacies of human behavior from various perspectives (Cohen & Manion, 2000). By using different methods to gather data, this approach verifies the consistency of the results. Consequently, this research utilized diverse tools, such as questionnaires and interviews, to cross-verify findings and enhance their reliability. Lastly, interrater reliability and dual coding play essential roles in validating the accuracy and trustworthiness of data analysis, especially within the context of qualitative research. Creswell (2013) highlights the critical need for employing multiple coders in the analysis of qualitative data, noting that interrater reliability enhances the credibility of the results by ensuring that interpretations of the data remain consistent among various researchers. Therefore, the qualitative data gathered from individual interviews were coded by two independent researchers to reach a consensus on the codes and themes with the aim of improving the quality of data interpretation.

4. RESULTS

This section presents the findings obtained from various data sources in order to address the research topics. The primary objective of this study was to determine whether the integration of diverse intercultural communication tasks and activities enhances students' understanding and appreciation of different cultures. This study also aims to examine the potential correlation between students' English proficiency levels and their level of intercultural awareness. Specifically, it seeks to explore whether students with higher English proficiency demonstrate superior intercultural awareness compared to those with lower proficiency. The primary objective of the study is to record the viewpoints and attitudes of students regarding their experiences with intercultural communication tasks in the classroom. This will provide qualitative data that will enable a comprehensive understanding of how these tasks are interpreted, the perceived benefits they offer, and any challenges or limitations faced by the students. Data from 57 participants, collected through the intercultural awareness questionnaire, revealed a mean proficiency level of 1.65, indicating a mix of A2 and B2 level students, with the majority leaning closer to the B2 level. The qualitative part of data was gathered by conducting 14 semi-structured individual interviews. These interviews aimed to obtain a more profound understanding of students' instructional experiences and their intercultural sensitivity.

4.1. Findings Related to the Intercultural Awareness Questionnaire

The questionnaire (Zorba, 2019) was employed as a pretest and posttest to investigate whether participants' intercultural awareness level changes after the implementation of a series of intercultural communication tasks in EFL classes. With this objective, the first research question of this study will be addressed. Additionally, to explore the relationship between intercultural awareness level and language proficiency, which constitutes the second research question, the group of 57 participants, consisting of A2 and B2 level students, was divided into separate subgroups based on their proficiency levels. The results reported in this section pertain to a single group of 57 participants

composed of A2 and B2 level students. Under the following subheadings, the descriptive statistical results of the scale, including the reliability of the scale in the pretest and posttest, along with detailed analyses, will first be presented.

4.1.1. Descriptive Statistical Results

The Intercultural Awareness Questionnaire was conducted before and during the implementation phase to collect quantitative data. The reliability of the instrument and the consistency of participants' responses were confirmed through Cronbach's Alpha coefficients, calculated as . 794 for the pretest and . 965 for the posttest, as shown in the table below.

Table 7. Pretest and Posttest Reliability of the Questionnaire

	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
Pretest	.794	.842	31
Posttest	.965	.965	31

Table 8 provides a summary of the pretest and posttest item statistics from the Intercultural Awareness Questionnaire, illustrating the variations in participants' responses across the two measurement phases.

Table 8. Summary Item Statistics of the Questionnaire

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Max/Min	Variance	N
Pretest	3.75	2.53	4.42	1.90	1.75	0.21	31
Posttest	4.23	3.81	4.56	0.75	1.20	0.03	31

A total of 57 students participated in the study, comprising 23 females and 34 males. The pretest provided a mean score of 3.75, with a minimum value of 2.53 and a high of 4.42, producing a range of 1.90. The Max/Min ratio was determined to be 1.75, and the variance was 0.21, signifying a certain level of variability in the answers.

In the posttest, the average score elevated to 4.23, with the minimum and highest values rising to 3.81 and 4.56, respectively. This resulted in a diminished range of 0.75 and a decreased Max/Min ratio of 1.20, indicating a more limited distribution of participants' scores. Furthermore, the variation diminished considerably to 0.03, indicating enhanced consistency in responses throughout the posttest phase. The results demonstrate an increase in mean scores and a decrease in variability between the pretest and posttest, indicating more consistent and enhanced responses after the lesson implementation.

4.1.2. Inferential Analysis of Pretest and Posttest Results

Six intercultural awareness lessons were conducted during the three weeks of an eight-week modular system. To determine whether the difference between participants' pretest and posttest results was statistically significant, a paired samples t-test was performed on IBM SPSS Statistics 22. Table 9 presents the overall paired samples t-test analysis results of pretest and posttest while Table 10 shows the correlation between two tests and lastly Table 11 presents the detailed results of each dimension of the questionnaire.

Table 9. Paired Samples t-Test Results

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pretest-Posttest	0.48	0.43	0.057	-8.44	56	$p < .001$

The p-value for the two-tailed significance test was $p < .001$ signifying that the difference between the pretest and posttest scores is statistically significant ($t(56) = -8.44$, $p < .001$). The results indicate a considerable shift in scores between the pretest and posttest evaluations signaling a change between the scores of the participants after receiving intercultural communication tasks.

Table 10. Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Pretest & Posttest	57	.420	< .001

The table presents the correlation of paired samples between the pretest and posttest scores. The analysis contains data from 57 participants and reveals a correlation coefficient of . 420, indicating a moderate positive link between the two measurements. The *p*-value (Sig.) is < .001, indicating that the correlation is statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level. The results indicate a moderate correlation between higher pretest scores and increased posttest scores.

Table 11. Paired Samples Statistics of Each Dimension of the Questionnaire

Dimensions	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
IntKnowledge_Pretest-IntKnowledge_Posttest	-0.34	0.53	0.07	-4.90	56	< .001
IntSkills_Pretest - IntSkills_Posttest	-0.46	0.59	0.08	-5.89	56	< .001
IntSensitivity_Pretest - IntSensitivity_Posttest	-0.69	0.56	0.07	-9.42	56	< .001
IntInteraction_Pretest - IntInteraction_Posttest	-0.55	0.60	0.08	-6.94	56	< .001
IntInterest_Pretest - IntInterest_Posttest	-0.38	0.68	0.09	-4.18	56	< .001

4.1.2.1. Intercultural Knowledge

The *t*-value was $t(56) = -4.90$, with $p < .001$, indicating a statistically significant improvement from pretest to posttest. The low standard deviation and standard error suggest a relatively consistent improvement across participants. Participants demonstrated increased consistency in their responses to items concerning cultural knowledge, signifying an improved comprehension of intercultural concepts. This indicates that participants improved their pre-existing knowledge. The slight mean difference suggests that the enhancement may have been limited to surface-level understanding rather than deep development of concepts.

4.1.2.2. Intercultural Skills

The *t*-value was $t(56) = -5.89$, with $p < .001$, indicating a statistically significant improvement. The slightly higher standard deviation suggests more variability in participants' improvements. Participants showed an enhanced understanding of cultural competencies, especially the capacity to navigate social interactions across other cultures. This indicates an enhancement in their capacity to identify appropriate behaviors and reactions in multicultural exchanges. The diversity in enhancements indicates that some participants encountered greater difficulties in developing intercultural skills, possibly due to individual differences in existing knowledge or experience.

4.1.2.3. Intercultural Sensitivity

The *t*-value was $t(56) = -9.42$, with $p < .001$, indicating the largest and most statistically significant improvement among all dimensions. The low standard deviation and standard error indicate that this improvement was consistent across participants. Participants demonstrated a significant enhancement in their sensitivity to cultural differences, including an improved capacity to comprehend and appreciate the behaviors, customs, and values of various ethnic groups. This indicates that individuals displayed increased empathy and diminished cultural biases.

