

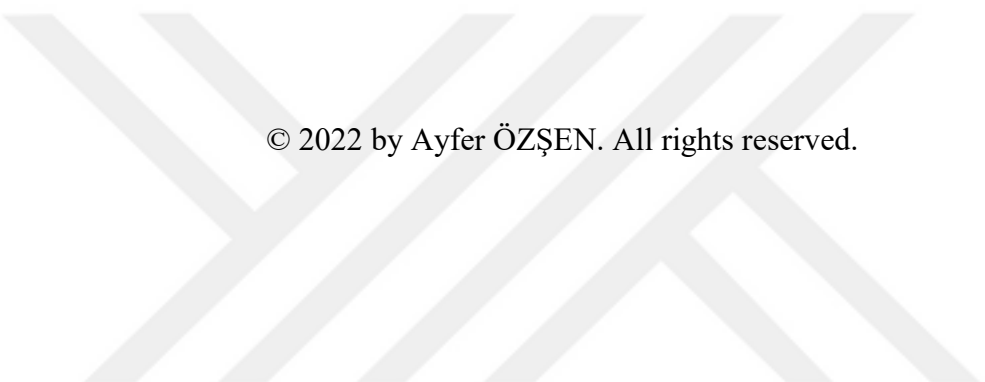
REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
SULEYMAN DEMIREL UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES EDUCATION

**UNIVERSITY PREPARATORY CLASS STUDENTS' INTERCULTURAL
AWARENESS AND THEIR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

Ayfer ÖZŞEN

Advisor: Prof. Dr. Nazlı BAYKAL

MASTER'S THESIS
ISPARTA, 2022



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ABSTRACT
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AYFER ÖZŞEN

Master's Thesis, Süleyman Demirel University, Graduate School of Educational
Sciences, Department of Foreign Languages Education

Advisor: Prof. Dr. Nazlı BAYKAL

2022, 83 pages

Recent global changes have resulted in the occurrence of multicultural and intercultural societies. All spheres of the communities including educational area have been affected by the current cultural status of the world. The number of the classes which require learners from various cultural backgrounds has increased. It has become more prominent for all individuals including learners to have intercultural awareness so that they can survive in today's societies. Therefore, studies working on intercultural awareness of students have gained importance in recent years. This current study focuses on the preparatory class students' intercultural awareness levels at a multicultural university. It aims to explore to what extent the university preparatory class students own intercultural awareness. It also examines the determining factors of intercultural awareness levels of the participants. In addition, the factors to which overall midterm scores and skills-based midterm scores of the learners are connected are scrutinized. The participants of the current research were chosen among the English preparatory class students at a multicultural university in Antalya province of Turkey. This study can be labelled as mixed-method research. Quantitative part included questionnaires and midterm scores of the learners. The researcher benefited from semi-structured interviews in the qualitative part. The analysis section was carried out by utilizing statistical data analysis in the quantitative part and content analysis in the qualitative part. The findings of the study showed that the participants of the study owned high levels of intercultural awareness. They also revealed that intercultural awareness levels are connected to the factors such as age, foreign classmates, and foreign country experience of the participants. In addition, the overall midterm scores and skills-based midterm scores of the participants showed

correlation between age, foreign classmates, and foreign country experience of the students when intercultural awareness levels were taken as a basis.

Key words: academic success, intercultural awareness, multiculturalism.



ÖZET
ÜNİVERSİTE HAZIRLIK ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN KÜLTÜRLERARASI
FARKINDALIK VE AKADEMİK BAŞARILARI

Ayfer ÖZŞEN

Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi, Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü,

Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı

Danışman: Prof. Dr. Nazlı BAYKAL

2022, 83 sayfa

Son dönemdeki küresel değişiklikler, çok kültürlülüğün ve kültürlerarasılığın oluşmasına sebep olmuştur. Eğitim alanı dahil toplumların tüm tabakaları dünyanın güncel kültürel durumundan etkilenmiştir. Çeşitli kültürel birikimden öğrencilerin bir arada olmasını gerektiren sınıfların sayısı artmıştır. Bugünün toplumunda yaşayabilmek için öğrenciler dahil tüm bireylerin kültürlerarası farkındalığa sahip olmaları daha önemli hale gelmiştir. Bu yüzden, öğrencilerin kültürlerarası farkındalıkları üzerine yapılan çalışmalar son yıllarda önem kazanmıştır. Bu çalışma, çokkültürlü bir üniversitedeki hazırlık sınıfı öğrencilerinin kültürlerarası farkındalıklarına odaklanmaktadır. Araştırma, hazırlık öğrencilerinin ne derece kültürlerarası farkındalığa sahip olduklarını incelemeyi hedefler. Ayrıca katılımcıların kültürlerarası farkındalıklarını belirleyen faktörleri araştırır. Buna ek olarak, öğrencilerin vize sınavlarındaki genel notları ve beceri bazlı notlarını etkileyen faktörler ele alınır. Araştırmanın katılımcıları Türkiye'nin Antalya ilinde çokkültürlü bir üniversitede İngilizce hazırlık okuyan öğrenciler arasından seçilmiştir. Araştırma, karma yöntemli araştırma olarak adlandırılabilir. Nicel kısmı anket ve vize notlarını içermektedir. Araştırmacı, nitel kısım için yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeden yararlanmıştır. Analiz bölümü, nicel kısımda istatistiksel veri analizi ve nitel kısımda içerik analizi kullanılarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırmanın bulgularına göre, katılımcıların kültürlerarası farkındalıkları yüksektir. Ayrıca sonuçlar, öğrencilerin kültürlerarası farkındalıklarının yaş, yabancı sınıf arkadaşları ve yurtdışı deneyimi gibi faktörlere bağlı olduğunu göstermiştir. Buna ek olarak, öğrencilerin kültürlerarası farkındalıkları temel alındığında, genel vize notları ve beceri bazlı vize notları yaş,

yabancı sınıf arkadaşları ve yabancı ülke deneyimi gibi faktörlerle korelasyon göstermiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: akademik başarı, çok kültürlülük, kültürlerarası farkındalık.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my special thanks to my advisor Prof. Dr. Nazlı BAYKAL for her support and contribution through the process of my thesis.

I would like to extend my gratitude to Assist. Prof. Dr. Ahmet ÖNAL and Assist. Prof. Dr. Yusuf Emre YEŞİLYURT for their guidance during the process.

In addition, I would like to thank my colleagues who have been in cooperation with me throughout the process.

Last but not least, I would like to express my thanks to the students who voluntarily participated in the study.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CA	Cultural Awareness
CC	Cultural Competence
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference
EL	English Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
FL	Foreign Language
IA	Intercultural Awareness
IC	Intercultural Competence



OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Intercultural awareness: Being aware of one's own culture and other cultures around the world.

Intercultural competence: Owning effective and appropriate communication skills in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Receptive skills: Passive skills in which learners are expected to receive and understand the target language.

Productive skills: Active skills in which learners are expected to produce the target language.

1. INTRODUCTION

This part of the study presents the general frame of the research and involves statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions and significance of the study, assumptions, and limitations.

1.1.Statement of the Problem

People tend to adopt plurality and differences in their nature. Ibrahim (2007) claims that human societies are plural and diverse since the ancient times. Thus, they have the ability to survive in a multicultural environment. However, changes around the globe have been so frequent and rapid in recent years that the world has ended up with new forms of societies. This quick transformation of the world has exhilarated the process of multiculturalism in the countries and communities. It has required individuals from different backgrounds to be able to live in harmony, and to be able to adapt to this situation in a very short time. Sharing the same environment has resulted in intercultural communication as people in the same area all have diverse ethnicities, languages, lifestyles, and cultures. Tennekoon (2015) refers to intercultural communication as a significant component of today's world. People have to be in contact with individuals around them since they are social beings. Therefore, globalization has forced them to be aware of the existence of various cultures and to be more tolerant and more understanding towards these cultures.

Transformation of the world can be observed in many areas such as technology, sociology, health and education. Education can be accounted as one of the most critical areas that are concerned with humans' lives. It prepares people for the context they live in. In most cases, education is named as primary source of information for people. Ortiz-Ospina and Roser (2016) consider education as the basis of individuals and communities. Seeing how essential education is for people, we can not deny the significance of the related studies in the development of humanity. Especially language education plays a significant role in today's society so that individuals can communicate with one another. To be more specific, English language education is of great interest among the educational circles. Ryan (2006) states that a substantial number of people across the world are in favor of learning English. Rao (2019) remarks that English is popular in areas

such as international business, politics, science, and cross-nations communication. People from diverse backgrounds need to speak English to be able to interact with one another. This necessity results in English language education in schools and out of schools. English language education can contribute to the development of the society by supporting cross-cultural interaction and relations. Therefore, examination of the English language teaching (ELT) and its relation to multicultural issues are to gain seriousness.

Current situation around the world puts the focus of English language classes on multiculturalism and raising awareness regarding diversity of cultures. Yamada (2014) acknowledges that individuals speaking different languages communicate using English in today's global society, and they appreciate multiculturalism and multilinguality. Thus, English language classes have a crucial place in celebrating diversity. Learners can benefit from the linguistic opportunities and intercultural aspects offered in English language classes if these lessons can be organized effectively. Cope and Kalantzis (2020) assert that multicultural education seeks for a better community without privileging certain groups and discriminating against some cultures. Reid (2015) states that preventing the problems occurring due to communication breaks can be possible through mutual understanding and tolerance. Therefore, planning and administrating education in this direction can foster the development of interculturally competent individuals. This implementation might focus on learners, teachers, administrators, parents and all the other people involved in the field of education.

All people taking part in educational area are valued separately. However, students are the primary focus of education as all the actions regarding education are taken considering learners. Since there is a need for being individuals who are competent in cultural and linguistic terms to be able to survive in today's society, raising students that own intercultural awareness is necessary. Grasmane and Grasmane (2021) mention that intercultural awareness means a lot when we talk about communication across cultures. Preparing students for intercultural community requires raising intercultural awareness levels of learners. Thus, students are planned to be competent in multicultural contexts.

English language classes can provide learners with necessary linguistic and cultural aspects in order to take place in the current multicultural society. These lessons can contribute to the success of students by demanding respect for diversity of cultures and

languages. Holding skills in terms of cultures and languages enables learners to be successful eventually since these students tend to have broader and more critical perspectives. It means that learners who are more aware of all cultures around and have higher motivation to be competent at intercultural communication can achieve more. Intercultural awareness levels of students may be a determinant of accomplishment. Considering today's multicultural society, the need for interculturally aware individuals, significance of education, learners' place in education, and prominence given to English language classes, the current study focuses on the level of intercultural awareness among preparatory class students at a multicultural university. The name of the university is Antalya Bilim University, which is located in Antalya. The university involves students and instructors from different countries and cultural backgrounds. Learners from the countries such as Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Russia, Mali and Iran register into the university in question.

1.2.Purpose of the Study

The study is aimed at exploring the intercultural awareness of university preparatory class students. In addition, it expects to explore determinants of intercultural awareness level of university preparatory class students. It also aims to uncover the relationship between university preparatory class students' intercultural awareness and their success in English language skills and overall English language success.

This study aims to contribute to English language teaching area by revealing data about intercultural awareness. Language and culture are inseparable. As cultural exchange and intercultural respect are incredibly important in today's world, inclusion of them in language education is required. To be able to determine what to do to ensure intercultural enrichment in class, priority should be given to the examination of current level of students' intercultural awareness. Seeing the results of this study, English language teachers can have an idea about the current situation of university students in terms of intercultural awareness and plan their teaching accordingly.

English language curriculum can be prepared according to the results of this research and similar studies. The study involves the students' academic success. The future studies focusing on the achievement of learners can benefit from the outcomes of this research.

It can guide the researchers for the further study areas. It can also guide English language teachers for the betterment of students' language skills. The findings of the study might be used by the teachers of other languages and lessons, as well.

Considering the study aims mentioned above, the current study focuses on the following research questions:

1. What is the level of intercultural awareness among preparatory class students at a multicultural university?
2. What factors relate to the level of intercultural awareness among preparatory class students at a multicultural university?
3. What factors relate to the overall success of the preparatory class students at a multicultural university in English midterm exams when intercultural awareness levels of the participants are taken as a basis?
4. What factors relate to the overall success of the preparatory class students at a multicultural university in English midterm exams when intercultural awareness levels of the participants are taken as a basis?

1.3. Significance of the Study

Language is impossible to be separated from the concept of culture. Baker (2013) emphasizes that most approaches take culture and language relationship as a basis. Therefore, it is a must for language education to integrate culture in the teaching and learning process. As a matter of fact, changes around the globe take the inclusion of culture further into interculturality level. Rajprasit (2020) remarks that increasing interaction among people across the world has a huge impact on English language itself and how to teach it. Before determining the ways to teach, it is required to make sure students are open to interculturally appropriate classroom environment. This current study is expected to reveal to what extent students own intercultural awareness and are competent enough to survive in multicultural environments.

Language education policy by Council of Europe (2020) highlights the substantiality of plurilingual and intercultural education within its scope. Seeing this, it is crucial to plan

the curriculum and design course materials in accordance with plurilingualism and interculturalism. If teachers and authorities in educational circle gain an idea about learners' level of intercultural awareness, they might feel more confident in planning and implementation of language policies. Nhem (2020) states that teachers should be capable of developing textbooks fostering intercultural development for the betterment of their students' learning process. Therefore, it is highly recommended that teachers be conscious of learners' profile in terms of interculturality. The current research is to shed light on the course content development process according to students' profile by revealing learners' level of intercultural awareness (IA) in a predefined context.

Many studies related to culture and intercultural awareness focus on teachers. Castro et al. (2004) assert that teachers' perceptions are valued for the success of new concepts in English language teaching area. This notion directs many researchers to work with teachers. Like in many other studies, the concepts of culture and intercultural awareness are examined through the perspectives of teachers. Luk (2012) claims that several studies conducted in different contexts have worked on teachers' perspectives and applications of culture in classes. However, there are not many studies regarding intercultural awareness which have been administered on students. The studies working on learners focus on perspectives and ways to develop intercultural awareness. However, these studies do not put direct emphasis on the relationship between academic success and intercultural awareness of language learners. This current research is significant for revealing information about students' level of intercultural awareness and how their IA level relates to their success. Taking the similar aspects of this study and previous research into account, this research can also be considered as a sample for Antalya province in Turkey. It might contribute to the education field through building on previous research.

Dietz (2018) states that interculturality is related to majority and minority groups in a community in terms of their religions, nationalities, languages, and cultures. In order for a society to be referred to as intercultural, it should involve members from diverse backgrounds such as diverse cultures, ethnicities, nations, beliefs, and languages. Similarly, multiculturalism is related to diversity in a community. Song (2010) asserts that multiculturalism is against the concepts of assimilation, rather it supports the respect to all cultures in a society. The terms such as interculturality and multiculturalism have emerged and become indispensable parts of the world. Like all the other layers of the

society, higher education is becoming increasingly intercultural and multicultural as a result of the transformation of the world lately. Students from separate backgrounds register universities. Learners from different countries have more chances to study abroad. Therefore, there is a need for innovative approaches to deal with the interculturality and multiculturalism of higher education institutions. Enders et al. (2008) claim that universities have to revise their methods and policies because higher education is recently more accessible to a diversity of communities. This study might pose a prominence in reviewing the higher education as it reveals university students' intercultural awareness levels and the effect of this level on these students' success.

1.4. Limitations

This study involves the participation of 100 preparatory class students studying at a multicultural university. Conducting it on a small sample might be accounted as a limitation. In order to reveal more detailed results and represent the majority, the research can be applied to a larger sample. It was administered in only one university, which is another limitation. By expanding the research circle through the inclusion of multiple universities, researchers can come up with inferences that are applicable to countrywide. Thus, the study may not be limited to only one higher education institution.

Another limitation can be defined as the implementation of the study at a preparatory class of a university. This limitation can be resolved by conducting the research in undergraduate and graduate levels, high schools, secondary schools and elementary schools. Thus, educational world can take advantage of data from students in all levels. Also, the study is conducted among Turkish students only. Collecting data from participants from other nations can hinder this limitation. This research involves the participation of students only. It can be conducted among other people in educational world such as teachers, administrators and parents to extend the circle of the study.

The current study benefits from the midterm grades of the students. As the school where the study was conducted did not allow access to the final exam grades of the participants, final exam was not involved in the study. Therefore, the research had to be limited to midterm scores. However, other course components such as project scores and participation grades would be used to enlarge the scope of the study.

The current study involved 5 students with the highest levels of intercultural awareness and 5 students with the lowest levels of intercultural awareness. Not including students with average levels of intercultural awareness would be accounted as a limitation.



2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RELATED STUDIES

This chapter involves the terms culture, cultural competence (CC), cultural awareness (CA), intercultural competence (IC) and intercultural awareness (IA). In addition, the relations of these terms with one another and English language (EL) classes are explained through the chapter. This section also reveals the evolution of culture in language classes, which starts from cultural competence and ends with intercultural awareness.

2.1. Definition of Culture

The term culture appears in different contexts and fields with various definitions and conceptualizations. As education and language are connected to many areas such as sociology, politics, philosophy, and psychology, it is obligatory to review the concept of culture in some fields before examining the relationship between language, education, and culture. Hirschman and Reed (2014) regard culture as an essential aspect of social life and social contexts. Since humans are social beings and education is a vital part of humans' social life, it is inevitable to see the cultural impacts on educational life. Pesurnay (2018) considers culture and its material, spiritual and actional products as outcomes of life process. Living together requires people to produce a common culture. Seeing this, culture is automatically included in life when we talk about humans and social environments they live in.

Pivovarov (2009) focuses on the conceptualization of values and defines culture as “a side of human life referred to creation of ideals” (p.17). Namely, culture is to search for what the ideals are. On the other hand, Grawitz (1989) emphasizes the application of the knowledge and mentions that shared values and manners rather than having the knowledge of things within the society constitutes the concept of culture. Human behavior is emphasized in Grawitz's understanding of culture. Considering this, it can be inferred that culture also includes the ideal behaviors of people in a community.

Taylor (1924) shows a holistic social approach and defines culture as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (p. 389). In parallel with Taylor's definition, Kluckhohn (1949) states that culture can be considered as accumulated

knowledge, belief and thought style and a way of whole life. Byram (2003) refers to culture as “the shared beliefs values and behaviors of a social group” (p.50). In other words, one needs to own certain values to be able to take part in a society. People need to contribute to the community they take part in through their beliefs, ideas, attitudes and implementation of these concepts.

Knip (1982) states that culture is created by humans as a result of the combination of elements such as language, traditions and art, and is learned by social transmission. Knip sees people as the creators and the transmitters of the culture. In addition, Schafer (1998) puts human perception into the center of the concept of culture and defines culture as “an organic and dynamic whole which is concerned with the way people see and interpret the world, organize themselves, conduct their affairs, elevate and enrich life, and position themselves in the world” (p. 17). Lindsey et al. (1999) are interested in the human perception and identity, too. They regard culture as grouping of people in accordance with their ethnicity, social life and jobs, and consider culture as a way to identify oneself with similar people. In other words, culture is about how people perceive themselves and differentiate themselves from the others around. Thus, culture means grouping of similar people.

Another approach, which is semiotic approach adopted by Leeds-Hurwitz (1993), is mostly concerned with representation and takes culture as “a set of systems or codes of symbols and meanings” (p.17). According to Leeds-Hurwitz, meanings are conveyed through the symbols. People decide on what to express through these symbols and signs. Bakhtin and Medvedev (1994) combine semiotics and ideology. They state that object-signs constitute ideological environment and ideological environment forms the concrete world of humans. As well as all the other things, culture is produced here.

Culture is defined differently in many academic spheres and by many academicians and researchers depending on the context. Derraz and Mazari (2015) state that relationship between language and culture in the language learning process requires the disciplines such as psychology, philosophy, linguistics, and sociology. All the disciplines in question focus on a different aspect of culture. Therefore, taking one definition as a basis would be inappropriate for education and language. Instead, examining the reflection of the cultural studies on language would be a more beneficial approach. Language is related to

all the areas in life, so all the definitions of culture can be partly used in language education. Belogurov et al. (2018) state that contemporary language classes include a variety of cultural areas, and culture and FL teaching are integrated.

The studies and articles related to culture indicate that culture is a concept that takes place in humanities such as philosophy, psychology, political science, and sociology. Upon the examination of culture in various social areas, it would be appropriate to scrutinize the relationship between culture and English language classes. Language classes can be regarded as social environments as language itself is a social entity. Therefore, inclusion of culture in language classes as a social concept is a must.

2.1.1. Relationship between culture and EL classes

Culture and language are inseparable. Kramsch (2000) considers language as a system of signs with cultural value. She states that cultural reality is symbolized by the language itself. Thus, language can be regarded as an indispensable component of culture. Hartono et al. (2021) state that language reflects culture. Similarly, culture is an indispensable part of language. Brown (1994) remarks that language and culture are interwoven. Therefore, culture should be included in language education for a proper language education. Hilliard (2014) claims that it is impossible to teach a language without teaching culture. Godwin-Jones (2013) mentions that culture is a must in language teaching, but how it should be integrated is a matter of discussion.

The more integration of culture into language classrooms might lead to a more peaceful teaching and learning environment. Barantsova and Rutkovska (2020) state that language teaching is a way to change students' perspectives towards other cultures. Glynn et al. (2020) mention that more tolerance and more positive attitudes towards other cultures can be ensured through cultural knowledge attainment in the classroom. Blioumi (2015) remarks so that students can avoid misconceptions across cultures, they need to develop some strategies to differentiate familiar cultures from the other cultures. As long as misunderstandings are minimized, it is highly possible to ensure a friendly classroom environment. A positive classroom will result in more productivity in language learning.

Belogurov et al. (2018) claim that English is used as a lingua franca among the members of intercultural communication. Everyone living in the modern world; teachers, students, artists, economists and workers can be counted as a member of intercultural communication. They all need English to be able to communicate with people from any other cultures. English can be named as a glue holding various cultures together. Çakır and Demircioğlu (2015) mention that millions of people around the globe use English to communicate with foreigners regardless of their geographical backgrounds. Seeing this, cultures of English-speaking communities might be counted as one of the cultures to involve in EL classes.

Byram (2021) describes intercultural speakers as people who can mediate among the cultures including their own cultures and all the other cultures around. Benaissi and Bouslama (2018) remark that survival in the new form of the world requires individuals with mediator roles among variety of cultures. Therefore, inclusion of other cultures is inevitable in EL classes. In addition, benefiting from learners' own cultures might be an effective way in EL classes as well as cultures of target language language's culture and all the other cultures. Estuarso (2017) believes that more engagement of students in learning process can be attained through the involvement of course materials related to their own cultures. Increase in engagement and motivation might bring more competent in language skills.

Alptekin (2002) reveals the status of culture in language classes by claiming that learners should be a part of acculturation in a foreign language learning process and should attain new culture understanding and a new perspective about the world. Kim (2003) claims that people need language for their own culture and to learn about other cultures. Likewise, involvement of culture; not only learners' own culture but also culture of target language in language classes is significant. Therefore, culture teaching in language classes is incredibly important so that learners can not only represent their own cultures but also adapt to other cultures.

2.2. Definition of Cultural Competence

Kirmayer (2012) remarks that cultural competence is a term that was used in the US in the 1980s to set a framework for diversity and inequality. Boyle and Springer (2001) state that cultural competence can be defined in many ways and with many concepts. It can be regarded as a term which requires having the knowledge of cultures and applying this knowledge in contexts. Burchum (2002) refers to cultural competence as a developmental process which requires continuing growth in knowledge and skill improvement based on interaction, awareness, understanding, knowledge, sensitivity, and skill in cultural context. This definition focuses on CC as an ongoing continuum that shows progress in time. Bazron et al. (1989) claim that cultural competence requires individuals to show consistent behaviors with the system so that they can be efficient in cross-cultural situations. They put emphasis on human behavior in context.

Dean (2011) mentions in one definition of cultural competence that the concept in question is mostly about gaining knowledge about different groups in terms of history and common characteristics and using this knowledge to connect with them and ensure understanding. National Association of Social Workers (2001) describes cultural competence as a process where people from variety of cultures, ethnicities, languages, races and beliefs are responded respectfully and efficiently. The association in question also preserves dignity of all these people. Therefore, CC might be referred to as a concept that takes human relationships as a basis and specially underlines the necessity of adapting oneself into cultural contexts to strength these relations.