4.1.2.4. Intercultural Interaction

The *t*-value was $t(56) = -6.94$, with $p < .001$, indicating a statistically significant improvement. The slightly higher standard deviation indicates greater variability in participants' responses. Participants demonstrated higher awareness and

comprehension of effective engagement in multicultural encounters. This indicates they enhanced their capacity to communicate and conduct themselves appropriately in varied cultural circumstances. The variability in responses indicates that not all participants experienced equal improvement.

4.1.2.5. Intercultural Interest

The *t*-value was $t(56) = -4.18$, with $p < .001$, indicating a statistically significant improvement. The slightly higher standard deviation reflects some variability among participants. Participants displayed greater curiosity and interest in acquiring knowledge about many cultures. This indicates that the intercultural awareness lessons fostered an enhanced respect for cultural diversity and an openness to exploring new cultural views. The low mean difference suggests that the enhancement in intercultural interest was less significant relative to other dimensions, indicating a necessity for more related tasks to improve participants' curiosity and involvement with diverse cultures.

Overall, statistically important improvements were observed in all dimensions, demonstrating that the lessons effectively impacted participants' intercultural awareness, skills, sensitivity, interaction, and interest. The most significant enhancement was shown in Intercultural Sensitivity, highlighting the effectiveness of the related tasks in promoting empathy and comprehension of cultural differences. The variety in progress across dimensions, such as Intercultural Skills and Interaction, indicates that the lessons affected participants differently, perhaps due to differences in prior knowledge, interest, or learning preferences. The modest mean difference in Intercultural Interest suggests a necessity for supplementary strategies to maintain or enhance participants' interest and involvement with cultural variety.[1]

4.1.3. Comparative Analysis of Intercultural Awareness Across Proficiency Levels

This study also seeks to examine whether a significant relationship exists between intercultural awareness levels and language proficiency levels. The participant group

[1] A correlation analysis was conducted among the dimensions, revealing a statistically significant relationship only between Pair 1 (Intercultural Knowledge) and Pair 3 (Intercultural Sensitivity) ($p < 0.05$). The relationships among the other dimensions, such as Intercultural Skills, Interaction, and Interest, were either weak or not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$).

consists of 20 students at A2 level and 37 students at B2 level. To address this objective, the pretest and posttest questionnaire responses of the participants were analyzed through correlation analysis using SPSS. Table 12 below demonstrates the descriptive statistics of the correlation analysis. Descriptive statistics for pretest and posttest scores were already reported in the previous section. In addition to this, the mean proficiency level of participants was 1.65 (*SD* = 0.48), with a sample size of 57. This reflects a distribution of A2 and B2 level students, with the majority falling closer to B2 proficiency. The variability in proficiency suggests potential differences in intercultural awareness that will be further explored through correlation and comparative analyses.

Table 12. Descriptive Statistics of the Correlation Analysis

	Mean	SD	N
Pretest	3.75	0.33	57
Posttest	4.23	0.45	57
Proficiency	1.65	0.48	57

The mean proficiency level of 1.65 suggests that the participant group consisted of a mix of A2 and B2 level students, with the majority closer to the B2 level. The standard deviation of 0.48 reflects moderate variability in proficiency, indicating a fairly balanced distribution between A2 and B2 students.

Table 13. Correlation Analysis

		Pretest	Posttest	Proficiency
Pretest	Pearson Correlation	1	.420**	.008
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001	.955
	N	57	57	57
Posttest	Pearson Correlation	.420**	1	-.004
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001		.976
	N	57	57	57

Proficiency	Pearson Correlation	.008	-.004	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.955	.976	
	N	57	57	57

Pearson correlation coefficients are reported. **p < 0.01 (2-tailed).

The correlation analysis in Table 13 indicates that proficiency level does not significantly influence pretest or posttest scores. The correlation coefficients for both pretest and posttest scores in relation to proficiency levels are around zero and lack statistical significance. A moderate positive and statistically significant correlation exists between pretest and posttest scores. This suggests that participants with higher pretest scores generally achieved higher posttest scores, regardless of their proficiency levels.[2]

4.2. Findings Related to Semi-Structured Interview

The semi-structured interview consisted of 13 questions aimed at seeking answers to the third research question: "3) What are students' perceptions of their lesson experiences with intercultural communication tasks?

Following the thematic analysis procedure outlined in the data analysis section, the interview questions were analyzed and grouped into four distinct categories to capture key themes: (1) understanding cultural differences, (2) navigating cultural interactions, (3) cultural learning in language education, (4) students' perceptions of intercultural awareness lessons.

Table 14. Categorization of Interview Questions

Category	**Questions**
Understanding cultural differences	Question 1, Question 3, Question 5
Navigating cultural interactions	Question 2, Question 6, Question 9

[2] A detailed analysis was conducted to examine potential differences between A2 and B2 groups across each dimension using independent samples t-tests. The results indicated no statistically significant differences in pretest and posttest scores for any dimension. While both groups showed improvement in posttest scores, the degree of progress was comparable across proficiency levels, suggesting that language proficiency did not significantly influence development within the measured dimensions.

Cultural learning in language education	Question 4, Question 7, Question 8
Students' perceptions of intercultural awareness lessons	Question 10, Question 11, Question 12, Question 13

Three main themes: (1) development of intercultural awareness, (2) influence of language proficiency on intercultural awareness, (3) students' perceptions of lesson experiences with intercultural communication tasks and 16 sub-themes emerged from the responses of the 14 voluntary participants. The detailed findings of the interview are presented below.

Table 15. Interview Results Related to Development of Intercultural Awareness

Sub-Themes	Excerpts	Coding Frequency
Interest in learning about different cultures	DA22: Yes, I would like to learn about the cultures of different countries, especially those other than American and British cultures. Learning about other cultures not only helps us better understand them but also enables us to have greater respect for different worlds and perspectives. NA36: I feel excited and curious when interacting with people from other cultures because it offers a chance to learn new perspectives and experiences. It also helps to challenge my own assumptions and broaden my worldview.	20
Respect and acceptance	DA2: I realized that as long as there is respect, everything can be resolved. Naturally, I respect that culture and listen to the other person. However, what matters most to me are my own values. DB108: I respect it. I cannot change my own culture, but their culture doesn't cause any issues for me either. If it doesn't create problems, then it's not a problem for me. Similarly, I wouldn't tell them to change their culture to suit me. I also wouldn't say, 'You should learn about my culture.	19
Recognizing and understanding cultural differences	NA36: Cultural differences for me refer to the distinct beliefs, values, customs, behaviors, and artifacts that characterize a particular group of people. These differences can manifest in language, food, social norms, traditions, and even ways of thinking.	14
Personal growth	DA22: Yes, these courses have brought changes to my thoughts and awareness. In addition to learning more about people from other cultures, I've matured in both my behavior and attitudes toward different cultures by understanding them better.	8

	DA9: It's no longer like that for me because I've realized that this isn't a general thing. Even within the same culture, everyone's family structure can be different. We can't generalize anything completely.	
Approaches to navigating cultural differences	NA36: Yes, I can cope with conflicts resulting from cultural differences by being open-minded, respectful, and patient. It's important to actively listen and seek to understand the other person's perspective. Effective communication and finding common ground are crucial strategies.	7
	DB95: I become a bit aggressive in this matter (conflicts with different cultures); it has happened to me before. I think I cope with it, but without reaching a mutual agreement. I manage it, but both sides end up calming down and parting ways.	
Perception of similarities in cultural differences	NA27: Actually, there isn't a big difference; we are similar to each other in some ways. For example, in food and meals, we are similar. Yeah, yeah, like Turkish food and breakfast. We're the same in that sense. And the culture of friends sitting together in a coffee shop and drinking tea is also similar.	1

As shown in Table 15, six sub-themes emerged from the participants' responses to questions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 9. While *"n"* defines the number of the participant, *"f"* stands for the frequency of the code. The results showed that regardless of English proficiency level and nation, participants repeatedly reflected their openness to learning about various cultures beyond the traditional focus on American and British cultures (*f*=20). Participants stated that they feel excited and curious to meet new people from different cultural backgrounds. Two domestic students stated they utilize media such as social media platforms and movies to explore new cultures. Accordingly, participants expressed that learning about other cultures can be achieved through fostering mutual respect (*f*=19). Of the 14 participants, 13 stated that they respect the opinions of others while continuing to defend their own beliefs and cultural values. However, one domestic student at B2 level mentioned that he could adopt an opposing cultural element if he finds the opinion reasonable. While they highlighted the importance of showing respect to cultural differences, they do not prefer to adopt those differences and maintain their own cultural values.

Mainly domestic, most participants defined cultural differences as traditions, customs, food, clothing, and lifestyle (*f*=14). They even mentioned that cultural differences can exist among individuals who are of the same nationality and grew up in the same family. On the other hand, two non-domestic students, one at B2 level and the other at

A2 level, stated that they are all similar and there are no differences between them. All participants, regardless of their language proficiency level or nationality, stated that the intercultural communication lessons fostered maturity and positive changes in their perspectives and helped them break stereotypes by rejecting generalizations, except for one individual (*f*=8). They reported overcoming their prejudices and learning the importance of approaching differences with tolerance. However, one domestic participant at B2 level mentioned that he did not have any bias to begin with and that these lessons did not bring about any changes in his perspectives.

Besides, almost all participants stated that they resolved cultural conflicts by engaging in open and effective communication while showing respect and empathy for opposing viewpoints (*f*=7). Even though one of the participants stated he feels aggressive in cultural conflicts, he can end up calming down and finding a middle ground. On the other hand, three domestic participants at B2 level reported that they ended conversations without finding common ground or effectively managing the process. Lastly, a non-domestic interviewee studying at A2 level stated that he believes all people share similar points and the important thing is to raise an awareness towards those similarities in different cultures (*f*=1). Questions 4, 7 and 8 investigated the influence of language proficiency on intercultural awareness. According to the participants' responses, five sub-themes emerged which can be seen in Table 16.

Table 16. Interview Results Related to the Influence of Language Proficiency on Intercultural Awareness

Sub-Themes	Excerpts	Coding Frequency
Cultural learning and language proficiency	DA4: It is not enough to just learn the language; it is equally important to learn the culture of the country where the language originates. Or to consider the culture while using the language. For example, cultural issues can arise when using the language, such as accidentally using an inappropriate word in their culture. NB118: No, just speak this language, you have to speak the language and you don't have to know a lot about the territory (its culture). If you don't want.	18
Impact of language proficiency on communication	DA22: My language skills and knowledge were occasionally insufficient, which made it difficult for me to cope with the challenging aspects of learning about different cultures for a while.	9

Impact of individual characteristics on cultural exchange and communication	DA4: First and foremost, you need to be social. Being introverted or shy is not suitable for this. Ironically, I am that kind of person. But being social means always staying in communication with people.	4
Motivations for learning English as a global lingua franca	DA9: If I knew another language, I would use it too, but here's the thing: English is the most commonly used language in the world. Since most people know English, it usually becomes the common language for communication. However, if I knew their culture or language, I would use that instead.	3
Necessity of a common language in multilingual settings	DA9: I definitely think a common language is necessary. This is usually English or, at times, body language. In intercultural communication, friendliness is important, but having a common language is the most crucial factor. Without a shared language, communication doesn't happen. We both need to have a common language.	2

Except for two students, all participants stated that knowing the culture associated with a language contributes to language development (*f*=18). They also expressed the belief that learning about different cultures enhances English language skills. However, one domestic student at A2 level and one non-domestic student at B2 level stated that learning about different cultures in English lessons does not contribute to the improvement of English proficiency.

Five A2 level participants, including two non-domestic students, and four B2 level participants, including one non-domestic student, provided responses related to the impact of language proficiency on communication (*f*=9). Regardless of proficiency level or nationality, all participants identified language proficiency as the most critical factor influencing intercultural communication. One domestic participant at B2 level stated that, while speaking with his Arab friends, the pronunciation of the "p" and "b" sounds made it difficult to determine whether his friend was speaking in a harsh tone, which in turn affected their social interactions. Non-domestic students did not address the impact of individual characteristics on cultural exchange and communication. Domestic students, however, emphasized that being social, confident, and curious are essential individual traits for effective intercultural interaction and communication (*f*=4). One domestic participant and one non-domestic participant, both at A2 level and one non-domestic student at B2 level also provided responses related to motivations for learning English as a global lingua franca (*f*=3). Their responses revealed that they

value English as a global lingua franca for its ability to connect individuals across cultures. Their motivations include practical utility in diverse environments, fostering intercultural relationships, and the specific context of multicultural educational institutions.

Lastly, the responses of an A2 level domestic participant highlighted the importance of having a shared language, particularly English, in multilingual contexts (*f*=1). He emphasized that a common language facilitates communication and fosters mutual understanding in diverse settings. Questions 10, 11, 12, and 13 explored students' perspectives on their experiences with intercultural communication tasks during lessons. Based on the participants' responses, five sub-themes were identified, as presented in Table 17.

Table 17. Students' Perceptions of Lesson Experiences with Intercultural Communication Tasks

Sub-Themes	Excerpts	Coding Frequency
Sufficiency and content satisfaction in intercultural lessons	NA36: I think the number of intercultural class hours in this course was sufficient, though additional practice and real-life interaction opportunities would further enhance the learning experience. I would have liked to see more interactive activities, such as role-playing scenarios and guest speakers from different cultures. DB95: I think the lessons could have been a bit longer.	15
Educational insights through intercultural tasks	DB6: It contributed a lot, significantly. For example, I learned various words and the names of different foods. Then I learned about etiquette, specifically their etiquette. For instance, I discovered that certain hand gestures considered rude in some countries are seen as positive in others. My awareness has increased. DA9: Honestly, I don't think English has significantly contributed to my learning of English. However, I feel that meeting new people has broadened my perspective and helped me grow personally. But I don't think this is directly related to English. Because we meet people from different cultures rather than from England or America, English doesn't play much of a role culturally in those interactions, in my opinion.	10

Positive engagement in intercultural communication lessons	DB108: So, we didn't just learn about English culture. For me, learning about culture in general was beneficial. These activities also made learning English more enjoyable in class. Sometimes the lessons can be intense, and they lighten that load. Plus, learning about different cultures made the experience better. It kind of makes things easier.	7
Perspectives on effective EFL teaching through cultural engagement	DB3: I don't know, maybe it's because I'm curious. I wonder how each culture is and what it's like. And I'm not sure how accurate it is to learn about it solely through the internet. That's why I think it's better to learn it directly from the people of that culture. If schools could teach this, I think it would be much better.	4
Preference for EFL over ELF	DB3: I don't think it's necessary because, in the end, everyone's language and culture are their own. If we are learning English, it makes more sense for us to focus on the cultures of the countries where that language is spoken. For instance, while I'm learning English, seeing Arab culture or a different culture doesn't seem quite right to me. I mean, there are so many cultures, so how would we decide which ones to include in the books? There's just too much variety.	1