2.2.1. Relationship between cultural competence and EL classes

Language can be considered as a social phenomenon. Foreign language is necessary to communicate with people from different backgrounds. However, being in contact with individuals from variety of cultures brings about the necessity of certain adaptation skills. Dykstra-Pruim et al. (2005) claim that educators believe studying another language requires being sensitive, showing tolerance and being open to other cultures and to other languages. Borau et al. (2009) state that cultural competence involves being aware of one's own culture, perspectives on cultural varieties, information on different cultures and owning cross-cultural skills. These are among the skills that are necessary for

language learners to be able to adapt to all languages and cultures as well as target language and culture.

Cultural competence is not necessary only for students. Teachers should also be culturally competent in class. Keengwe (2010) remarks that cultural competence is necessary for a teacher to be effective in the classroom. Teachers need to be a good model for their students in terms of applying cultural competence skills and attitudes. Heilala-Rasimov and Vesanen (1991) state that teachers must be ready for the situation and have the necessary skills if CC is to be included in class. Diller and Moule (2005) claim that teachers should have a high level of complex awareness, be sensitive, own information about how to be effective in classroom. With the integration of CC skills and teaching skills, a teacher can be more confident in his/her profession and contribute more to the development of the students.

2.3. Definition of Intercultural Competence

Intercultural competence is a concept derived from cultural competence. As the name suggests, it requires being competent at intercultural concepts. It is a must to focus on this concept before introducing the concept of intercultural awareness as IC is one of the basic terms that build IA. Deardorff (2004) defines intercultural competence as “the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one’s intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (p. 184). Bennett et al. (2003) define intercultural competence as “the ability to think and act in interculturally appropriate ways” (p. 422). Definition by Apud et al. (2006) focuses on background of individuals by referring to intercultural awareness as “an individual’s effectiveness in drawing upon a set of knowledge, skills, and personal attributes in order to work successfully with people from different national cultural backgrounds at home or abroad” (p.530). The common point of the definitions of IC is that many scholars emphasize the usefulness of application of intercultural knowledge as well as the acquisition of it. It means individuals should gain the necessary knowledge to survive in intercultural contexts and should be able to use this knowledge appropriately depending on people, places and time.

Barrett (2012) remarks that intercultural competence involves attitudes, skills, knowledge, and behaviors. A person needs certain qualifications to be able to survive in intercultural environment. Caligiuri et al. (2000) relate intercultural competence to adopting an international view rather than putting the focus only on ethnicity. In other words, IC involves building a global perspective among individuals to be able to benefit from mutual tolerance and understanding. Zotzmann (2015) points out that an individual needs to achieve management on ideas, feelings, transformation, and ambiguity during intercultural interaction and to develop understanding towards other viewpoints to gain intercultural competence. Building a bridge between one's own culture and other cultures around is of great concern. Sachdev and Young (2011) claim that individuals can be accounted as intercultural speakers if they can mediate between their own cultures and the culture they encounter. This intercultural balance can serve to the betterment of individuals and cultures around the world.

Intercultural competence is a significant concept in the globalizing world as sharing the same environment is becoming a must for many people. Bedir (2019) claims that 21st century education is to prepare students for globalization and help them to succeed in the society. The recently composed global community forces individuals from different cultures to live in the same place and communicate with one another. Krumm and Schulze (2017) state that interaction and cooperation in international circle increase as everybody in the world becomes closer to one another; thus, intercultural understanding becomes more necessary than ever. This necessity arises in many fields including education. Changnon and Spitzberg (2009) state that increasing diversity in society results in the increasing significance of IC, and it becomes more popular in academia. Taking this into consideration, it is necessary to look into the transmission from cultural competence to intercultural competence.

2.3.1. Switch from cultural competence to intercultural competence

Nokelainen and Pylvas (2021) state that the processes of internationalization around the globe require international mobility. As a result of increase in international mobility, interaction among people from different cultures has become a must. Communication among people and movement of people across the world have become easier in recent years as a result of these global actions. Spitzberg (2000) states that a variety of cultures

are becoming increasingly accessible, and people of these cultures are getting in contact with one another more frequently than ever before. As interaction among people is easier compared to the past, multiculturalism is inevitable in the societies. Chen and Starosta (1998) mention that cultural diversity has become a norm in many countries because of changes in cultural characteristics of social, political, and educational lives in general. Cushner and Mahon (2009) mention that young people need to keep up with the global issues and work together with others to deal with the problems around the world, and therefore own intercultural competence. The same argument is valid for not only young people but also for all the other individuals around the world. People should be competent at intercultural skills rather than cultures separately since it is hard to talk about individual cultures in today's society.

2.3.2. Relationship between intercultural competence and EL classes

Education is becoming intercultural as in the case of all the other fields around the world. Cushner and Mahon (2009) state that intercultural education involves intercultural competence as a long-term purpose. Taking the development of IC into consideration, it is not surprising for educational circle to give priority to the concept in the long term. Sachdev and Young (2011) emphasize the status of intercultural competence in EL classes by stating that teachers and students can be referred to as good when they show high level of IC. Intercultural education's goal is to help learners gain the competences required to participate effectively as citizens in diverse societies (Council of Europe, 2021, para. 2). López-Rocha (2021) mentions that the need for effective communication and awareness in connection with the global issues results in the influence of intercultural competence in preparing students for life. Equipping students with certain competencies for a better and more quality life is the main purpose of education. Nguyen (2017) states that

learners are expected to not only acquire cultural knowledge and raise cultural awareness, but also develop their ability to reflect, self-reflect, argue and construct their own critical views of different cultural issues and their cultural identity, that help building their tolerance and harmony with themselves, with other people and cultures. (p. 150)

Liaw (2006) argues that intercultural competence is a term which is used for the cultural aspect of foreign language education in situations where learners are to communicate in cross-cultural contexts. Cross-cultural situations are inevitable today because of rapid changes and developments all around the world. Therefore, students are to participate in these environments somehow. Neuner (1997) considers inclusion of intercultural competence as a method that emphasizes the personal social identities of students in language learning and teaching process. It suggests that learners' own cultures are required to gain intercultural competence in language classes so that effective communication with people from other cultures and speakers of other languages can be ensured.

The recent global order means new characteristics for students. Fenner (2006) remarks that language learners are expected to attain a new intercultural personality trait if they want to catch up with the world. Deardoff and Jones (2009) claim that intercultural competence helps people to develop skills and behaviors that will be used through interaction with individuals from variety of cultures. All skills that learners can gain through learning process can add up into their personalities. It can be inferred from this notion that FL classes can contribute to learners' personality, and their new personality may support their language learning. This two-way advantage promotes the development of IC for students' better adaptation into the world.

2.4. Definition of Intercultural Awareness

Changes around the world and necessity of the concept of intercultural competence have brought about the term intercultural awareness. Burchum (2002) defines cultural awareness as "the developing consciousness of culture and the ways in which culture shapes values and beliefs" (p.7) and elaborates the dimensions of cultural awareness as exploring the culture of one's own, being aware of bias and prejudices regarding one's own culture and noticing the same and different aspects of various cultures. This definition indicates that intercultural awareness is a term related not only to ethnocentric culture but also to other cultures. Shaules (2007) asserts that intercultural awareness involves recognizing one's own culture and other cultures around the world. It means that individuals need to be aware of their own cultures and other people's cultures around them.

Çubukçu and Tural (2021) refer to intercultural awareness as a concept that involves intercultural competence in cognition level. They believe intercultural awareness is about recognizing the relationship between cultures. Barany (2016) states that intercultural awareness includes being aware of variety of values, behaviors, and attitudes in an unbiased manner. Byram (2000) defines intercultural awareness as “the ability to interact successfully with others across cultural difference” (p. 2). It means people need to acquire certain skills to be able to interact with members of various communities. Zhu (2011) refers to intercultural awareness as the basis of interaction and highlights the significance of other cultures as well as an individual’s own cultural values. It indicates that all the cultures around the world are considered to be equally valued, and individuals are expected to be aware of this equality.

2.4.1. Intercultural awareness in EL classes

Students of different cultures need to study in the same schools and classrooms, which might result in need for intercultural awareness in classrooms. That learners from various cultural backgrounds study in the same place brings about a need for intercultural communication competence among those students. Xerri (2016) considers English users as multicultural people. Therefore, English language learners are to be culturally rich and to be aware of this richness. In other words, EL learners are supposed to own intercultural awareness. Seeing this, it is essential to examine IA in the education world. Many scholars have studied intercultural awareness in educational context and in English language classes.

Gupta (2020) claims that decisions related to education can be affected by globalization process of education. An inclusive approach regarding other cultures in schools might be adopted. Normalizing all cultures and respecting people from different cultures have become a necessity in schools as well as social life outside school. It has required the examination of the term “intercultural awareness” in all levels of educational context to raise awareness among educators and learners.

Intercultural awareness is defined as “an awareness of the roles of cultures in intercultural communication” (Baker, 2009, p. 197). Chen and Starosta (1996) argue that competence in intercultural communication involves intercultural awareness as an indispensable element. Ur (2012) believes that accepting other cultures as well as learners’ own cultures rather than superiority of a language in the classes should be a perspective to get in language classes. When students are aware of other cultures and see that these cultures naturally exist in the society, they can be better at intercultural communication. They may not feel superior to other people or inferior to them. They can be more tolerant to the variety of cultures. Rappel (2011) emphasizes the merit of intercultural awareness and states that it has a goal to prepare students for issues which stem from difference of cultures. Tural (2020) claims that intercultural awareness is a must for communication, which is the main purpose of learning a language. Therefore, it plays a huge role especially in effective English language classes. Özkan and Yılmaz (2016) state that differences in cultures should not be ignored in language classes so that learners can adapt to international communication easily through the promotion of intercultural awareness.

Language is regarded as an indispensable component of culture. Therefore, inclusion of culture and intercultural awareness in English language classes is a must. Choeichaiyapoom (2013) claims that “since language cannot be separated from culture, intercultural awareness would be a relevant concept for English language teaching particularly in a global context” (p. 3). In the study by Choeichaiyapoom, an increase in intercultural awareness among upper secondary school students is observed through the use of English instruction which adopts intercultural approach. It shows that students tend to gain more intercultural awareness when classroom language fosters interculturalism. The language used in class should be appropriate for all cultures to be freely introduced and represented.

Intercultural awareness and language learning are supportive concepts to each other. A study by Agag and Belkaid (2019) which has been conducted among bilingual and multilingual students who have been studying social sciences for three years reveals a positive relationship between language learning and intercultural awareness. Participants are of the opinion that languages they learn help them gain knowledge on the cultural elements of the target language. Thus, they have tendency to be more respectful towards the differences and similarities among all languages and cultures. Similarly, Chen et al.

(2001) remark in their study which includes the participation of Business Administration undergraduate students that individuals' cognitive ability with regards to similarities and differences of other cultures is named as intercultural awareness. The studies indicate that higher level of intercultural awareness enables learners to develop mentally.

Teachers' and students' perceptions of intercultural awareness are vital to pursue a smooth educational life. Yılmaz (2016) investigates the native and non-native English-speaking instructors' and university level English language learners' perspectives on intercultural awareness. Her study indicates that cultural exposure is required for language classes, but instructors are not considered to be effective enough to include culture in the lessons. The study also highlights the role of the curriculum in raising intercultural awareness. Kaya (2021) works on Turkish EFL teachers' beliefs, attitudes, practices and professional training needs on intercultural communicative competence teaching. His study also involves intercultural awareness and reveals that teachers are aware of their needs but not competent enough in application. Similarly, Özışık (2018) has conducted research on English language lecturers' perspectives on intercultural awareness. Her study shows that lecturers are aware of the value of intercultural awareness as a term; however, they lack the knowledge and skills to benefit from it in classroom activities.