The interview findings revealed a largely favorable response to the intercultural lessons among participants. The majority of participants (*n*=13) indicated satisfaction with both the adequacy of the lesson duration and the cultural content presented. Two domestic participants studying at A2 level highlighted that the class hours were sufficient and well-structured, while another participant with the same demographics and proficiency level emphasized the lessons' effectiveness in improving their comprehension of cultural differences. Despite the overall satisfaction, a few participants proposed enhancements to optimize the efficacy of these sessions (*n*=3). A non-domestic participant at A2 level and two domestic participants at B2 level suggested the integration of more interactive activities, including role-playing, guest lecturers, and peer cultural exchanges, to foster a more engaging and pragmatic learning environment. On the other hand, a limited sample of participants, mainly A2 students, had doubts regarding the adequacy of the lesson hours. A non-domestic A2 level participant and a domestic participant at B2 level proposed that lengthening lecture durations could facilitate a more comprehensive evaluation of many cultures and enhance the overall educational experience. Conversely, certain participants, including DB3 who is a domestic participant studying at A2 level, challenged the necessity of including diverse cultural viewpoints, favoring a more concentrated emphasis on the cultures linked to the English language.

Seven participants at A2 level, three of whom were non-domestic students, and two participants at B2 level, one of whom was a non-domestic student, provided responses sharing their educational insights after the implementation of intercultural tasks (*n*=9). Among these, only one domestic A2 student stated that the intercultural communication lessons did not significantly contribute to their English learning but acknowledged that the lessons broadened their perspective (*f*=1). The remaining participants expressed high levels of satisfaction, noting that the lessons not only enhanced their intercultural awareness but also supported their language development through the practice of new vocabulary and engaging tasks (*f*=10). Both domestic and non-domestic participants emphasized how the classes promoted cultural diversity and exposed them to new customs, norms, and behaviors. However, non-domestic students frequently emphasized their own experiences with stereotypes and cultural adaptation (*f*=4).

The interview findings also indicated that participants engaged positively with the intercultural communication lessons as they frequently described the lessons as enjoyable, educational and interactive (*f*=7). While A2 level participants (*n*=4) regardless of their nationality expressed high levels of satisfaction with the lessons emphasizing the lessons created a stress-free learning environment as well as offering cultural insights, B2 level participants (*n*=2) emphasized the lessons promoted intercultural awareness and advanced communication skills. Only one non-domestic student shared his insights regarding his lesson experience and highlighted the lessons fostered a sense of inclusion and helped him feel more comfortable interacting with others. The rest of the participants appreciated the lessons' role in language learning and exploring diverse cultural practices.

One non-domestic and three domestic participants studying at B2 level touched on effective EFL teaching through cultural engagement by sharing their views (*f*=4). The non-domestic participant suggested teaching different cultures in language classes only if there are students from different cultures. On the other hand, while two domestic participants stated they would like to see different cultures in language classes since they may need further cultural knowledge if they travel abroad, another participant preferred for focusing on diverse cultures in EFL classes saying that "English is now a world-language". Lastly, contrary to the previous participant's opinion, a domestic student at A2 level suggested that students need to study the

culture of the foreign language that they want to improve. According to his perception, he stated that there are various cultures and it is not possible to cover them all in language classes (*f*=1).

In conclusion, the results from the semi-structured interviews indicated that students generally hold positive perceptions regarding their experiences with intercultural communication tasks in EFL lessons. Participants from different proficiency levels and nationalities reported multiple benefits, such as increased cultural awareness, vocabulary enhancement, and improved communication skills. A2 level learners highlighted the practical and stress-free nature of the lessons, whereas B2 level learners presented a more reflective comprehension of the wider implications of intercultural engagement in language education. The responses indicated a variety of viewpoints regarding the incorporation of cultural content in English as a Foreign Language lessons. Domestic participants typically prioritized linguistic proficiency alongside an appreciation for cultural diversity, whereas non-domestic participants highlighted the importance of promoting intercultural understanding. A2 learners frequently emphasized the direct advantages of language acquisition from the lessons, whereas B2 learners concentrated on the role of activities in fostering long-term intercultural competence and enhancing advanced communication strategies. In addition, cultural focus preferences showed variability. A domestic A2 participant indicated a preference for focusing on cultures specifically associated with English-speaking countries, citing concerns regarding the practicality of incorporating a diverse range of cultures in language classes. Conversely, many B2 learners, including non-domestic students, acknowledged the incorporation of varied cultural perspectives to more accurately represent the global application of English as a lingua franca.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate significant improvements in students' intercultural awareness following the implementation of intercultural communication tasks within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. This section interprets these results through the lens of existing literature and theoretical frameworks, establishing connections between the study's outcomes and prior research.

5.1. Findings on Intercultural Awareness Level of Students

The implementation of intercultural communication tasks in the EFL classroom resulted in a notable increase in students' intercultural awareness, as evidenced by the rise in mean scores from the pretest ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 0.33$) to the posttest ($M = 4.23$, $SD = 0.45$). Additionally, the reduction in standard deviation and the increase in Cronbach's Alpha from .794 to .965 indicated improved internal consistency and scale reliability across the instrument. Paired samples t-test results further supported this improvement, with statistically significant gains particularly in the dimension of Intercultural Sensitivity ($t(56) = -9.424$, $p < .001$). Although all dimensions showed progress, Intercultural Interest demonstrated a comparatively smaller effect ($t(56) = -4.182$, $p < .001$), suggesting a need for more sustained experiential learning to deepen curiosity.

These findings are in line with previous research highlighting the benefits of intercultural communication activities in language education. For instance, Byram (1997) and Deardorff (2006) emphasize that the development of intercultural competence is essential for meaningful communication in multicultural contexts. Fantini (2009) similarly outlines that enhanced cultural sensitivity and engagement lead to improved intercultural knowledge and skills. Moreover, the pronounced improvement in Intercultural Sensitivity reflects Baker's (2015a) argument that this domain is often the most directly impacted when learners are immersed in culturally enriched instruction. The more limited growth in Intercultural Interest also echoes

Kramsch's (1993) assertion that curiosity is best fostered through repeated and meaningful intercultural encounters.

5.2. Findings on Proficiency Level and Intercultural Awareness Level of Students

A comparison analysis was conducted to explore potential differences in intercultural awareness between A2 and B2 proficiency groups. Independent samples t-tests indicated no statistically significant differences in either pretest or posttest scores between the two groups. Although both A2 and B2 participants demonstrated improvement, the level of advancement was similar, suggesting that proficiency level did not significantly influence the development of intercultural awareness. Correlation analysis further supported this finding, revealing no meaningful association between language proficiency and intercultural awareness ($r = .008$, $p = .955$ for pretest; $r = –.004$, $p = .976$ for posttest). However, a moderate positive correlation between pretest and posttest scores ($r = .420$, $p = .001$) indicated that learners who initially possessed higher levels of intercultural awareness tended to make greater progress, regardless of their proficiency level.