Eğitim (2022) presents a teacher's opinion that he is accepted more by students when he has a higher level of intercultural awareness. It shows that teachers whose intercultural awareness levels are greater are necessary for a more peaceful classroom environment. Chang (2004) works with five EFL teachers and emphasizes the essentiality of intercultural awareness among teachers and necessity of teacher training programmes accordingly. Another study by Özkan and Yılmaz (2015) reveals teachers at preparatory school support culture teaching in class; however, they integrate only the target culture rather than all cultures. The study emphasizes the necessity of more attempts to boost intercultural awareness in language classes. The research by Westrick and Yuen (2007) focuses on intercultural sensitivity, which is a component of intercultural awareness. It compares the intercultural awareness levels of the secondary school teachers in four schools. Thus, it plans to contribute to the development of the participant teachers professionally.

Li (2016) highlights a lack of intercultural awareness among students because of training, which results in wrong or misleading preference of methodology in classroom. It brings about the obligation to promote intercultural awareness among learners in class. Thus, betterment of teaching-learning process can be ensured. Kusumaningputri and Widodo (2018) state that students need the help of teachers to gain critical thinking and intercultural awareness. Gashi (2021) mentions that using appropriate coursebooks and extra materials is a way that teachers can contribute to intercultural awareness level of students. These sources might be helpful in developing positive perspective towards English language classes. Sarıkayış (2022) works with 6th, 7th, and 8th graders in a secondary school. Her study reveals that the higher levels of intercultural awareness the students have, the more positive perspectives they have towards English lessons. It means helping students increase their level of intercultural awareness might contribute a lot to language teaching process. Kailola (2016) focuses on coursebook analysis to look for cultural elements to indicate the level of intercultural awareness among learners. This study shows that students' own cultures, target culture and other cultures should appear in balance in coursebooks so that learners can adapt to the contemporary world which requires them to learn about all cultures.

Ece (2019) explores the effects of international baccalaureate programmes on teachers' and administrators' level of intercultural awareness. She remarks that these programs have no impact on intercultural awareness. Therefore, she suggests improvement and adaptation of the programmes so that they raise intercultural awareness among teachers and administrators. A four-year longitudinal study by Korzilius et al. (2007) with 39 students in the Netherlands focuses on the impacts of International Business Communication program on intercultural awareness development and language acquisition. The research includes a little evidence to show the contribution of the teaching program to intercultural awareness development. The study by Roh (2014) focuses on the intercultural sensitivity of the students in high schools and middle schools in Korea. It shows that raising intercultural awareness can be achieved by implementing sufficient programs. It suggests that these programs provide students with multicultural environments.

Examination of coursebooks takes a prominent part in the curriculum. Taking this into consideration, Zorba (2019) examines 7th grade students' intercultural awareness perceptions and coursebooks' effectiveness in intercultural awareness. His study shows that students lack intercultural awareness, and the main reason for this is considered to be the imbalanced distribution of cultural elements of target culture, home culture and other cultures among the units of the coursebooks. The study also highlights the significance of focusing on all the world cultures instead of the culture of the target language, which is English in our case.

Research by Baker (2013) reveals students' positive attitudes towards the class materials which include intercultural communication and intercultural awareness. Students' willingness in this issue requires the integration of intercultural awareness raising course materials into language classes. Another study by Kafa (2016) focuses on the correlation between English as a lingua franca (ELF) materials and perspectives of the undergraduate students regarding intercultural awareness. The research shows that the participants tend to have higher level of intercultural awareness when they have more positive attitude towards the ELF materials used in class. Another study by Edalati Kian (2020) analyzes textbooks in private language courses and English materials used outside the classroom. It reveals that English sources used outside the classroom are also crucial for students to gain intercultural awareness. Nhem (2020) studies the teachers' ability to use and adapt coursebooks in order to develop intercultural awareness. His study indicates that teachers are aware of the vitality of including IA in textbooks, but they do not own the skills to prepare coursebooks accordingly.

The ways to increase intercultural awareness among students and teachers are to be examined, as well. Interacting with people from different cultures either virtually or face to face is a way to boost intercultural awareness level. A study conducted by Kisa (2017) shows the significance of foreign country experience in increasing the level of intercultural awareness. The students participating in her study are the ones who are a part of Erasmus Exchange Programme. They state that their level of intercultural awareness improves through their experience in a different country with different cultures. Another research by Altuğ et al. (2019) includes students who are with Erasmus+ Programme experience and students with no experience in Erasmus+ Programme. The study compares both groups in terms of attitude, knowledge, skill and

action. Although both groups have positive approach towards intercultural competency, the ones with Erasmus+ experience have higher levels of intercultural competency than the students with no Erasmus+ experience. In addition, the participants with Erasmus+ experience are better at applying their knowledge on culture in their daily lives. Çalışmış (2022) has a study that focuses on a virtual exchange programme between two universities and its effects on critical intercultural awareness. Her study highlights the benefits of technology (virtual communication) and interaction with different cultures in developing intercultural awareness. Wang (2014) has conducted research on intercultural awareness in foreign language teaching and learning among teachers and students. Participants are aware of the significance of learning boosting strategies such as exchange programs. These programs are regarded as the activities to raise intercultural awareness. Furthermore, the study highlights the role of technology in raising awareness.

Another way to raise intercultural awareness in language classes is to include literature in teaching. Ghosn (2002) states that literature can develop learners emotionally, benefit their behaviors in interpersonal and intercultural aspects. Literature includes texts such as drama, epics, poetry, story, short story and novel. Topaloğlu (2016) has explored the effect of drama on raising intercultural awareness among students in higher education. The study shows that drama is an effective way to raise intercultural awareness. Drama is also a way to practise all skills of the target language such as speaking, vocabulary and listening. It is considered to be a meaningful activity to include both culture and teaching in language classes. As another genre of art, Civelekoğlu (2015) examines the impact of poetry implementation on intercultural awareness. Her study reveals an increase in intercultural awareness after the implementation of poetry in English classes. It indicates that inclusion of even one cultural element in language classes plays a significant role in raising intercultural awareness. Epics, which is another genre of literature, can contribute to intercultural awareness level of students. Bahçe (2008) has conducted a study on the use of epics in English language classes at a preparatory school. Her research reveals that students increase their level of intercultural awareness when epics are used as a course material in language classes.

Short story as another literature field can also be used to develop intercultural awareness in language classes. Tural (2020) has conducted a study on short story use in English language classes to increase intercultural awareness level. Her research indicates that a

variety of activities should be used in English language classes to improve intercultural awareness level of students. Another study which has been conducted by P.M. Ribeiro (2016) supports the usage of technology in raising intercultural awareness through the involvement of digital storytelling. Digital storytelling is regarded as a way to develop peer interaction and emotional exchange among students. Gözpınar (2014) has a study which focuses on the use of proverbs in language teaching and its effects on raising intercultural awareness. He includes proverbs in English, Turkish and Georgian languages. The purpose is to raise intercultural awareness among the students who are 13-18 years old and the language teachers. The findings of the research reveal that not only the students but also the teachers participating in the study have the opinion that inclusion of proverbs is helpful to increase the level of intercultural awareness.

All the studies above emphasize the importance of intercultural awareness. They also uncover the perspectives of teachers and students in different levels regarding the concept of intercultural awareness. In addition, the studies in question suggest some ways and techniques to raise intercultural awareness in the class. Özkan and Yılmaz (2016) summarize the content of the related studies by stating that intercultural awareness of learners and teachers in language classes can be improved through implementation of teacher training programs, coursebooks and course materials focusing on culture, and cross-cultural projects.

The relationship between intercultural awareness and academic success of students in language classes is not examined in the studies above. The term academic success might mean students' overall language performance, and their success in skills such as reading, listening, writing and speaking. Obilişteanu (2009) considers these skills as the indispensable components of life. Therefore, developing these skills is required for comprehension and expressing oneself in a language. Çakır (2006) states that inclusion of intercultural awareness in courses ensures improvement in language skills and students' views and behaviors.

2.5. English Language Skills

Language teaching includes four main skills. Burns and Siegel (2017) state that the idea of four macro skills is a concept that nearly all teachers around the world agree on. Al-Jawi (2010) divides language instruction into four skills; reading, listening, writing, and speaking. Davies (1976) classifies these skills into two categories: receptive skills; reading and listening, and productive skills; speaking and writing. Masduqi (2016) refers to receptive skills as passive skills in which learners receive and understand the language, and names productive skills as active skills in which students need to produce target language. Golkova and Hubackova (2014) state that learners are definitely exposed to not only receptive but also productive skills while they are learning a language. Language learning process can not be considered without the integration of these skills.

2.5.1. Receptive skills

Al-Jawi (2010) classifies receptive skills as reading and writing, and states that these skills are required for effective social interaction, for fun, to get daily information and for academia. It means that we need receptive skills so that we can interpret what is going on around us. Van Parreren (1983) presents the opinions of psycholinguists that consider receptive skills as models for learners because communication depends on reading and listening text. Similarly, Ilankumaran and Sreena (2018) claim that learners will have better communication when they develop reading and listening skills because productive skills are based on receptive skills. In other words, we need to develop reading and listening skills first to be able to communicate in a spoken or written form.

Listening is one of the receptive skills in language learning. Nunan (2002) underlines the merit of input; thus, listening is classified as a way of input in language learning, and it is crucial in developing speaking skills. Renukadevi (2014) claims that efficient learning cannot be achieved if learners do not understand input properly. In another words, listening is an significant part of language learning and communication. Liubinienė (2009) argues that learners' adaption into new skills and knowledge can be boosted through effective listening skills. Styfanyshyn and Yurko (2020) state that effective listening is a crucial skill because of its benefits in many situations and communication; however, little attention is given to it in language learning. As listening is regarded as a

receptive skill, it plays a vital role in comprehension of the target language and sets a basis for productive skills. Therefore, assessment of it is more of an issue.

Listening is crucial for intercultural awareness. Students should be competent in cultural elements to be able to have better listening comprehension skills. Also, they tend to develop better intercultural skills when they are good at listening. Hayati (2009) asserts that cultural information is required for learning spoken language because language is a way to transmit culture. Language involves signs of culture. Listening is a skill that helps learning cultural values. Arevalo (2010) states that listening is helpful for learning about social relations and cultural values, and for appreciating this knowledge. In addition, understanding what other people say is a component of culture. Hall (1959) argues that cultural context includes speech reception. When individuals are good at receiving other people's speech, they have broader knowledge of culture.

Reading is another receptive skill in language learning. Kelly (1969) states that reading has been included in language teaching and learning process since the beginning of language education. Bojovic (2010) considers reading as a cognitive ability that individuals need while mingling with texts in written form. Atamuratovna and Mammatovna (2020) emphasize the significance of reading skills and adverse impact of poor reading skills in language learning. Koda (1988) puts emphasis on the essentiality of reading skill by claiming that it is impossible for children to adapt to social, economic, and cultural environment if they are unable to read in English. Sever (1995) regards reading as a multi-faceted process which includes interaction, reception, cognition, feeling and sensation. It might be inferred that as another receptive skill, reading plays a crucial role in comprehension and production in language learning. Taking it into account, the study by Van Maele and Yu (2018) can be outstanding as it works on the development of intercultural awareness among students through the implementation of reading.

Reading is an essential skill for intercultural awareness of students. Students might need cultural knowledge to make sense of the texts. Similarly, reading texts can provide learners with wide range of cultural knowledge. Basuki et al. (2017) regard reading as a significant skill which enables learners to have information about cultural experiences. Ceylan (2016) states that short story as a type of reading enables students to compare their cultures with other cultures. Her study shows that reading is a highly advantageous skill

for learners in terms of cultural benefits. On the other hand, having more cultural information will result in more command on reading. Bernhardt et al. (2003) claim that competence in culture is necessary so that students can have a better understanding of reading texts. Otherwise, a proper understanding might not be achieved.

2.5.2. Productive skills

Productive skills can be categorized into two; writing and speaking. Harmer (2007) remarks that productive skills, which are written and oral skills, focus on producing language rather than receiving the input. It means productive skills go beyond reading and listening and require students to react to input they receive. Artini et al. (2017) assert that communication is concerned with exchanging ideas clearly in a written or spoken form. Considering this, learners must be competent at writing and speaking skills so that they can achieve effective communication. Field (2015) acknowledges that productive skills are significant in language learning because they bring real-life experience into the classroom.