These findings contrast with previous research that emphasizes the role of linguistic competence in fostering intercultural sensitivity. For instance, Özşen (2022) reported a significant correlation between language development and intercultural awareness, while Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory highlights the contribution of language proficiency to learners' participation in culturally enriched social interactions. In the present study, however, proficiency level did not emerge as a determining factor. This discrepancy suggests that, within the current context, learners' prior intercultural exposure or personal disposition may have played a more influential role than language skills alone. Supporting this interpretation, Deardorff (2009) and Bekiroğlu & Balcı (2014) emphasize the impact of intercultural experience on awareness development. In alignment with their findings, demographic data collected in the present study revealed that participants with prior overseas experience demonstrated higher levels of intercultural awareness compared to those without such exposure, suggesting that real-life intercultural engagement may play a more significant role than linguistic proficiency alone.

Although proficiency itself did not predict awareness gains, the relatively limited improvement in Intercultural Interest ($t = –4.182$, $p = .001$) observed in the paired samples t-test highlights the need for sustained, experience-based learning. This aligns with Kramsch's (1993) view that initial exposure can inspire curiosity, but deeper interest is cultivated through continued involvement in intercultural practices. Similarly, İlter (2016) and Bennett (1993) argue that immersive interactions over time facilitate lasting development in intercultural sensitivity. Finally, the absence of significant differences between proficiency groups reinforces Liddicoat & Scarino's (2013) model of intercultural language learning, which views intercultural awareness as emerging primarily from reflective comparison and engagement with diverse perspectives rather than from linguistic ability alone.

5.3. Perceptions of Students about the Intercultural Communication Tasks

The qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews revealed that students generally held positive perceptions of the intercultural communication tasks implemented during the course. Participants across both A2 and B2 proficiency levels reported several benefits, including enhanced communication skills, expanded vocabulary, and increased cultural awareness. While A2 students particularly appreciated the pragmatic and low-stress nature of the lessons, B2 students demonstrated deeper, more reflective understandings of the broader significance of intercultural engagement. Non-domestic students also shared unique perspectives, noting heightened awareness of stereotypes and increased confidence in navigating multicultural settings.

Despite the overall satisfaction, some A2 participants expressed concerns about the feasibility of covering a wide range of cultures, emphasizing the need for focused cultural content. This view is echoed in Tural and Çubukçu's (2021) work, which warns against cognitive overload and calls for targeted cultural instruction. These concerns also resonate with Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions theory, which stresses the importance of tailoring instruction to learners' cultural backgrounds.

Thematic analysis further identified prominent themes such as the adequacy of course content, learning outcomes from intercultural tasks, and students' positive emotional engagement during lessons. While the majority praised the lessons, a few participants suggested incorporating more interactive elements—such as role-plays, guest speakers, and peer exchanges—to enrich the experience. This preference aligns with

the findings of Ryan and Sercu (2006), who advocate for experiential learning opportunities in intercultural education, and with Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory, which underscores learning through doing.

Participant preferences regarding cultural content also varied. Some favored focusing solely on cultures tied to English-speaking countries, while others advocated for broader, globally inclusive cultural representations. This divergence corresponds with Baker's (2015b) notion of "intercultural communicative awareness," which views English as a global language that should reflect both native and non-native cultural influences. Holliday (2010) similarly argues for inclusivity in intercultural curricula. Alptekin (2002) supports this stance by emphasizing the need for a reconceptualized model of communicative competence in ELT—one that recognizes English as a world language and integrates both local and international cultural contexts into instruction.

Overall, these findings are consistent with earlier studies (Sercu, 2005; Byram & Wagner, 2018; Çakır, 2022; Pham & Pham, 2022), which argue that intercultural tasks enrich students' cultural knowledge while simultaneously promoting more meaningful and engaging language learning. Furthermore, they align with Basarkod et al.'s (2024) assertion that positive attitudes toward intercultural education are associated with improved student wellbeing and social outcomes, and with Bennett et al.'s (2003) view that such training fosters empathy and inclusive classroom environments. Ultimately, the findings of this study reinforce the transformative potential of integrating intercultural communication tasks into language education, regardless of students' proficiency level, to promote dynamic, inclusive, and holistic learning environments.

6. CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to investigate the impact of interaction-based intercultural communication tasks on enhancing intercultural awareness (ICA) among students, while also exploring the relationship between English proficiency levels and ICA. The findings align with previous research, demonstrating that targeted educational tasks can significantly promote ICA by fostering students' knowledge, sensitivity, skills, and interaction in intercultural contexts.

The results of the pre- and post-assessments revealed a notable increase in participants' ICA levels, with significant improvements in intercultural knowledge, sensitivity, and interaction. However, the dimension of intercultural interest did not show a statistically significant change, suggesting that while task-based learning effectively enhances practical skills, fostering deeper cultural curiosity may require extended exposure and immersive experiences.

Additionally, the second research question addressed the relationship between English proficiency and intercultural awareness. A correlation analysis revealed no statistically significant relationship between proficiency levels (A2 and B2) and ICA growth. While students with higher proficiency tended to score higher on both pre- and posttests, the increase in ICA was consistent across different proficiency levels, indicating that the lessons were beneficial regardless of language competency.

The third research question sought to capture students' perceptions of their experiences with intercultural communication tasks through semi-structured interviews. Analysis of the interview responses revealed three overarching themes: (1) development of intercultural awareness, (2) influence of language proficiency on intercultural awareness, and (3) students’ perceptions of lesson experiences. Participants expressed increased interest in learning about diverse cultures, emphasizing respect, acceptance, and a broader perspective gained from the tasks. Some students, particularly at B2 level, highlighted how the lessons enhanced their confidence and communication skills, while A2 level participants appreciated the stress-free and engaging nature of the activities. This study diverges from previous research by demonstrating that intercultural awareness can be enhanced independently of language proficiency levels. While earlier studies, such as those by Zorba (2019) and Coşkun (2023), have often suggested a direct link between higher proficiency and increased ICA, the present

findings indicate that even lower-proficiency learners can experience significant growth in intercultural competence through well-designed tasks. In contrast to Byram (1997) and Baker (2011), who emphasize the cumulative impact of linguistic proficiency on intercultural competence, this study highlights the role of experiential and interactive learning environments that transcend language barriers. This finding resonates with recent work by Tural and Çubukçu (2021), who advocate for integrating intercultural components at all proficiency levels, ensuring broader participation and more inclusive pedagogical practices. Furthermore, this study stands out for its emphasis on practical classroom implementation and the use of digital tools as facilitators of intercultural awareness.

The integration of interactive and digital teaching tools played a crucial role in facilitating this process. Platforms such as Microsoft Forms, Padlet, and collaborative online environments not only enhanced engagement but also allowed for personalized feedback and reflection. This technological integration aligns with findings by Hampel and Stickler (2015) and Wu et al. (2020), who emphasize that digital tools can significantly enhance intercultural competence across varying proficiency levels. Moreover, the interactive nature of these tools fosters an inclusive learning environment, reducing anxiety and increasing motivation, as evidenced by Wu et al. (2020).

Another distinguishing feature of this study is the heterogeneity of the participant group, which included students from various cultural and language backgrounds. The diverse sample allowed for a broader examination of intercultural dynamics and provided insights into how intercultural awareness can develop in multicultural classroom settings. Such diversity adds to the robustness and generalizability of the findings, distinguishing this research from studies with more homogenous samples.

Additionally, semi-structured interviews corroborated these quantitative findings. Students reported increased curiosity towards other cultures, greater empathy, and improved confidence in navigating multicultural environments. Participants highlighted the practical nature of the tasks and the real-world applicability of intercultural scenarios, reinforcing the importance of integrating such tasks into regular curricula. Notably, students emphasized how the use of interactive and digital tools fostered deeper engagement and allowed for personalized feedback, enhancing their learning experiences. This aligns with Hampel and Stickler's (2015) findings,

which highlight the importance of digital platforms in promoting student interaction and cultural exchange. Similarly, Wu et al. (2020) demonstrated that gamified and interactive tools increased motivation and reduced anxiety, contributing to a more effective and enjoyable learning process. The results suggest that incorporating technology-driven intercultural tasks not only enhances knowledge retention but also cultivates a dynamic and inclusive classroom environment.

In conclusion, this study underscores the importance of embedding intercultural awareness activities within English language teaching, not only to enhance linguistic competence but also to equip students with essential skills for thriving in multicultural environments. The findings advocate for continued research and the development of innovative instructional materials that promote ICA, thereby contributing to a more inclusive and culturally aware educational environment. By integrating digital tools and fostering experiential learning, this research provides a forward-looking model for intercultural education, bridging the gap between theory and practice in the evolving landscape of language teaching. In doing so, the study empirically supports Alptekin's (2002) assertion that English language instruction should aim to develop learners' intercultural communicative competence through engagement with both global and local cultural contexts, preparing them to operate effectively across diverse settings.

6.1. Implications

The results highlight the necessity of embedding intercultural communication tasks within EFL curricula to foster holistic language education. Corbett (2003) and Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) advocate for structured frameworks that incorporate cultural content, enhancing both linguistic and intercultural competencies. This study reinforces the value of task-based approaches, suggesting that interactive activities, such as collaborative projects, cultivate intercultural skills essential for global citizenship. According to the reflections of the participants of this research, it is seen that students enjoy engaging with cultural components in ELT materials. In ELT textbooks, Mozaffarzadeh and Ajideh (2019) suggested that while linguistic competence is emphasized, the absence of cultural content restricts students' ability to engage meaningfully in cross-cultural communication. The authors advocate for curriculum reforms that integrate intercultural elements, aligning with contemporary global communication needs. As Lund (2006) also emphasizes there is a need of

incorporating cultural and contextual elements in English language textbooks to facilitate meaningful language acquisition. Her evaluation of Norwegian textbooks reveals the limitations of conventional language instruction, which frequently separates linguistic elements from their cultural surroundings. Incorporating intercultural learning objectives can enable instructors to cultivate a comprehensive language learning environment that equips students for authentic intercultural interactions. Exposing students to diverse cultural contexts not only enhances their language proficiency but also nurtures intercultural awareness and empathy, promoting global citizenship (Siddiqie, 2011).

Moreover, the variability in participants' progress across dimensions emphasizes the importance of differentiated instruction. As noted by Baker (2011), intercultural learning should accommodate diverse proficiency levels, ensuring that tasks remain accessible while challenging higher-level students to engage more critically.

6.2. Limitations and Suggestions for Further Studies

Although this study was carefully designed, revised, and conducted with meticulous attention to detail, it is not entirely free of limitations. By acknowledging these limitations, the researcher seeks to maintain transparency and offers a comprehensive understanding of the study's objectives and scope. First of all, the study was conducted with fewer participants than previously planned. Due to the period of the module and students’ absenteeism problems, 57 participants were recruited. Another limitation is that due to the restricted schedule of the modular system in the setting, the lesson implementations could be conducted within 3 weeks. More exposure to the intercultural communication lessons would have enhanced the participants’ awareness level and a more meaningful impact might have been observed.

While the findings of this study offer valuable insights into the development of intercultural awareness in English language teaching, several limitations must be acknowledged. The relatively small sample size and the focus on a single institution may limit the generalizability of the results to broader educational contexts. Future research could benefit from expanding the participant pool to include students from different institutions, regions, and age groups to enhance the external validity of the findings.

Additionally, the duration of the lesson implementation was limited to a single academic term. Longitudinal studies that track the progression of intercultural awareness over extended periods could provide a deeper understanding of how these competencies develop over time and the long-term impact of intercultural communication tasks. Investigating how sustained exposure to intercultural tasks influences not only students' attitudes but also their behavioral responses in real-world settings could further enrich the field.

Future studies may collect participants' reflections by the end of each intercultural lesson along with teachers' reflections and observations while conducting these lessons. Thus, deeper data and different perceptions on the issue may be explored. Also, use of different digital tools and platforms in promoting intercultural awareness, comparing their effectiveness across various educational contexts may be explored in further studies. As digital learning environments continue to evolve, examining how emerging technologies, such as virtual reality (VR) or augmented reality (AR), contribute to intercultural competence could yield novel insights.

Moreover, research focusing on the perspectives of instructors and their role in facilitating intercultural tasks could provide a more holistic view of the educational process. Understanding the challenges and opportunities educators face in implementing intercultural communication activities may lead to the development of more comprehensive teacher training programs.

Finally, investigating the intersection of intercultural awareness with other essential 21st-century skills, such as critical thinking, collaboration, and empathy, could offer a multidimensional perspective on the benefits of intercultural education. By broadening the scope of research, future studies can contribute to more inclusive, dynamic, and effective pedagogical approaches in English language teaching.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Items of the Intercultural Awareness Questionnaire (Zorba, 2019)

The items of the Intercultural Awareness Questionnaire used in this study provided both in Turkish and English are listed below for reference. This appendix provides an overview of the scale items to ensure transparency and facilitate understanding of the tool utilized during data collection. The full, original version of the scale, including any additional details such as instructions or scoring guides, can be accessed via the following link: https://forms.office.com/r/79gqtiLBLh

1. I'm interested in people coming from different cultures.	Farklı kültürlerden gelen insanlar ilgimi çeker.
2. I cope with the conflicts resulting from cultural differences.	Kültürlerarası farklılıkların sonucunda oluşan çatışmalarla başa çıkarım.
3. I also learn about cultures of different countries (apart from American and British cultures) while learning English.	İngilizce öğrenirken farklı ülkelerin kültürleriyle ilgili (İngiliz ve Amerikan kültürleri hariç) yeni şeyler de öğrenirim.
4. I like learning about different cultures.	Farklı kültürlerle ilgili yeni şeyler öğrenmekten hoşlanırım.
5. I'm open to the ideas of people coming from different cultures.	Farklı kültürlerden gelen insanların düşüncelerine açığımdır.
6. I detect the similarities between my own culture and other cultures.	Kendi kültürüm ile farklı kültürler arasındaki benzerlikleri tespit ederim.
7. While learning English, I also learn about cultures of countries where English is spoken.	İngilizce öğrenirken İngilizce konuşulan ülkelerin de kültürleriyle ilgili yeni şeyler öğrenirim.
8. I'm willing to be friends with people coming from different cultures.	Farklı kültürlerden gelen insanlarla arkadaş olmaya istekliyim.
9. If I evaluate people in terms of my own culture, I may reach the wrong conclusions.	Kendi kültürüm açısından insanları değerlendirirsem, yanlış sonuçlara ulaşabilirim.
10. I distinguish differences between my own culture and other cultures.	Kendi kültürüm ile diğer kültürler arasındaki farkları ayırt ederim.
11. While learning English, I also learn about my own culture.	İngilizce öğrenirken, kendi kültürüm hakkında da bilgi edinirim.
12. I avoid displaying behaviours that may pave the way for misunderstandings	Farklı kültürlerden gelen insanlarla etkileşimde bulunurken yanlış