Writing is a productive skill which plays a huge role in language learning. Adloo and Aghajani (2018) state that writing requires the combination of many other skills. These prerequisite skills can be vocabulary, grammar, reflection, cognition, analysis and synthesis. Cruz (2010) highlights the substantiality of culture in writing skills as well as all the other language skills. Ahmed (2016) argues that writing is a hard communication skill which is necessary in today's world. Spanou and Zafiri (2019) remark that writing might be the most difficult skill, and it requires turning input into output. Advancement of learners in writing skills can be ensured if culture is involved in language learning. Arini and Nurlia (2017) assert that inclusion of culture in language teaching and learning process improves students' writing skills.

Speaking is another skill to be assessed to make sure learning is achieved. Usmonov (2020) defines speaking as "a process of oral express as a type of speech" (p. 51). Like writing, it is a productive skill. It requires the inclusion of many skills such as vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar and register. The main purpose of a language is communication. Speaking is crucial for communication and language learning. Thus, speaking serves to the main purpose of a language.

Culture is a prominent determinant of speaking of people. Philipsen (1976) states that individuals from different cultural backgrounds speak differently and they have different opinions on values. It results in the necessity of cultural knowledge and reflection of this knowledge on speaking. Bahrani and Soltani (2012) remark that language learners need some competencies to be able to perform speaking. Culture can be regarded as one of the most significant competencies required for speaking. Students should be aware of cultural varieties and speak accordingly. Similarly, they can gain more knowledge on culture if they can speak and communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds. A Saavedra-López et al. (2021) acknowledge that cultural awareness of learners helps them to have an effective use of language while speaking. It means learners need cultural skills to be able to communicate.

Taking the advantages of skills into consideration, students' achievement of these skills is incredibly important. Therefore, exploring the relationship between these skills and students' intercultural awareness might be influential in language classes. As language and culture are impossible to be separated, impacts of recognition of culture on language learning can be of significance in language teaching. Depending on the academic achievements of the students, to what extent intercultural awareness should be a concern of language classes can be discovered. Determining factors of intercultural awareness level can be examined, as well. Findings of the study in this direction might guide teachers in preparing appropriate course materials. In addition, it might serve to the development of better curriculum with the inclusion of appropriate course materials.

3. METHODOLOGY

This part involves research design, participants of the study, data collection tools, data collection procedure, and data analysis.

3.1. Research Design

This research is aimed at exploring to what extent students possess intercultural awareness. To be able to reach the target, this study benefits from mixed methods research. It means combination of quantitative and qualitative methods is adopted in this study. Cheek and Morse (2014) describe mixed methods research as studies using quantitative and qualitative methods simultaneously. As mixed method studies require both methods, it is necessary to examine them both separately first.

Quantitative research deals with numbers in data collection and analysis part. Dörnyei (2007) points out that a quantitative study depends basically on numerical data and uses statistical methods for analysis. Cohen et al. (2017) state that numerical terms are used in quantitative research. Creswell (1994) describes quantitative research as a research type which analyzes the numerically collected data through the use of mathematical methods. Qualitative study is based on non-numerical data collection and analysis. Dörnyei (2007) mentions that non-statistical methods are used in data analysis process of qualitative research. Popay et al. (1998) state that interpretation of subjective meaning is the basis for qualitative research. Mohajan (2020) mention that quantitative studies benefit from numeric data and aims to quantify defined variables such as behavior, opinion and perception. Fossey and Harvey (2001) assert that use of qualitative methods might be beneficial for betterment of the quantitative research validity.

Creswell (1999) states that mixed method is a way to support the study qualitatively as well as through the use of charts, graphs, and numbers. In other words, it enables researchers to collect data and analyze it in both paradigms. Burke Johnson et al. (2007) remark that

mixed methods research is an intellectual and practical synthesis based on qualitative and quantitative research; it is the third methodological or research paradigm (along with qualitative and quantitative research). It recognizes the importance of traditional

quantitative and qualitative research but also offers a powerful third paradigm choice that often will provide the most informative, complete, balanced, and useful research results. (p. 129)

Malina et al. (2011) mention that quantitative or qualitative method alone is not constructive enough for explaining phenomena. Therefore, they suggest using mixed methods. Caracelli et al. (1989) define the purposes of using mixed method as triangulation, complementarity, development, and initiation (as cited by Kitchenham, 2010, p. 562). In this study, revealing the results for the same research questions through more than one sources of evidence, and seeing the differences and similarities that both sources of evidence present are planned. Therefore, triangulation and complementarity purposes are taken into consideration for this research. Byrne and Humble (2007) claim that drawbacks of some methods might be eliminated and strengths of them may be emphasized through the use of mixed method. They also state that an explanation for conflicting outcomes can be provided in this way. Almeida (2018) points out that researchers can make use of mixed methods when they need to compare data and examine it thoroughly.

Creswell (2009) claims that mixed methods appear in three strategies, which are concurrent mixed methods, transformative mixed methods, and sequential mixed methods. Brannagan et al. (2010) assert that concurrent mixed methods give equal weight to qualitative and quantitative methods and use them concurrently. According to Creswell (2009), “the researcher uses a theoretical lens as an overarching perspective within a design that contains both quantitative and qualitative data” (p.15). Almeida (2018) stresses that researchers rely on sequential strategy when they need to decide on the procedure of the second data collection technique after the analysis part of the first data collection technique. It means second part of data collection process can only be achieved depending on the first part. Sequential strategy is adopted in this study. Mixed methods can also take advantage of different techniques depending on the context and research requirements. Dörnyei (2007) remarks that mixed methods are typically composed of questionnaires and interviews. In this research, quantitative data is collected through the use of questionnaires. After the analysis of quantitative data is completed, qualitative data is collected and analyzed. Qualitative data is collected by conducting semi-structured interviews with certain participants.

3.2. Participants

Taherdoost (2016) claims that researchers are expected to determine target population, decide on sampling frame, select a sampling technique, and choose sampling size before collecting data. Target population in this research is university preparatory class students. Participants of the research are among the preparatory class students who study at Antalya Bilim University. Turkish students who study at English preparatory class are the participants. The students are required to receive English education in 2020-2021 academic year. Therefore, sampling frame can be regarded as the Turkish students who study at English preparatory class at Antalya Bilim University in 2020-2021 academic year. The participants are to be the citizens of the Republic of Turkey and to be the speakers of Turkish. Other cultural information such as religion and ethnicity are not requested from the participants.

Taherdoost (2016) states that researchers do not have enough time and resources to work on the entire population, so they need to choose some of the participants and work with them. Among the sampling methods, convenience sampling is used to choose the participants of this study. Marshall (1996) states that convenience sampling is picking the most accessible participants. It is practical in terms of money, time, and effort issues. Dörnyei (2007) regards convenience sampling as the most popular sampling method in studies because of participants' voluntariness, accessibility, and availability. Since the time for this research was limited and participants needed to be reached as soon as possible, convenience sampling was appropriate for it. It was necessary to complete the data collection procedure before the educational year was over. Otherwise, it was likely to lose contact with the participants and access their scores. The most accessible Turkish students in the school in question were accounted as the participants of the study. Participants of the study were chosen among the accessible ones and contacted individually. As the study was planned to be conducted with 100 participants, not all the students at preparatory school were asked to cooperate with the researcher. The number of the students were to be diminished to 100 using convenience sampling technique. Thus, the research was ensured to be completed in time.

The students in question were asked to be a part of the study. However, there was no obligation to do so. Participation in the research was on a voluntary basis. Voluntary members were provided with an online questionnaire and asked to fill it in. Before the students saw the demographic information and questions part, they needed to accept that they took part in the research willingly. To be able to prove their consent, the students were provided with an informed consent form (*see Appendix A*). It was ensured that participants did not feel any pressure or obligation in this way.

Table 1. Demographic information of the participants

Demographic information of participants	Number
Gender	
Male	40
Female	60
Age	
18	24
19	49
20+	27
Foreign country experience	
Yes	33
No	67
Foreign classmates	
Yes	46
No	54

Table 1 indicates demographic information about the participants of the research. Demographic information part of the study included 5 questions. These questions addressed the name, gender, age, whether the participant had been abroad, and whether the participant had a foreign friend in class. The names of the students were needed only for the continuing part of the study, which required contacting the participants for the semi-structured interview process. Names of the participants were confidential otherwise and were not shared with any other person. The other questions asking for gender, age, foreign country experience and foreign classmates were significant for the data analysis process while comparing the means and determining the 2intercultural awareness level of the students. Among the 100 participants taking part in the numeric section of the

research, 60 participants were females, and 40 participants were males. 24 participants were 18 years old, 49 students were 19 years old, and 27 participants were 20 years old or older. 33 students had been abroad, and 67 participants had not been abroad. 46 participants had foreign friends in class while 54 students did not have foreign classmates.

Among these 100 participants, 8 students were asked to participate in semi-structured interviews. This part was also carried out on a voluntary basis. If a participant did not volunteer in cooperating, another student who could be accessed was contacted in this part. No demographic information was taken into consideration here. Only intercultural levels of the participants; the lowest and the highest ones were taken into account. It means the participants of the following part of the study were determined by using judgement sampling. The researcher decided on who to include with a certain frame in mind. Perla and Provost (2012) assert that a person who conducts a study drives data from a system to choose participants in judgement sampling.

3.3. Data Collection Tools

This study used two data collection tools, which are questionnaire as quantitative method and interview as qualitative method. Aksu (2009) claims that choosing one method for research is not an obligation, so both methods are possible to be used throughout the study. Using two methods in different sections of research is highly popular for educational science. Borg et al. (1996) point out that educational research benefits from questionnaires and interviews as data collection tools because how participants feel, behave, get motivated, experience things and succeed are not directly observed. It is necessary to make use of some data collection tools to reveal these unobservable concepts. Taking it into account, this study was planned in a way that the researcher took advantage of two methods to get the best results.

3.3.1. Questionnaire

Questionnaire was the first data collection tool used in this study (*see Appendix B*). Drewer (1962) regards questionnaire as a set of questions on social research that is sent to a sample group to collect data about some issues and personal characteristics. Babbie (1990) defines questionnaire as “a document containing questions and other types of

items designed to solicit information appropriate to analysis” (p. 377). Aksu (2009) claims that questionnaires provide pros for studies since they allow the use of not only open-ended items but also closed questions.

Language of the questionnaire in this research was determined as English. Simple words and structures were used to ease the understanding of the participants. It has two parts, which are demographic information and intercultural awareness questionnaire part. It includes open-ended, closed and Likert scale items at the same time. It includes 25 questions in total except for the name of the students. The item asking for the name is not numbered since names are confidential and are not revealed in the research. There are two open-ended items, which ask for the name and age of the participants in the questionnaire. 3 questions can be regarded as close-ended questions, which ask for gender, existence of foreign country experience and foreign classmates. The students needed to choose male or female for the former one and, yes or no options for the latter. These open-ended and closed-ended items constitute the demographic information part of the questionnaire.

The other 21 items require the participants to scale their answers from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Acharya (2010) points out that scaling enables researchers to drive outcomes from nonquantifiable issues; thus, subjective matters are quantified. It means researchers benefit from scaling when they need to specify the answers to subjective issues. Scaling type used in this study is Likert scaling (summative), which is defined as “arrangement of opinions from extreme negative to extreme positive” (Acharya, 2010, p. 5). Croasmun and Ostrom (2011) state that Likert scaling offers researchers a range of options that respond to certain statements. The questions prepared by the use of Likert scaling technique in this research include 5 options, which are “strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree”. The students were to choose the most suitable option to them for each item. The part with Likert scale items is named as intercultural awareness questionnaire. Intercultural awareness questionnaire used in the research conducted by Civelekoğlu (2015) was taken as a basis for the questionnaire in this study. Her questionnaire includes items about people in general. However, the items in this study were adapted so that the students could respond to these questions considering their context; their own experiences in a foreign country or with their foreign classmates. The

number of the questions in intercultural awareness questionnaire in this research is the same as Civelekoğlu's questionnaire. Only verbal adaptation was carried out.

Content validity and face validity are among the crucial points for a questionnaire. Creswell (2007) defines content validity as “the extent to which the questions on the instrument and the scores from these questions are representative of all the possible questions that a researcher could ask about the content or skills” (p. 172). Schaefer et al. (2003) claim that content validity helps us make connection between abstract concepts and observable, measurable signs; therefore, it is significant for designing devices for research. Civelekoğlu (2015) acknowledges that Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) sets the basis for the intercultural awareness questionnaire used in her study. The questionnaire used in the current research was adapted from the one in Civelekoğlu's study. Çağatay and Gürocak (2016) state that CEFR provides teachers with detailed guidelines about teaching, learning, planning and assessing. It means CEFR is comprehensive enough to rely on while designing a questionnaire about English language teaching (ELT) field. Since the questionnaire in the current study is an adaptation of the one in Civelekoğlu's research, it might be considered to have content validity. Getting some criticism and review by people who specialized in the field of ELT might be a way to ensure content validity. Zhou (2011) mentions that expert opinion is a good way to make sure about the content validity of a questionnaire. Seeing this, a group of teachers working in Antalya Bilim University and Süleyman Demirel University were asked to proofread the questionnaire before conducting it. It was applied only after the positive ideas of colleagues on the questionnaire were attained. When it comes to face validity, Mosier (1947) claims that it refers to the practicality and suitability of a test to its purpose. It means a questionnaire should appear to be related to its aims. To check whether the questionnaire looks in the same line with the target results, opinions of the colleagues were asked before the data collection procedure.

Another point is reliability of the questionnaire. Bolarinwa (2015) indicates that reliability is to what extent outcomes of a study can be replicated. It means consistent results need to be gained when the study is conducted with different participants and in a different time. Creswell (2009) regards reliability as internal consistency of the items. Cronbach Alpha coefficient is a way to measure reliability. Dörnyei (2007) states that Cronbach Alpha coefficient reveals the reliability of the study and reliability ranges from 0 to 1,

from the least reliable to the most reliable. Items in the demographic part, which ask for name, age, gender, foreign country experience and foreign classmates, were excluded while measuring the reliability of the questionnaire. Only intercultural awareness part, which consists of Likert scale items, was included in the measurement. Before conducting the survey across the school, reliability test was carried out with the inclusion of 20 participants. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the questionnaires filled by those participants revealed that reliability of the current questionnaire came out as 0.88. It is closer to 1; therefore, it can be considered as highly reliable. Similarly, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the actual study is 0.88. It shows that the study is highly reliable.

3.3.2. Semi-structured interview

This study includes a semi-structured interview part (*see Appendix C*). McIntosh and Morse (2015) state that semi-structured interviews are aimed at attaining subjective answers from participants about a topic or case. Hatry et al. (2015) assert that semi-structured interviews usually allow one participant at a time, and include closed, open-ended and follow-up question types. Aksu (2009) claims that the researcher has a set of questions in semi-structured interviews and can come up with new ones while conducting the interview. It means semi-structured interviews allow the use of extra questions to explore the participants' opinions. Not having a strict set of items enables the researcher to have more detailed data.

The interview used by Zorba (2019) was taken as a basis in this study. He included 11 open-ended interview questions related to intercultural awareness in his research, but the number of the questions is decreased to 6 in the current study. Thus, the interview used in this study consists of 6 main questions. The interviewer could ask follow-up questions to elaborate on the interviewee's responses when necessary. Thus, adequate data was planned to be collected. Mother tongue of the students was chosen as the interview language. Zhou (2011) expresses that it is easier for people to convey message in their mother tongue when they are expected to communicate complex opinions, ideas, and beliefs. Therefore, language of the interview was determined as Turkish because the researcher wanted participants to deliver information and express themselves well enough for quality data collection procedure. Before the application of the semi-structured interview on the participants, the students were provided with the interview questions in

Turkish and English. However, they were informed that the language of the data collection would be Turkish. The participants were provided with time before interview was conducted. Thus, the students could think and reflect on the questions in their mother tongue.

Validity and reliability are important concepts for interviews as well as questionnaires. Kaya (2021) states that rating and comments of different scholars are significant for validity of the study. Therefore, 5 colleagues were included in this research to ensure semi-structured interview was valid. Similarly, reliability was enhanced through the inclusion of different perspectives. Considering this, 6 colleagues were asked to participate in the data categorizing procedure. Those scholars were asked to come up with themes separately and to compare their themes afterwards. They were also asked to decide on what codes can be grouped under what themes. Consensus was reached at the end of their work and data was analyzed accordingly. Data attained from the semi-structured interviews was analyzed thorough the use of content analysis method.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

Data was collected at Antalya Bilim University School of Foreign Languages. The researcher needed to implement a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview, and to access the midterm grades of the students in 2020-2021 academic year. Therefore, permission for all steps was taken from the administration of the School of Foreign Languages. The permission procedure was carried out through e-mailing the management. After the administration approved the research, data collection process started. However, it took longer than expected to collect data due to Covid-19 pandemic. Contacting the school management and the participants online took longer time than face to face interaction, so the researcher needed more time to finalize the process.

3.4.1. Quantitative data

The voluntary participants were provided with the questionnaire using Google Forms. 100 students participated in the main part of the study as planned. Prior to the main study, 20 students were asked to complete the questionnaire so that the researcher could check the reliability of the adapted questionnaire. Seeing that pilot study was highly reliable,

the questionnaire part was carried out with 100 students. Quantitative data also included participants' midterm exam grades. Grades were attained by contacting the Testing Office of School of Foreign Languages after the midterm exam results were announced to the students. IBM SPSS Statistics 22 application was used to analyze the data gained through the questionnaire and students' midterm grades. Quantitative data analysis was needed for the qualitative data collection procedure since the participants of the semi-structured interview were chosen accordingly. 5 students with the highest level of intercultural awareness and 5 students with lowest level of intercultural awareness were interviewed.

3.4.2. Qualitative data

The participants who had the highest level of intercultural awareness and the lowest level of intercultural awareness were picked for the interview. Equal number of students with high level and low level of intercultural awareness was included in the interview part. The students to take part in the qualitative part were contacted through e-mail and Microsoft Teams. The students were informed that the interview takes approximately 5 minutes. They were also provided with the questions to be asked during the interview. Written consent was obtained from the students for their participation in the interview. The interview was conducted with 10 students in total through Microsoft Teams. Video recording of the interview was taken with the permission of the participants. Berazneva (2014) states that recording the interviews can contribute to the data collection procedure a lot because it is a way to make sure data is collected, stored, and archived. The participants were reminded about the study and its purposes before the recording started. After qualitative data was collected, transcripts of the videos were taken. Content analysis was done to analyze the interview results.

3.5. Data Analysis

Quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis were two steps of data analysis procedure.

3.5.1. Quantitative Data Analysis

IBM SPSS Statistics 22 application was used to analyze the data gained through the questionnaire and students' midterm grades. Milovanović and Perišić (2020) state that "the IBM SPSS software platform offers advanced statistical analysis, a vast library of machine learning algorithms, text analysis, open-source extensibility, integration with big data and seamless deployment into applications" (p.275). Considering this, the researcher preferred the SPSS software to make use of various properties.

Options in the questionnaire questions were assigned numbers before the data was transferred into the SPSS application. Gender was numbered as 1 and 2; "female, and male" respectively. Age item included three categories; "18, 19 and 20+", which were numbered as 1, 2 and 3. Whether the participants had been abroad or not was questioned through "yes and no" options, which appeared as 1 and 2 numbers on SPSS. Similarly, the question that asked if the students had a foreign friend in class or not contained "yes and no" options, which were numbered as 1 and 2. The intercultural awareness questionnaire included options named "strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree". These Likert-scale options were numbered as 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 respectively. The data from the demographic information and intercultural awareness questions part of the questionnaire was coded with numbers and transferred into the system in this way. The mean of the questionnaires of all the participants without considering their gender, age, foreign country experience and foreign classmate interaction was obtained from the SPSS analysis system. The means of the questionnaires depending on gender, age, foreign country experience and foreign classmate interaction were obtained from the analysis system and presented.

The means for the participants in the midterm grades analysis section were grouped as '4 and above' and 'below 4'. It could be inferred from this classification that the researcher was only interested in whether the participants chose agree and strongly agree options, or the other options. While classifying the midterm exam grades, the students whose grades were over 75 were numbered as 4 (high achievers). The points of 50-74.5 were numbered as 3 (achievers) while the grades of 25-49.5 were numbered as 2 (low achievers). The scores of 0-24.5 were numbered as 1 (non-achievers). Classification of the grades regarding skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) is as follows: In the speaking

and writing parts, grades between 15.5-20 out of 20 were numbered as 4 (high achievers); grades between 10.5-15 as 3 (achievers); grades of 5.5-10 as 2 (low achievers); and grades of 0-5 as 1 (non-achievers). In the reading and listening parts, grades between 8-10 out of 10 were numbered as 4 (high achievers); grades between 5.5-7.5 as 3 (achievers); grades of 3-5.5 as 2 (low achievers); and grades of 0-2.5 as 1 (non-achievers).

3.5.2. Qualitative Data Analysis

The researcher benefited from content analysis approach for the qualitative section of the study. Grbich (2012) states that content analysis is a type of qualitative data analysis method which aims to explore text through categorizing and coding systematically; thus, it determines patterns and frequencies of words and their relationship. Garry and Harwood (2003) remark that content analysis helps researchers have a better analysis and interpretation of data by defining themes and reducing phenomena into these themes. Feld et al. (1992) describe the content analysis procedure in the following steps: deciding on the verbal material, determining a data collection method, collecting data, getting information on a content analysis system, working on an interrater agreement method, coding, and analyzing data. Verbal material of this research was the transcripts obtained from the interview recordings. Data collection method was semi-structured interview on intercultural awareness. Video recording is a way to collect data from the participants. Upon learning how systems of content analysis work, the researcher got the support of six different colleagues as interraters. These interraters were to help the researcher in coding the material to ensure the reliability of the data. After consensus was reached on the themes, the researcher analyzed the qualitative data. The defined themes could be put in 7 groups as “behaviors, values, speech patterns, communication, diversity, fun, and knowledge”. Behavior theme included codes such as actions, manners, greetings and welcoming. Value theme involved codes like respect, belief, routines, and family. Speech pattern theme consisted of codes such as pronunciation, fluency, and accent. The codes such as interaction, responding and sharing environment were taken under the theme of communication. Diversity theme included different languages, ethnicity, and nations. Fun theme was about spending time together and doing some activities. Knowledge theme included information about components of culture such as language, food and clothes. The pre-defined themes represent the elements of intercultural awareness; thus, they were planned to be used to reveal the intercultural awareness levels of the participants. How

many times a theme was repeated in the interviews was figured out by the researcher in the analysis procedure.



4. FINDINGS

In this chapter, findings of the questionnaires and interviews are presented.

4.1. Findings of the Questionnaires

Findings of the students' questionnaires are presented in this section.

The participants in the study show high level of intercultural awareness in general ($M=3.98$). Without taking the factors such as age, gender, foreign country experience and foreign classmates, the responses of the participants to the items in the questionnaire are closer to “agree” option.

4.1.1. Findings of the questionnaires depending on gender, age, foreign country experience and foreign classmate interaction

Table 2 shows the means attained from the interviews depending on the variables in the questionnaires.

Female students' results indicate higher level of intercultural awareness ($M=3.99$) when compared to the male participants who show lower level of IA ($M=3.97$).

When the results with regards to age are considered, 19-year-old students have the highest level of intercultural awareness ($M=4.25$). The participants who are older than 20 years old ($M=3.94$) and the ones at the age of 18 ($M=3.87$) follow the 19-year-old students respectively.

The participants with a foreign country experience reveal a higher level of intercultural awareness ($M=4.00$) when compared to the ones without any experience abroad ($M=3.98$).

The students with foreign friend interaction in class show a higher level of intercultural awareness ($M=4.04$) when compared to the participants with no foreign friends in class ($M=3.53$).

Table 2. Means depending on the variables in questionnaires.

Variable	Parameter	Mean
Gender	Female	3.99
	Male	3.97
Age	18	3.87
	19	4.25
	20+	3.94
Foreign country experience	Yes	4.00
	No	3.98
Foreign classmate	Yes	4.04
	No	3.53

4.1.2. Correlation between findings of the questionnaires and the participants' success in the midterm test.

Table 3 shows the correlation between the variables in the questionnaires and the total, reading, listening, speaking, and writing grades of the participants in the midterm test depending on the means attained from the questionnaires. It includes the age of the participants, whether the learners have experience abroad, and whether they have foreign classmates. It also presents the correlation between midterm scores of the students and the variables of age, abroad and foreign classmates.