while interacting with people coming from different cultures.	anlaşılmalara neden olabilecek davranışlardan kaçınırım.
13. I tolerate unusual behaviours of people coming from different countries.	Farklı ülkelerden gelen insanların alışılmadık davranışlarını hoşgörü ile karşılarım.
14. I find different lifestyles of people coming from different countries as strange.	Farklı ülkelerden gelen insanların farklı yaşam tarzlarını tuhaf bulurum.
15. I observe both my own culture and other cultures.	Kendi kültürümü ve diğer kültürleri gözlemlerim.
16. I interact with people coming from different countries with ease.	Farklı ülkelerden gelen insanlarla kolaylıkla etkileşimde bulunurum.
17. I use my knowledge about their cultures while interacting with people coming from different cultures.	Farklı kültürlerden gelen insanlarla etkileşimde bulunurken kültürleri hakkındaki bilgilerimi kullanırım.
18. I respect beliefs of people coming from different cultures.	Farklı kültürlerden gelen insanların inançlarına saygı duyarım.
19. I take every opportunity to learn about cultures of different countries.	Farklı ülkelerin kültürleri hakkında öğrenme fırsatını değerlendiririm.
20. While learning English, I also learn the differences between my culture and other cultures.	İngilizce öğrenirken, kendi kültürüm ile diğer kültürler arasındaki farkları da öğrenirim.
21. I show that I understand them while interacting with people coming from different cultures.	Farklı kültürlerden gelen insanlarla etkileşimde bulunurken onları anladığımı gösteririm.
22. I'm eager to learn about different cultures.	Farklı kültürleri öğrenmeye istekliyim.
23. I like exploring lifestyles of different cultures.	Farklı kültürlerin yaşam tarzlarını keşfetmeyi severim.
24. I explain both similarities and differences between my own culture and other cultures.	Kendi kültürüm ile diğer kültürler arasındaki benzerlikler ve farkları açıklarım.
25. I feel anxious while interacting with people coming from different cultures.	Farklı kültürlerden gelen insanlarla etkileşimde bulunurken gergin hissederim.
26. I try to learn about their cultures while interacting with people coming from different cultures.	Farklı kültürlerden gelen insanlarla etkileşimde bulunurken onların kültürlerini öğrenmeye çalışırım.
27. I respect values of people coming from different cultures.	Farklı kültürlerden gelen insanların değerlerine saygı duyarım.

28. While learning English, I also learn that there are similarities between my own culture and other cultures (apart from American and British cultures).	İngilizce öğrenirken, (Amerika ve İngiltere hariç) başka ülkelerin kültürleri ile kendi kültürüm arasında benzerlikler olduğunu da öğrenirim.
29. I tolerate the conflicts resulting from cultural differences.	Kültürel farklılıklardan kaynaklanan çatışmaları hoşgörü ile karşılarım.
30. While learning English, I also learn that there are different lifestyles in different countries.	İngilizce öğrenirken, farklı ülkelerde farklı yaşam tarzlarının olduğunu da öğrenirim.
31. I accept there are differences between my culture and other cultures.	Kendi kültürüm ile diğer kültürler arasında farklılıklar olduğunu kabul ederim.

Appendix 2. Interview Questions

1) What are cultural differences for you? / Senin için kültürel farklılıklar nelerdir?

2) Can you cope with the conflicts resulting from cultural differences? Why/How? / Kültürel farklılıklardan kaynaklanan çatışmalarla başa çıkabilir misiniz? Neden / Nasıl?

3) Would you like to learn about cultures of different countries (apart from American and British cultures)? Why? / Farklı ülkelerin kültürlerini öğrenmek ister miydiniz (Amerikan ve İngiliz kültürleri dışında)? Neden?

4) Is it important to know the culture of a language while learning a foreign language? Why? / Yabancı dil öğrenirken o dilin kültürünü bilmek önemli midir? Neden?

5) How do you feel when you interact with people from other cultures? Why? / Başka

kültürlerden insanlarla etkileşimde bulunduğunuzda nasıl hissedersiniz? Neden?

6) What kind of skills are necessary to communicate with people from different cultures? / Farklı kültürlerden insanlarla iletişim kurmak için hangi becerilere ihtiyaç duyulur?

7) Do you think having knowledge and skills related to different cultures contributes to your English learning? / Farklı kültürlere ilişkin bilgi ve becerilere sahip olmanın İngilizce öğrenmenize katkı sağladığını düşünüyor musunuz?

8) Do you think that different cultures should be taught in foreign language classes? Why? / Farklı kültürlerin yabancı dil sınıflarında öğretilmesi gerektiğini düşünüyor musunuz? Neden?

9) Can you easily communicate with someone from a different culture? If yes, how do you achieve this? If no, what are the factors that make communication difficult? / Farklı bir kültürden biriyle kolayca iletişim kurabilir misiniz? Eğer evetse, bunu nasıl başarıyorsunuz? Eğer hayırsa, iletişimi zorlaştıran faktörler nelerdir?

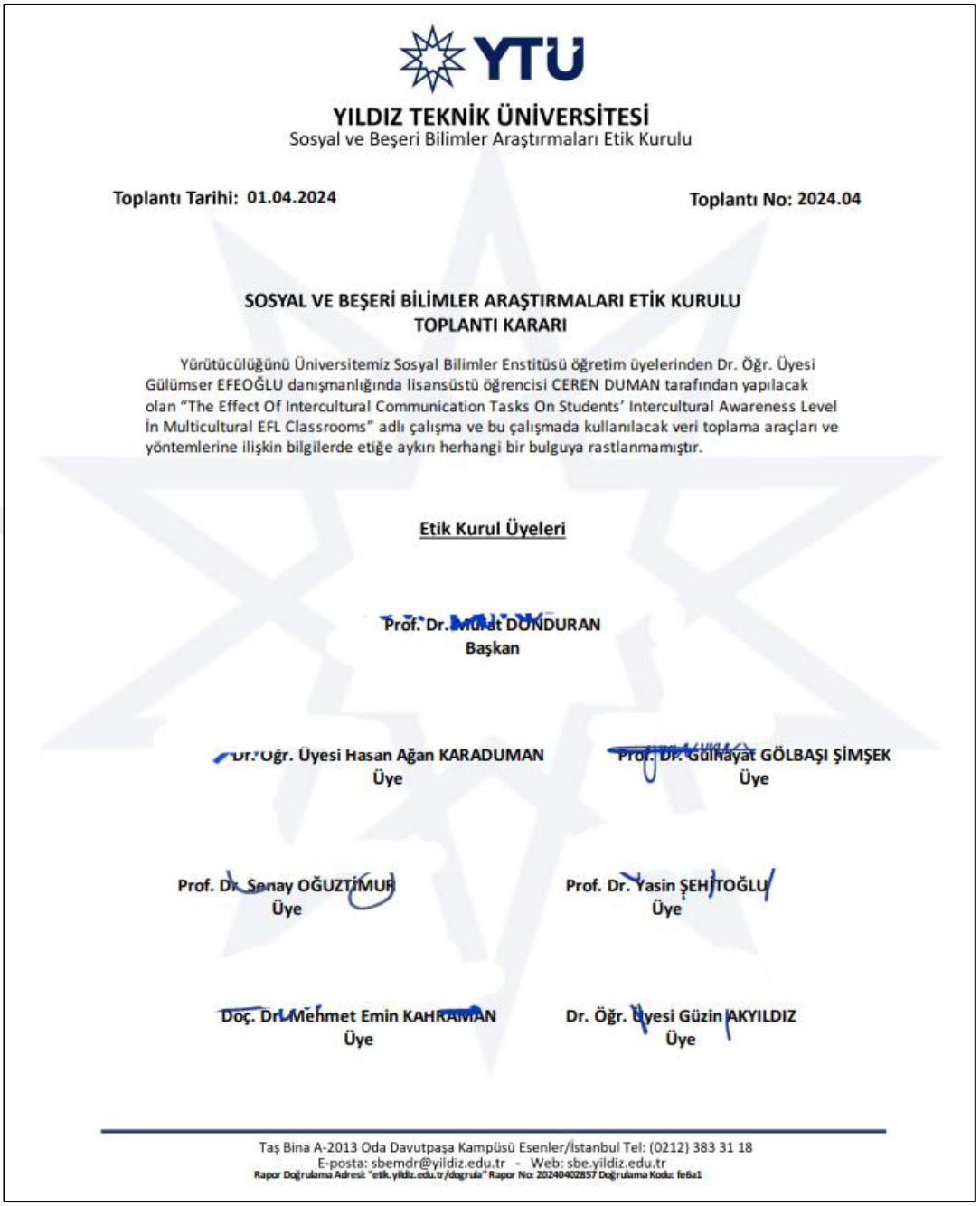
10) Were you satisfied with these three-week intercultural awareness courses? / Bu üç haftalık kültürel farkındalık derslerinden memnun kaldınız mı?

11) Did these lessons make any changes in your thoughts or awareness? If yes, how? If not, what challenges did you face? / Bu kurslar düşüncelerinizde veya farkındalığınızda değişikliklere neden oldu mu? Eğer evetse, nasıl? Eğer hayır ise, hangi zorluklarla karşılaştınız?

12) Do you think that the number of intercultural class hours in this course was sufficient? / Bu kursun kültürlerarası ders saat sayısı yeterli miydi?

13) What else would you have liked to see included in these lessons? / Bu derslerde başka nelerin dahil edilmesini isterdiniz**?**

Appendix 3. Ethical Approval for the Study



YILDIZ TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu

Toplantı Tarihi: 01.04.2024 **Toplantı No: 2024.04**

SOSYAL VE BEŞERİ BİLİMLER ARAŞTIRMALARI ETİK KURULU TOPLANTI KARARI

Yürütücülüğünü Üniversitemiz Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü öğretim üyelerinden Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Gülümser EFEOĞLU danışmanlığında lisansüstü öğrencisi CEREN DUMAN tarafından yapılacak olan "The Effect Of Intercultural Communication Tasks On Students' Intercultural Awareness Level İn Multicultural EFL Classrooms" adlı çalışma ve bu çalışmada kullanılacak veri toplama araçları ve yöntemlerine ilişkin bilgilerde etiğe aykırı herhangi bir bulguya rastlanmamıştır.

Etik Kurul Üyeleri

Prof. Dr. Murat DÜNDUREN
Başkan

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Hasan Ağan KARADUMAN
Üye

Prof. Dr. Gülhayat GÖLBAŞI ŞİMŞEK
Üye

Prof. Dr. Senay OĞUZTİMUR
Üye

Prof. Dr. Yasin ŞEHİTOĞLU
Üye

Doç. Dr. Mehmet Emin KAHRAMAN
Üye

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Güzin AKYILDIZ
Üye

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Rapor Doğrulama Adresi: "etik.yildiz.edu.tr/dogrula" Rapor No: 20240402857 Doğrulama Kodu: fe6a1

Appendix 4. Ethical Approval from the Research Site

Evrak Tarih ve Sayısı: 01.04.2024-67655

ALTINBAŞ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
BİLİMSEL ARAŞTIRMA VE YAYIN ETİK KURUL TOPLANTISI
KARAR TUTANAĞI

Toplantı No: 2024/10
Toplantı Tarihi: 25/03/2024
Toplantı Yeri: Çevirim içi

Kurul Başkan ve Üyeleri:

Prof. Dr. Saim [redacted] -İşletme Fakültesi/Öğretim Üyesi- Başkan
Prof. Dr. Osman Nuri [redacted] -Uygulamalı Bilimler Fakültesi/Öğretim Üyesi -Üye
Prof. Dr. Dilek [redacted] -İktisadi, İdari ve Sosyal Bilimler Fakültesi/Öğretim Üyesi- Üye
Prof. Dr. Nuray [redacted] - Dış Hekimliği Fakültesi/Öğretim Üyesi- Üye
Prof. Dr. Yasa [redacted] - Mühendislik ve Mimarlık Fakültesi/Öğretim Üyesi- Üye
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Yeşim [redacted] -Hukuk Fakültesi/Öğretim Üyesi- Üye
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Gaye [redacted] -Eczacılık Fakültesi/Öğretim Üyesi- Üye
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Yalda [redacted] -Tıp Fakültesi/Öğretim Üyesi -Üye
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Cüneyt [redacted] Güzel Sanatlar ve Tasarım Fakültesi/Öğretim Üyesi-Üye
Doç. Dr. Hakan [redacted] - Araştırma Dekanı/Dekan- Üye

Kararlar:

1. Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu'nda görev yapmakta olan Öğretim Görevlisi **Ceren Duman**'ın *"The Effect of Intercultural Communication Tasks on Students' Intercultural Awareness Level in Multicultural EFL Classrooms (Çok Kültürlü İngilizce Öğretim Sınıflarında Kültürlerarası İletişim Görevlerin Öğrencilerin Kültürlerarası Farkındalık Düzeyine Etkisi)"* başlıklı tez çalışması kapsamında Üniversite öğrencilerimizden anket/ölçek/test/mülakat yoluyla veri toplama önerisi görüşüldü. Araştırmanın bilimsel içeriği, metodolojisi, orijinalliği ve kaynakları etik onay kapsamı dışında olup, başvuru sahibinin sunduğu belgeler ışığında "belirtilen yöntemle veri toplamada ve araştırma yapmada herhangi bir sakınca bulunup bulunmadığı" hususuyla ilgili değerlendirme yapıldı. Bu yönüyle yapılan değerlendirmede, araştırma önerisinde etiğe aykırı bir unsur tespit edilmediğinden uygun bulunmasına ve Rektörlük Makamına arz edilmesine karar verildi.
2. [redacted]

Appendix 5. Voluntariness of Participants and Informed Consent Form

Purpose of this study

You are invited to participate in this study. The purpose is to seek your perceptions on your experience of using intercultural communication tasks in English as a foreign language classes and your intercultural awareness level. The study will be conducted between 19.04.2024 and 05.06.2024. With the aim of investigating your intercultural awareness level, a questionnaire and interview questions will be given to participants. Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or answer any questions or withdraw from the interview at any time with no effect on your future academic status since your participation and answers in this study will not be graded.

Confidentiality

All data collected will remain confidential and accessible only to the investigators of this study. If the results are published, your name and personal data will not be used. If you choose to withdraw from this study, your data will be removed and destroyed from our database.

Contacts for Further Information

If you require any further information regarding the questionnaire and interview or your participation in the study, you may contact Ceren Duman at [redacted].
The interview will take approximately 5 to 10 minutes of your time.
Note: Additional follow-up questions may be asked in the interview, as appropriate, with each participant.

Thank you for your participation.

Date Signature