Table 3 reveals that there is a very weak positive correlation between the age of the participants and their reading scores. The correlation between the age and the listening scores is a negative weak one while the speaking grades and the age correlation is a very weak negative correlation. The correlation between the age and the writing is a very weak correlation. The total grades are in a very weak negative correlation with the age of the participants.

When it comes to the variable labelled as abroad in Table 3, which is about whether the participants' experience in another country, reading and listening scores show a very weak positive correlation with the variable in question. Speaking, writing and total grades of the participants, on the other hand, are in a very weak negative correlation with experience in a foreign country.

Table 3 indicates a positive correlation between scores and whether the students have a foreign classmate or not. However, the strength of the correlation is weak between the total grades and foreign classmate variable while the correlation is very weak with the other skills, which are reading, listening, speaking and writing scores.

Table 3. Correlation between variables and success of the participants

variables	reading	listening	speaking	writing	total
Age	.021	-.228	-.033	-.083	-.034
Abroad	.061	.041	-.113	-.127	-.047
Classmate	.165	.118	.097	.156	.206

4.2. Findings of the Interviews

Table 4 shows the frequency of the pre-defined themes of analysis. The interview analysis reveals that behaviors are mentioned 9 times by the participants. Values are repeated 12 times while speech patterns appear 5 times. Communication can be found in 26 places while diversity is used 13 times. Fun is mentioned 7 times, and knowledge appears in 34 places in the interviews.

Table 4. Frequency of the themes in interviews

Theme	Frequency
Behaviors	9
Values	12
Speech patterns	5
Communication	26
Diversity	13
Fun	7
Knowledge	34

Table 5 indicates some participants' excerpts on behavior theme. It reveals some examples of behavior such as greetings, actions, manners and welcoming.

Table 5. Example excerpts emphasizing behavior theme.

Participant	Excerpt
Participant A	I have some friends who go abroad and experience culture shock. If they knew about the culture of those countries, they would not experience it. They would behave according to their lifestyles.
Participant B	I can feel more comfortable around my foreign classmates when I am knowledgeable about their cultures. I can behave more sincerely. For example, they have different greetings. I can be more polite when I talk to them.
Participant G	Learning English is not enough. If we do not know how to behave people while we are in the same environment, language is useless. Cultural information shapes our behavior while speaking.
Participant H	My foreign friends are very helpful. They are doing their best to get on well with us in class. We can apply our culture when we are together. I am happy with my foreign classmates in the class.

Table 6 focuses on speech pattern theme. It shows some participant statements about accents, pronunciation, and fluency.

Table 6. Example excerpts emphasizing speech pattern theme.

Participant	Excerpt
Participant A	I think I can learn accents better if I know about the cultures British and American people.
Participant G	My pronunciation will improve when I talk to people from other cultures.
Participant H	I can learn about their accents and have an accent.
Participant I	I can speak more fluently.

Table 7 indicates some sentences about communication theme from the participants' interviews. It presents statements emphasizing interacting, common environment, and responses.

Table 7. Example excerpts emphasizing communication theme.

Participant	Excerpt
Participant A	We can communicate better if we know their cultures. We can understand each other and share ideas more comfortably.
Participant B	I can communicate well with my foreign classmates. They help me to deal with cultural issues. I can express my ideas while I am talking to them. I have a better adaptation thanks to my interaction with them.
Participant C	I pay extra attention while communicating with my foreign friends because I am aware that I will need this experience later in my life.
Participant D	I think communication and culture affect each other. If I communicate well with my foreign friends, I will learn more about their cultures. If I know their cultures, my communication skills will improve.

Table 8 presents data about knowledge theme. The interview scripts include cultural information such as language, food and clothes.

Table 8. Example excerpts emphasizing knowledge theme.

Participant	Excerpt
Participant A	We can learn about their clothes, food and language. if we know about other people's cultures.
Participant C	I think learning a language means learning about culture. Therefore, I will have more ideas about cultures when I learn English.
Participant E	I can learn about my foreign friends' cultures when we are in the same class.
Participant F	Learning my classmates' cultures help me improve my English because I can come up with more ideas.

Table 9 presents some example excerpts of value theme. It involves statements on respect, belief and routines.

Table 9. Example excerpts emphasizing value theme.

Participant	Excerpt
Participant B	When I spend time with friends from countries, I have to respect their values.
Participant D	If we want a good class, we need to respect our friends from abroad. They are new in our country. We should present the good parts of our culture to them.
Participant H	I was surprised when I met my classmate from abroad. I was prejudiced at the beginning. However, my opinion about other cultures has changed. I love my friend now. She is very respectful and understanding. She tells me about their holidays and routines.
Participant J	I feel obliged to respect my classmates' beliefs and cultures because I also need to be respected.

Table 10 shows example excerpts on diversity theme. It includes some statements about different cultural backgrounds.

Table 10. Example excerpts emphasizing diversity theme.

Participant	Excerpt
Participant A	I want to meet people from different countries and be good friends with them. Spending time with different people contributes to my perspective.
Participant F	We need to be in the same school with students from different countries. I think it is good for us because we are not one type.
Participant I	English lessons help me learn about different people. We have a lot of information about different cultures in the books and materials.
Participant J	I love diversity in cultures, people and languages. I think we teach each other different things at school.

Table 11 presents data about fun theme. It focuses on statements that include spending time and doing activities together.

Table 11. Example excerpts emphasizing fun theme.

Participant	Excerpt
Participant A	It is fun to learn about their celebrations. People around the world have enjoyable activities.
Participant C	They have some interesting foods and clothes. I want to try them all.
Participant D	There was a story in reading book. I really liked it.
Participant H	I enjoy working with my foreign classmates. We try to understand each other. Sometimes we can not understand what we say to each other, and we start laughing. It is fun.

Table 12 reveals data about receptive skills mentioned by the participants. It includes sentences of the students taking part in the interview section of the study. These sentences touch upon reading and listening skills.

Table 12. Example excerpts emphasizing receptive skills.

Participant	Excerpt
Participant A	I think learning cultures helps me in listening and reading. At the beginning, I translated the words according to Turkish language rules. I could not understand what I read or listened then. Now, I am more familiar with cultural differences between English and Turkish. I can understand the paragraphs and listening better in class and in the exams.
Participant B	When I learn the cultural words, I can focus on the reading and listening more. I do not need to check the dictionary because I already know those words.
Participant G	I have to pay more attention while my foreign friend is talking because he has a different accent. It is good for me because accents are always different in books and exams.
Participant H	I believe it will help me for my future job. I will read a lot of texts in English to survive in the business world. I plan to run an international business. Therefore, I need to be good at understanding texts and people.

Table 13 provides some excerpts on productive skills, which are speaking and writing. It shows some statements by the participants of the interview part.

Table 13. Example excerpts emphasizing productive skills.

Participant	Excerpt
Participant C	We can communicate with our friends from different countries if we learn about their cultures. It helps me to express myself in class.
Participant F	I want to have more friends from abroad. If possible, I want to talk and write to them. I need to improve my English and cultural knowledge.
Participant I	If we use vocabulary about foods, music, clothes and celebrations of other cultures, we can write better essays. This vocabulary helps me find more ideas.
Participant J	If my classmates tell me about their cultures, I feel more comfortable. I feel more confident if I know it. I can talk to them more sincerely.

5. DISCUSSION

This part involves the discussion of the findings. The study includes four research questions. The findings of the quantitative and qualitative parts of this study are presented in this section through the comparison of existing literature and this research. Similarities and differences between this study and research having been conducted beforehand are revealed in a detailed way to answer the research questions. The reasons behind these similarities and differences are explained to justify the research questions. In addition, the view of the researcher is presented to make inferences from the results.

5.1. What is the level of intercultural awareness among preparatory class students at a multicultural university?

The first question of the study examines the level of intercultural awareness among the participants, who are preparatory class students at a multicultural university. This research question focuses on the IA level of all the students involved in the study regardless of their demographic background such as age, gender, whether they have been abroad and whether they have foreign classmates.

Intercultural awareness is a global term that is used frequently nowadays. Gürsoy and Özcan (2021) state that globalization forces people to own intercultural awareness. Therefore, individuals are expected to have high level of IA in today's world. Van Maele and Yu (2018) remark in their study that the students in higher education institutions in China show high level of intercultural awareness. Similarly, the research by Kafa (2016) presents a high level of intercultural awareness among the experimental group. The current study goes in the same line with these studies and presents high level of intercultural awareness among the learners who participate in the research ($M= 3.98$). It indicates that the participants are open to intercultural differences and are aware of existence of the other cultures around.

5.2. What factors relate to the level of intercultural awareness among preparatory class students at a multicultural university?

The second research question requires the inclusion of demographic information such as age, gender, foreign country experience and foreign friends in class. It reveals data about how the participants' ages, genders, foreign classmates, and foreign country experiences relate to their intercultural awareness levels. It also shows the relationship between intercultural awareness and factors such as behaviors, values, speech patterns, communication, diversity, fun, and knowledge. It aims to relate these factors obtained from interviews to demographic information of the participants, as well.

Age is among the demographic factors that is to be examined in this current research so that intercultural awareness levels of the participants can be compared. The study by Fretheim (2007) asserts that there is a correlation between ages and intercultural awareness levels of the participants. It shows that older ages come with higher intercultural awareness levels among the participants. In addition, the research by Westrick and Yuen (2007) indicates that intercultural awareness levels of the older participants are higher. The findings of the current study overlap with these studies in terms of the idea that age makes differences in the intercultural awareness levels of the participants. However, it does not present a linear relationship between age factor and IA level. The students who are 19 years old have the highest level of IA while 18-year-old ones have the lowest level.

Gender is another factor that is used in this study to compare the intercultural levels of the students. The female participants show higher level of intercultural awareness than the male ones.

Experience is another factor to examine in the intercultural awareness levels of the learners. Bennett (1993) states that experience in intercultural environments is necessary for individuals to gain intercultural awareness. Similarly, the study by Westrick and Yuen (2007) shows that interaction of the participants with other cultures poses significance in the levels of intercultural awareness. The research by Roh (2014) supports these studies by revealing that experience with other cultures matters in the development of intercultural awareness. It shows that participants are more open to cultural differences

when they take place in intercultural contexts more frequently. This current study examines intercultural experience in two ways; whether the students have experience in a foreign country and whether they have foreign classmates. The learners who have been abroad show higher level of intercultural awareness ($M= 4$) when compared to the ones without experience abroad ($M= 3.98$) according to the data from the questionnaires. In addition, the students who have foreign classmates own higher level of intercultural awareness ($M= 4.04$) than the ones without any foreign classmates ($M=3.53$). It indicates a huge gap between two groups of participants. This data shows that intercultural experience of the participants plays a significant role in their levels of intercultural awareness.

Behavior is one of the themes derived from the interviews in this study. It is a term related to intercultural awareness. Baker (2015) refers to behavior in his basic intercultural awareness categorization. It means behavior is a significant component of intercultural awareness. The research by Yılmaz (2016) shows that frequency of behavior theme is 6 in the interviews. This current study is in line with Yılmaz's research. The students' interaction with foreign classmates and experience in a foreign country make difference in terms of their verbalization of behavior theme in this research. Behaviors are mentioned 9 times by the students who have foreign classmates and foreign country experience. The participants without foreign country experience or without foreign classmates do not mention behavior in their interviews at all. This data emphasizes the significance of intercultural experience as well as underlining the behavior theme. Table 5 indicates some example excerpts about behavior theme from the student interviews.

This study also includes speech patterns such as pronunciation, accent, and fluency in the interview categorization. Alvord and Martinsen (2012) remark in their study that pronunciation as a speech pattern changes when the students go abroad. It shows that interaction with other cultures has a connection with speech patterns. Similarly, the participants of the interview part of the current study mention the speech patterns theme 5 times. Table 6 indicates some excerpts from the interviews that emphasize speech patterns theme. All the excerpts are taken from the interviews of the students who have foreign country experience or the ones who have foreign classmates. These students are aware of the relationship between speech patterns and cultures; thus, they tend to have higher level of intercultural awareness.

Communication is another concept that is highly related to intercultural awareness. Sperber (1990) refers to culture as the essence of communication among people. Communication and culture are impossible to be considered without the existence of one another. Latané (1996) asserts that communication is helpful for the occurrence of culture, and culture requires communication. It means that both of them are crucial for the individuals and societies in today's world. Humans need them to be able to keep in touch with the individuals not only from the same background but also from different backgrounds. The study by Yılmaz (2016) indicates that interactional reasons; in other words, communication with people from other cultures is mentioned by the participants taking place in the interviews. Similarly, the current research interview results reveal that the students mention communication 26 times. All the participants regardless of their age, gender, foreign country, or friend interaction agree that communication is a motivation for intercultural interaction. It shows that the learners' need to interact with other people from diverse cultures is a good factor for intercultural awareness. However, demographic information does not pose any significant difference among the participants. It is not surprising when we consider the high level of intercultural awareness among the participants gained from the questionnaires. The general mean of the students taking place in the quantitative part of the study is 3.98 out of 5. Table 7 indicates some excerpts from the interviews regarding communication without taking the demographic information of the participants into account.

Knowledge is another theme that is related to intercultural awareness levels of the participants. According to the study by Liu (2016), students who gain general knowledge are more inclined to own intercultural knowledge. In other words, learners can be more conscious of the existence of other cultures and be more knowledgeable about their applications if they are competent in general knowledge. In a similar vein, the research by Yılmaz (2016) includes 3 participants' opinion mentioning that learning culture develops general knowledge. Similarly, the participants in this current study emphasize knowledge 34 times in their recordings. Knowledge is a theme that was mentioned by all the participants in the interviews regardless of their gender, age, foreign country experience and foreign classmates experience. It means that learning something is a great motivation for the learners without considering their demographic background to be

involved in intercultural situations. Table 8 shows some excerpts from the interviews which include knowledge.

Cultural values are a crucial part of intercultural awareness. Önalın (2005) states that culture involves values and beliefs. In addition, Byram et al. (2001) state that individuals need to be aware of their own cultural values, other people's cultural values, and the relationship between these values. Values are addressed 12 times in the interviews in this study. Table 9 indicates some example excerpts from student interviews. It shows that participants mention mutualism in terms of respecting values in their interviews. It means that cultural values are highly important for the participants.

Diversity is another theme used in the analysis of the student interviews. Baker (2016) states that intercultural awareness contributes to students' lives by helping them deal with cultural diversities. Therefore, it is an inseparable component of IA. The students in this study mention diversity theme 13 times in their interviews. Table 10 indicates some example scripts on diversity from the students' interviews. All the participants emphasizing diversity have positive perspectives towards diversity.

The last theme defined for the interviews in this study is fun. The students taking place in the current research repeated fun theme 7 times in their speeches. Table 11 shows some excerpts on fun theme from the interviews of the students. It means that the students are interested in fun part of culture.

5.3. What factors relate to the overall success of the preparatory class students at a multicultural university in English midterm exams when intercultural awareness levels of the participants are taken as a basis?

The third question of the study focuses on the success of the learners. It examines the relationship between intercultural awareness levels of the participants and their overall success in midterm exams regardless of the language skills such as reading, listening, speaking, and writing. To be more specific, the factors relating to IA levels of the participants are used while revealing data.

Table 3 shows the relationship between total grades of the students and variables such as age, foreign country experience and foreign classmate interaction taking IA levels as a basis. The younger the participants are, the higher their total grades are. It presents a negative correlation between the age factor and total midterm grades of the participants. However, this correlation is not strong. Therefore, it can be inferred that age is slightly related to the overall success of the students. Younger students might be more open to multiculturalism; thus, they can be more motivated for higher scores. Table 3 also shows the correlation between foreign country experience of the participants and their overall success. It reveals that the learners with foreign country experience have lower success in terms of total grade. It can be inferred from this data that correlation between foreign country experience and overall score is a very weak one. When it comes to the foreign classmate factor, there is a weak positive correlation between it and the total grade of the participants according to Table 3. The students who have foreign classmates achieve better in the midterm. It might stem from the fact that those students are motivated by the existence of foreign friends around. Table 8 indicates that one of the participants can improve his/her English skills thanks to his/her foreign classmates. Another participant connects learning a language to learning cultures of foreign friends.

5.4. What factors relate to the skills-based success of the preparatory class students at a multicultural university in English midterm exams when intercultural awareness levels of the participants are taken as a basis?

The fourth research question is based on the students' achievements regarding English language skills in midterm exams. It examines the participants' scores in receptive skills and productive skills. It focuses on the reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills separately. It correlates the demographic background of the participants which requires information about gender, age, and intercultural experience to their scores in the midterm exam through taking the intercultural awareness levels of the participants as a basis.

5.4.1. Receptive skills

Table 3 deals with the correlation between the variables such as age, foreign country experience and foreign classmate and language skills such as reading, listening, speaking, and writing when intercultural levels of the participants are taken as a basis. Reading skill

is in a positive correlation with all variables, which are age, foreign country experience and foreign classmate, though this correlation is a very weak one. This positive correlation might be a result of occupational motivation. Table 12 shows that one of the participants will need to read English texts in the future while he/she is doing her job. It might result in higher achievement in reading.

Table 3 presents data about listening skill, as well. Although the correlation between listening and age is a weak negative one, the correlation of it with foreign country experience and foreign classmate interaction is a very weak positive one. Age factor affects the success in listening section of the midterm exam. The older the participants are, the lower listening grades they have. However, interaction with people from different countries results in higher scores in listening part. Table 12 shows that one of the participants pays more attention to what is being talked due to differences in accents of foreign classmates. Then, he/she has a chance to improve his/her listening skill.

5.4.2. Productive skills

Table 3 reveals data about speaking and writing skills, too. The correlation between productive skills and the variables of age and foreign country experience is a very weak negative correlation. The younger participants are better at speaking and writing in the midterm exam. Also, the learners who have experience abroad have lower grades in the speaking and writing part. On the other hand, the students who have foreign classmates have higher scores in the productive parts. The correlation between the productive skills and variables of age and foreign country experience is a very weak negative correlation. According to Table 13, one of the participants mentions communicating with foreign friends helps him/her express himself/herself better. Another participant states that foreign friends might contribute to his/her writing skill through vocabulary and idea development. Thus, he/she can write better essays.

6. CONCLUSION

The current research focuses on intercultural awareness levels of learners studying at a preparatory class of a multicultural university. It also explores the factors related to intercultural awareness levels of the participants. In addition, factors relating to the students' levels of IA and their overall scores in midterm exam is examined. The learners' scores in receptive skills and productive skills are utilized, as well.

This study is classified as mixed methods research. Hurmerinta-Peltomaki and Nummela (2006) state that mixed methods provide researchers with more valid results and enable them to have another source. This research benefits from both quantitative and qualitative techniques. The qualitative part of the study includes questionnaires and the participants' midterm exam scores. The qualitative part involves interviews. Analysis of the numeric section is done through a statistical analysis application while content analysis is used in nonnumeric stage.

The participants filling in the questionnaires have high levels of intercultural awareness in general. The questionnaire results show that the levels of intercultural awareness among the participants are different gender-wise. The female students show higher levels of IA than the male participants. Also, age groups have different levels of IA. The order of the age groups' levels of IA from the highest to the lowest is as follows: 19-year-old students, 20+ years old ones, and 18-year-old ones. The participants' experiences in a foreign country and whether they have classmates from other countries influence intercultural awareness levels of the students. The participants who interact with people from other cultures show higher levels of intercultural awareness than the ones with no interaction with foreigners.

The overall midterm scores of the students are related to the factors such as age, whether the students have experience abroad, and whether they have foreign classmates. Age and foreign country experience factors come in negative correlation with overall grades while foreign classmates factor results in positive correlation. There are also other factors such as self-motivation or occupational motivation that are related to the total grades of the students in the midterm exam.

Productive skills are in negative correlation with the factors of age and abroad while they are in positive correlation with classmate factor. When it comes to receptive skills, only the correlation between age factor and listening is negative. The other correlations between skills and variables are positive. The fact that the students who have foreign classmates have better achievement in the midterm test when language skills are considered might stem from the higher motivation of those learners. Not only the social environment but also the idea of a better future can be counted as the reasons for this. Those students might feel obligated to develop communication skills so that they can survive in the multicultural classroom environment. They can also enjoy the diversity in the class. They may be motivated to develop academic skills for better careers and job opportunities in the future.

The interview part of the study reveals that the students have high levels of intercultural awareness because they come up with sentences which include intercultural elements such as language, food, clothes, interaction, and diversity during the interview recording process. The students also state that components of intercultural awareness contribute to their success in developing language skills. Similarly, language skills are mentioned to be effective in gaining intercultural awareness. The contribution of the factors such as having foreign friends or going abroad to the success of the participants are mentioned by the students, as well. When the students are exposed to texts, audios, contexts, and information about multiculturalism and interculturalism, they can have higher levels of intercultural awareness. All these concepts are interrelated; therefore, it would be impossible to separate them.

The current study in general explores the intercultural awareness levels of the participants, what factors these levels are in relationship with, and how the students' levels of IA are connected to their academic success. It also examines the factors which are in relation with the midterm scores. The findings of the study meet the expectations from the research.

7. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

The current situation of the globe requires individuals from diverse cultures to be in connection with one another. The terms such as interculturality, multiculturalism, intercultural competence and intercultural awareness gain more value day by day. Crompton (1974) remarks that developing intercultural awareness is significant in today's world because we need to respect people from different background, live together in the same society and have to communicate somehow. Seeing this, it can be concluded that research on intercultural awareness plays a crucial role in education field. More studies in different provinces of Turkey and other countries can be conducted on this topic.

The current study includes midterm grades of the learners. Future studies can involve final exam grades or proficiency exam scores of the participants. Some materials to increase intercultural awareness levels of the students can be implemented, and the development of the participants' levels of IA in time can be observed. This study is conducted in Antalya. It can be replicated in different universities in Antalya and different cities in Turkey. It might also be carried out in elementary schools and high schools. This study includes Turkish students only. Conducting the research among the students from different countries can be another suggestion for further studies.

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Appendix B. Questionnaire

PART A- DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please answer the following personal questions.

Name/ Surname (Please write your full name.): _____

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Age: _____
3. Have you ever been abroad? Yes No
4. Do you have a foreign classmate? Yes No

PART B- INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS QUESTIONNAIRE

Please, choose the best option (from strongly disagree to strongly agree) for you.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
5	I am interested in learning cultures of my classmates.					
6	I would like to know what my classmates can react on a specific event.					
7	I think it is enjoyable to have classmates with different cultural backgrounds.					
8	I like discovering beliefs, values, and behaviors of my classmates.					
9	I am open to learning and experiencing other cultures.					
10	I am interested in learning the taboos of different cultures.					
11	I like comparing and contrasting my culture with cultures of my friends.					

12	I'm interested in learning about different cultures.					
13	When I learn something in a language, I wonder about the cultural background of it.					
14	I follow what other people in the world do through media.					
15	I respect the cultural diversity of a classroom.					
16	I believe in the mutual understanding of different cultures.					
17	I respect other cultures.					
18	Learning about different cultures is my field of interest.					
19	I believe that we should avoid cultural misunderstandings in the class.					
20	I think if someone knows about the culture of a language, s/he can understand the language better.					
21	I think it is important to learn the culture of the language we are learning.					
22	It can be enjoyable to participate in intercultural in-class activities.					
23	I would like to have foreign classmates.					
24	I am good at communicating with friends from other countries.					
25	I can handle easily when there is a misunderstanding between me and friends from other countries.					

Appendix C. Semi-structured interview

1. What do you think about friends from different cultures?
2. Why is culture important while communicating with friends from different cultures?
3. Do you think learning about the cultures of English-speaking countries is important while learning English? Why or why not?
4. Do you think learning about your friends' cultures and your own culture is important in English language classes? Why or why not?
5. Do you think learning English helps you to learn about other cultures? Please briefly explain.
6. How does learning about cultures in general help you in English classes (reading, listening, grammar, vocabulary, speaking and writing skills)?